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Arrangements for Senate President Emeritus Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr.

By PRESS OFFICER
Maryland General Assembly

Senate President Emeritus Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr. will lie in state in the rotunda of the Maryland State House on Thursday, January 21, 2021 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. and on Friday, January 22, 2021 from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, in-person visitation will be limited to appointments for invited guests only. Visitors must remain socially distanced and masks will be required at all times. State House staff has increased air circulation, created restricted walkways with marked off standing spots. Anyone entering the State House will be strongly encouraged to be tested, and

will have to complete mandatory health and temperature screenings. The visitation will also be streamed online with a link provided later this week.

Troopers who have previously served with President Emeritus Miller will provide an escort from the Lee Funeral Home to the Maryland State House, passing by Senator Miller's law offices, the Prince George's Fire Department in Clinton, MD, Surrattsville High School, Chesapeake Beach, Dunkirk Fire Department, and Herrington Harbor before arriving at the State House. Well-wishers are encouraged to send him off from these outdoor locations, but they are asked to wear masks and maintain proper

social distancing protocols. An exact schedule will be provided later in the week. A Maryland State Police procession will escort President Emeritus Miller from Route 50 Exit 24 to the State House where he will process through family and selected guests into the State House, with evening visitation for family members only.

On Friday, President Emeritus Miller will have visitation from 8–11 a.m., and from 3–7 p.m., with a pause for the Senate Session from 12–2 p.m. At 7 p.m., the Maryland State Police will escort President Emeritus Miller from the Maryland State House to Route 50. Troopers who have previously served with President Emeritus Miller will provide

an escort to the Lee Funeral Home. On Saturday, the family will hold a private mass and service at their family church St. John the Evangelist in Clinton, MD, followed by a private interment. The mass and service will be live streamed on the St. John the Evangelist Facebook page.

In lieu of flowers, contributions can be made to the Calvert Health Cancer Foundation, the Dunkirk Fire Department, the Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr. Center for Leadership at the College of Southern Maryland, or the Thomas V. Mike Miller Education Fund to support youth environmental education and career programs through the Chesapeake Bay Trust (please denote that fund if donating online).

Prince George's County Public Schools Achieves \$4.7M in Community Benefits as Alternative Delivery Project to Build Six New Schools Reaches Financial Close

By OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS
Prince George's County Public Schools

UPPER MARLBORO, Md. (Jan. 11, 2021)—Today, Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) Chief Executive Officer Dr. Monica Goldson and the Prince George's County Education & Community Partners (PGCECP) announced the creation of a \$1 million endowed fund to support students and educators, along with student internships, mentoring opportunities and apprenticeships valued at \$4.7 million, as part of the school system's Alternative Construction Finance Program.

This announcement follows commercial and financial close for the project. Formally known as the Blueprint Schools, the agreement between Prince George's County Public Schools and PGCECP—a consortium of Fengage Asset Management, Gilbane Development Company, Gilbane Building Company, Stantec and Honeywell—was finalized in mid-December.

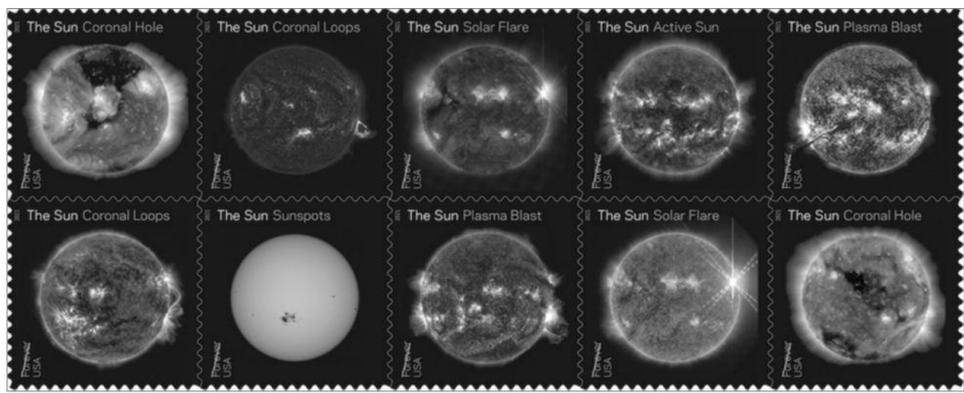
The project will build six new schools by July 2023, an innovative approach to

address aging schools. Through the initiative, PGCECP will build, design and maintain new Drew-Freeman, Hyattsville, Kenmoor and Walker Mill middle schools, as well as a new middle school and K-8 school in the Adelphi and southern areas of the county, supporting approximately 8,000 students.

The Blueprint Schools initiative, which uses a first-of-its kind delivery model for a U.S. public school system, is designed to build new schools faster, cutting the delivery time in half with lower construction costs and preventative maintenance. Other community benefits include the guaranteed procurement of at least 30 percent of total eligible costs of the program to minority-owned businesses, community-based enterprises and community-based small businesses that will serve as a much-needed economic stimulus. In addition, approximately \$174 million in savings is expected in deferred maintenance and construction costs.

The endowment fund will be admin-

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PHOTOGRAPH CREDITS: NASA/SDO/USPS

The United States Post office announced on Jan. 15, 2021, that they would be releasing a series of stamps highlighting images of the Sun captured by NASA's Solar Dynamics Observatory.

The U.S. Postal Service to Issue NASA Sun Science Forever Stamps

By MARA JOHNSON-GROH
NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center

GREENBELT, Md. (Jan. 15, 2021)—NASA's images of the Sun's dynamic and dazzling beauty have captivated the attention of millions. In 2021, the US Postal Service is showcasing the Sun's many faces with a series of Sun Science forever stamps that show images of solar activity captured by NASA's Solar Dynamics Observatory, or SDO.

"I have been a stamp collector all my life and I can't wait to see NASA science highlighted in this way," said Thomas Zurbuchen, associate administrator for NASA's Science Mission Directorate (SMD) in Washington. "I feel that the natural world around us is

as beautiful as art, and it's inspiring to be able to share the import and excitement of studying the Sun with people around the country."

The 20-stamp set features ten images that celebrate the science behind NASA's ongoing exploration of our nearest star. The images display common events on the Sun, such as solar flares, sunspots and coronal loops. SDO has kept a constant eye on the Sun for over a decade. Outfitted with equipment to capture images of the Sun in multiple wavelengths of visible, ultraviolet, and extreme ultraviolet light, SDO has gathered hundreds of millions of images during its tenure to help scientists learn about how our star works and how its constantly churning magnetic fields cre-

ate the solar activity we see.

That solar activity can drive space weather closer to Earth that can interfere with technology and radio communications in space. In addition to this immediate relevancy to our high-tech daily lives, the study of the Sun and its influence on the planets and space surrounding it—a field of research known as heliophysics—holds profound implications for the understanding of our solar system and the thousands of solar systems that have been discovered beyond our own. As our closest star, the Sun is the only nearby star that humans are able to study in great detail, making it a vital source of data.

For more information about NASA's SDO: www.nasa.gov/sdo.

Prince George's County Recognizes January as National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month

By V'HESSPA GLENN
Prince George's County Human Trafficking Task Force

UPPER MARLBORO, Md. (Jan. 14, 2021)—By Presidential Proclamation, January is recognized as National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month, with January 11 being recognized as National Human Trafficking Awareness Day, both of which bring attention and awareness to human trafficking and modern-day slavery. Throughout the entire month, the Prince George's County Human Trafficking Task Force, through the Human Relations Commission and in partnership with the Department of Family Services, are hosting and participating in a myriad of human trafficking awareness activities to highlight efforts to end human trafficking by identifying and rescuing victims, identifying and

prosecuting traffickers, and educating the community.

This partnership is accomplishing these goals through the launch of an awareness campaign by way of radio ads on Radio One and El Zol, billboard signs, bus shelters ads, and flyers on The Bus. In addition, the Capital Wheel at the National Harbor will illuminate the color blue in recognition of human trafficking awareness on January 1, 8, 11, 15, and 22. The partnership will also host multiple community education and awareness events, including a roundtable discussion with Senator Ben Cardin. Finally, this partnership in connection with the Family Justice Center will also host a series of "Code Blue" human trafficking conversations and multiple community education and awareness events. For more information, please visit familyservices.mypgc.us or civilrights.mypgc.us/.

Governor Larry Hogan Announces Appointments to All Three Branches of Government

By SHAREESE CHURCHILL
Office of the Governor

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (Jan. 13, 2021)—On the first day of the 442nd Legislative Session, Governor Larry Hogan announced the following appointments to Maryland's legislative, judicial, and executive branches:

Delegate Michael A. Jackson to the Maryland Senate, representing Legislative District 27

Colonel Reid J. Novotny to the Maryland House of Delegates, representing Legislative District 9A

Dennis Schrader as nominee for Secretary of the Maryland Department of Health

Michael O. Twigg to the Allegany County Circuit Court

Judge Stacy Adele Mayer to the Baltimore County Circuit Court

Heather Lynne Price to the Caroline County District Court

Judge Bryon Bereano to the Prince George's County District Court

In total, Governor Hogan is submitting 274 appointments to the House and Senate today.

Legislative Appointments

Michael Jackson has been a member of the House of Delegates since 2015 and currently serves on the Appropriations Committee. Jackson was the sheriff for Prince George's County from 2002 to 2010. He holds a B.S. in electrical engineering from DeVry Institute and a M.S. in police executive leadership from Johns Hopkins University. Jackson served in the U.S. Marine Corps, and previously served as the president of the Maryland Sheriffs' Association. He will take the seat formerly held by Senate President Emeritus Thomas V. "Mike" Miller.

Col. Reid Novotny is an account manager for World Wide Technology, a tech company that provides supply chain services in the telecom sector. He served 15 years in the U.S. Air Force, and is currently a colonel in the Maryland National Guard, where he is a joint staff lead for

IT and cyber. He replaces the seat formerly held by Delegate Warren Miller.

"I am confident that Delegate Jackson and Col. Novotny will represent their constituencies admirably in their new respective roles," said Governor Hogan. "I offer them both my sincere congratulations and look forward to working with them in the upcoming legislative session."

Executive Appointment

Dennis Schrader has served as Acting Health Secretary of the Maryland Department of Health since December 2020. Schrader has been with the department since 2017 and previously served as its acting health secretary from 2017 to 2018, and deputy secretary for healthcare financing and chief operating officer from January to December 2020. Schrader continues to lead the department's hospital surge operations, as well as its COVID-19 vaccination operations.

"Dennis has been an integral part of my executive team since 2015, and he has been working around the clock over the last 11 months to save lives," said Governor Hogan. "I have no doubt that the Senate will want to give Dennis a swift confirmation to ensure steady leadership as we continue to battle the COVID-19 pandemic."

Judicial Appointments

Michael Twigg has served as Allegany County State's Attorney since 2003, having worked in that office since 1997. Prior to that, he worked as a paralegal for Hazel and Thomas and in the specialist homicide section of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia. Twigg obtained a B.A. in political science from The Citadel and a J.D. from Georgetown University Law Center.

Judge Stacy Mayer has been an associate judge in the district court for Baltimore County since 2013. She served in the O'Malley administration as a deputy legislative officer and then chief legislative

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Comcast Names Michael Parker Top Executive for Beltway Region

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ChildWatch: Stay Awake!

We all must heed Dr. King's call, stay vigilant, and be prepared to be determined co-workers with God to ensure progress and right prevail. The time is ripe to do right.

Commentary, Page A4

Prince George's County Extends Indoor Dining Ban and Other Covid-19 Safety Measures for Restaurants and Other Businesses: These measures will remain in effect until at least January 29, 2021.

For the latest county COVID-19 updates, visit:

- health.mypgc.us/coronavirus
- mypgc.us/reopen

TOWNS *and* NEIGHBORS

In and Around Morningside-Skyline

by Mary McHale 301-735-3451

Darnall's Chance announces Gingerbread House winners

For 21 years, Darnall's Chance Museum, in Upper Marlboro, has been hosting the annual Gingerbread House Contest & Show. Despite Covid this year, they didn't want to break tradition. So, to comply with CDC guidelines and keep their patrons safe, they chose to deliver the show to everyone at home through a virtual program. The winners in three categories were:

Adult Winners: 1st Place, Michelle Howell; 2nd Place, Shaunah Cherry; 3rd Place, Brian Holt.

Child Winners: 1st Place, Violet Stallings; 2nd Place, Maeve Hosman; and 3rd Place, Abigail Hugue.

Family Winners: 1st Place, McHale Family; 2nd Place, Muldowney Family; and 3rd Place: McClain-Hosman Family.

After the initial judging, the public was able to go on YouTube, see all the entrees, and vote virtually for their favorites. The Our Viewer's Choice winners were:

Adult Category: Michelle Howell's "Gnome for the Holidays."

Child Category: Violet Stallings's "An Island Christmas."

Family Category: The McClain-Hosman Family's "Mimi & Papa's: 58 Christmases."

Prizes were awarded to all the winners. Darnall's Chance is happy to have been able to keep the Gingerbread House show going despite the trying times and they are eager to see everyone return to the museum next year!

Bells are ringing, for two couples

John Squatrito and Gabriella "Bella" Resendez were married Oct. 17 in Texas. John is the son of Ailsa and John Squatrito, and grandson of the late Lt. Col. Aubrey and Annetta Pridgen, formerly of Goodfellow Drive in Skyline. The groom is a 2nd Lieutenant in the Air Force, stationed at Laughlin AFB in Del Rio, Texas.

Isaac Gallegos and Eva Ramos were married New Year's Eve in Brownsville, Texas. Isaac is son of Therese and Miguel Gallegos and is my handsome grandson.

Neighbors & other good people

Victor Shaffer, 63, formerly of Suitland, died Jan. 6 of coronavirus. He was living in Georgia with two of his sisters.

He was a sweet guy and a good friend of my late son Brian.

Last week I mentioned a fatal hit-and-run the morning of Jan. 6 near Allentown and Suitland roads. He has been identified as Timothy Dewayne Rice, 43, of District Heights.

You may have noticed that the McHale Family was among the winners in the Family category of the Gingerbread House contest. That family is made up of my great-grandkids, Mary and Wesley, and their parents, Heather and Conor. They have also participated once before.

Changing landscape

CubeSmart Self Storage is due to open in February in the 8200 block of Woodyard Road in Clinton.

Rich Landon sent word that two new 7-elevens are due to open soon, one at the corner of Marlboro Pike and Walker Mill Road. The other is at Walker Mill and Addison roads. Both have gas stations.

The riot at the Capitol was proof that the District of Columbia must have authority to control its own National Guard, which they cannot do now. The problem may lead to a stronger call for DC statehood.

Tom's story, and he's "sticking with it"

Tom Ferrell, formerly of Morningside and later Skyline, emailed me about his life. Among the friends he still remembers are Danny Needham, Bruce Neale, Johnny Dandois, Russell Talkington, Charlotte Ellison, Donna Glagola and Frank (Billy) Robbins. Tom graduated from Suitland HS in 1961. Frank Binstead helped him get his first job, at the Peoples Drug Store warehouse.

In 1964 he joined the DC Air National Guard and became a full-time employee of the Guard as an aircraft crew chief. He made his career there, retiring in 2000 as an aircraft crew chief. Tom said he visited 37 states and 18 countries over his career—and loved his job.

He married Marie Volta of Forestville in 1970 and bought a house in Bryans Road. He has four children and nine grandkids.

He later divorced, but remarried in 1990, and bought a house in Brandywine. In 2011 they moved to near Tallahassee. He enjoys Florida but misses the snow.

He wrote me much more, all of which I enjoyed. And he finished with, "That's

my story and I'm sticking with it."

Virus update: 66 died yesterday in Maryland

The United Kingdom variant of the virus has been detected in Maryland, infecting a couple from Anne Arundel County—as if we needed that bad news.

Maryland has had 312,351 coronavirus cases, with 2,665 (!) added Jan. 13. As for virus deaths, there have been 6,367 with 66 on Jan. 13.

Maryland has administered 152,129 first doses of the vaccine, according to the state's most recent data. But I've yet to hear where I can go to get mine.

Oops

In last week's column I mentioned President Kennedy's Inaugural Parade had to be rescheduled because of new-fallen snow, bitter winds and record-cold (8 degrees) temperatures. But I had the wrong President. It was President Ronald Reagan's Parade and it was moved to the brand new Capital Centre in Prince George's County.

Starr Hickman, Potomac High 1977

Sidney Henry "Starr" Hickman, 62, retired Army Master Sergeant who served in the Air Defense Artillery branch in Germany and the Gulf War, died Dec. 17 in El Paso, Tex.

Formerly of Oxon Hill, he graduated from Potomac HS in 1977 and from Park University, Ft. Belvoir, Va., in 2006. His military service earned him ten medals, including the Kuwait Liberation Medal.

Survivors include his wife of 11 years, Ratna Hickman, mother, Margaret Ann Hickman, sons Maj. Marcel Hickman and CPT Maurice Hickman, two grandchildren, and eight siblings. Services were at Kalas Funeral Home.

Starr is also survived by his two poodles.

Milestones

Happy birthday to Mark Foland, Jan. 23; Claire Kennedy, Jan. 24; Kenneth Brown and Michelle Willis, Jan. 25: Father Thomas LaHood and Yvonne Garvin, Jan. 27; Alice Ward's granddaughter San' Tori Dixon, Jan. 28; Sister Zion, Jan. 29; David Call and Joanne (Clark) Bunch, Jan. 30.

Happy 120th Birthday (in Heaven) to my father, Dr. Richard Dyer Mudd, who was born in Anacostia on Jan. 24, 1901. He died in 2002.

Around the County

Maryland - Good Trouble De-Escalation Tool

"Honoring the life of late Congressman John Lewis"

LARGO, Md. (Jan. 11, 2021)—Good Trouble members from Maryland, Ohio, Michigan, and Virginia designed a de-escalation tool to mitigate negative interactions between drivers and law enforcement. Good Trouble was moved by the encounters witnessed between African Americans and law enforcement. The Tips for Drivers can be used by new drivers, young adults, or anyone with a driver's license. The seven steps with instructions on what to do during a traffic stop have been vetted by local law enforcement.

Since the passing of John Lewis, Good Trouble members responded to his call to action to "Get in good trouble, necessary trouble, and help redeem the soul of America." Good Trouble members discuss all matters regarding social injustice and policing in black communities.

Good Trouble is committed to seeking change, justice and equality for all.

If you would like more information about the Good Trouble think tank, please contact Renee Clarke at (240-.838-6653) or email at (Getn2goodtrouble@yahoo.com)

—Renee Clarke, Good Trouble

Local Students Honored

Clarion University Announces Fall Dean's list

CLARION, Pa. (Jan. 12, 2021)—The following student earned at least a 3.5 GPA to be named to the dean's list for the fall 2020 semester at Clarion University of Pennsylvania:

Laurel, MD: **Virginia Mooney**

—Tina Horner, Clarion University

MidAmerica Nazarene University Announces Fall 2020 Honor Roll

OLATHE, Kan. (Jan. 12, 2021)—MidAmerica Nazarene University recently announced its President's, Dean's List and Honor Roll for the fall 2020 semester. A total of 357 students qualified for one of the honors.

All students in traditional programs carrying 12 semester hours or more with a term GPA from 3.2 to 4.0 may qualify for one of these academic honors. Neutral credit hours are excluded from the calculation and reduce the course load used to figure the honor. The President's List is a 4.0 grade point average for the semester; Dean's List ranges from 3.5 to 3.99; and the Honor Roll is 3.2 to 3.49.

Following are MNU students named to the President's List, Dean's List and Honor Roll:

Bowie, MD: **Benjamin Ballah**, Honor Roll

—Carol Best, MidAmerica Nazarene University

Mercer University Announces Fall 2020 President's, Dean's Lists

MACON, Ga. (Jan. 14, 2021)—Mercer University recently announced the President's List and Dean's List for the fall 2020 semester. Inclusion on these lists requires students to meet rigorous grade-point-average standards specific to the college or school within the University.

The following area students earned a place on the lists:

Bowie, MD: **Mary Allen**, freshman, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Dean's List

—Kyle Sears, Mercer University

National Harbor Presents Fooduary January 15 to February 14

A month long restaurant event at one of the DMV's hottest entertainment and restaurant locations

NATIONAL HARBOR, Md. (Jan. 18, 2021)—National Harbor and its restaurant partners are celebrating dining promotions during a month long restaurant celebration. Harbor to Table offers include pre fixe menus (\$22 lunch and \$35 dinner), digital cooking demonstrations with chefs and bartenders, kits to make at home, family style packaged meals, fun giveaways, gift card incentives and a give back to the community component with donations going to restaurant workers at the harbor. Fooduary kicks off on Jan. 15 and will run through Feb. 14 with 19 participating restaurants bringing options that can be enjoyed at the Harbor or in your own home.

"Instead of the usual annual restaurant week, National Harbor wanted to create a month long promotion to help support restaurants" said National Harbor Marketing Director, Deborah Topcik. "We're thrilled to be able to highlight our unique offerings through special restaurant offers, video tutorials by chefs and bartenders, and giveaways."

While visiting National Harbor guests can stay warm on the Capital Wheel while enjoying views of the metro DC area and with pathways along the waterfront and other outdoor trails, it's a great opportunity to get outside and enjoy the fresh air.

For more information visit www.nationalharbor.com/fooduary/.

—Vicki Bendure, Bendure Communications, Inc.

Brandywine-Aquasco

by Audrey Johnson 301-922-5384

SENIOR HOMETOWN HEROES

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commissions, Department of Parks and Recreation of Prince George's County honored Senior Hometown Heroes with a special 2021 calendar for their contributions to the community.

Rounding out December 2021 was McKinley Hayes who saw a need in keeping communities aware of the different services offered in our community. He felt that it was helpful to establish partnerships and by doing so community members were better served. Information sent to me from my friend Joan Hayes, wife of McKinley Hayes.

CGES HISTORY (PART TWO)

Clinton Grove Elementary School (CGES) history. Martha Smith was the first teacher at the Old Robeystown School. She was directed by Rev. Kimball to organize a school association among the Freedmen and have them select five men to serve as trustees. It was his intent, if this meeting was successful, to pay for both the school and to deed it to the Freedmen. Rev. Kimball also praised Martha Smith, stating that the Freedmen's Bureau could not have found a better "colored teacher". Apparently, this meeting was the best that had been held since the school was built.

Mrs. Smith continued her efforts to work with Mr. Robey and the trustees while also running the school. On February 8, 1869, John Butler, a Freedmen's Bureau representative visited the schools and reported afterwards to Rev. Kimball that this was the "poorest concern I have come upon in all my travels." It was the feeling that Miss Smith was exerting all her powers to make the school into a success despite Mr. Robey's interference. The community agreed with Mr. Butler's evaluation and stated that its desire to "determine and direct their own affairs were thwarted by the control Robey exerted over the school".

Ultimately, Mr. Robey sent Rev. Kimball the deed and two bills for school construction. These were sent to Miss Smith to be given to the trustees. Mr. Robey insisted that the school yard be fenced in.

The concerns regarding the Robeystown School involving interference by Mr. Robey and failure to pay the final bills for construction. These issues were finally resolved when Mr. Robey finally sent the deed and the two bills.

On May 5, 1869, Rev. Kimball directed that the school be closed in July, and that the teacher, Miss Smith, should continue to receive her salary but not room and board. If this were not acceptable, she could, and did close the school earlier and

return to Philadelphia.

The next teacher was a man who remained only one month. After several more teachers came and went, Mrs. Mary Ferguson, a white woman from the area applied for the position. She was hired and the Freedmen's Union Commission agreed to pay her salary provided that the school had no fewer than thirty students. She too experienced the negative sentiments of the community toward "colored" schools. Mrs. Ferguson taught at the schools through the fall of 1870.

It is unclear who requested the removal of Mrs. Ferguson from the teaching position at Robeystown School. There is no record of who held that position from 1871 until the hiring of Rosa E. Cannon until 1873. She had better tenure at the school, remaining until 1877.

NOTTINGHAM MYERS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

"Hello Church Family and Friends. Thank you for your generous donations of food items for the CSS Food Pantry. The items totaled 1,095 lbs. We are truly blessed to be able to share with others who are struggling during this pandemic".

"Special thanks to the men who helped to unload the cars on December 27th. Tyrone McKelvey, Phillip Hill and Joe Lewis and those individuals who helped with the loading of the trucks and the truck drivers, Melvin Thomas, Melvin Thomas, James and Katie Wilkerson and Eugene Fletcher". "Again, many thanks for your support and have a safe, healthy and Happy New Year. Blessings", Dorothy C. Magruder Chair, Health & Welfare Ministry. Nottingham Myers a nurturing church connecting mission and ministry to advance the Kingdom of God. Pastor Constance Smith.

HAPPY FOUNDERS DAY

Happy Founders Day to the Men of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Incorporated, celebrating 110 years of achievement in every field of Human endeavor.

EGATE

Four schools were honored for gifted and talented education. The schools were Kenmoor Middle School, Maya Angelou French Immersion School, Tulip Grove Elementary School and University Park Elementary School have qualified for the 2020 Maryland Excellence in Gifted and Talented Education (EGATE). Schools designation which recognizes excellence in gifted and talented education. PGCPs-Express-Newsletter for PGCPs Employees.

COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE (CASA)/PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY

ONLINE VOLUNTEER INFORMATION SESSION SCHEDULE

2nd Saturdays at 11:00 am
4th Thursdays at 6:00 pm

Contact:
recruitment@pgcasa.org

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COMMUNITY

Social Security Matters

Ask Rusty:

Do COVID-19 Bonuses Count Toward the Earnings Limit?

By RUSSELL GLOOR,
AMAC Certified Social Security Advisor
Association of Mature American Citizens

Dear Rusty: I'm 63 and still working, and I receive Social Security benefits. Because of COVID-19 my employer has been giving us a \$300 bonus, every 3 months. This will be \$1,200 for the year and it will put me over the \$18,240 earnings limit for this year. My question is, since these bonuses are COVID-19 related are they still considered earned income? My second question is, if I go over the limit does Social Security stop my check, even if it might be a portion of the check? **Signed: Working During COVID-19**

Dear Working: Whether your 2020 earnings (and those bonuses) put you over the annual earnings limit will depend upon how the bonuses are reported on your Federal income tax return (or your W-2 if you aren't required to file). Your employer will send your W-2 earnings to the IRS which will, in turn, inform Social Security of your earnings. Social Security compares your 2020 W-2 earnings to the earnings limit to see if you exceeded the allowable limit. In other words, how your employer defines those COVID-19 bonuses and reports it to the IRS determines whether SS will count them toward the earnings limit. You should check with your employer's Human Resources department to see if your COVID-19 bonuses will be considered as taxable earnings reportable on your W-2.

If you exceed the limit, and you don't inform Social Security in advance that you did, they won't know about it until they receive your W-2 information from the IRS (sometime next year, after you file your income taxes). They will then send you a notification that you exceeded the limit and tell you how much you owe them, and they will want to recover \$1 for every \$2 you are over the limit (half of what you exceed the limit by). They'll give you the option to repay what they consider to be an overpayment in one lump sum, request a repayment plan or to have your SS benefits withheld for as many months as it takes for them to recover what you owe. Note they only withhold full months of benefits, not partial, so you could go several months without collecting any SS benefits until they recover what is owed.

The money they withhold because you exceeded the limit is not lost forever, because when you reach your full retirement age (66 ½ if you turned 63 in 2020) they will give you time credit for any months they withheld benefits. That means they will move your effective claim date forward by the number of months benefits were withheld, which will result in a small increase in your benefit amount. But you'll get that higher benefit for the rest of your life, enabling you to eventually recover the money they withheld because you exceeded the limit. And for information, during the year you reach your full retirement age (FRA) the limit goes up and the penalty is less, and once you reach your FRA there is no longer a limit to how much you can earn while collecting benefits.

The 2.3 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.Amac-Foundation.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.

This article is intended for information purposes only and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the AMAC Foundation's staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association (NSSA). NSSA and the AMAC Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security Administration or any other governmental entity. To submit a question, visit our website (amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory) or email us at ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org.

Former University of Maryland Student Sentenced to Life in Prison for First Degree Murder

White Supremacist stabs Black man to death just days before graduation from Bowie State

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

UPPER MARLBORO, Md. (Jan. 14, 2021)—Prince George's County State's Attorney Aisha Braveboy today announced that Sean Urbanski (age 25) was sentenced to life in prison for stabbing 23-year-old 1st Lt. Richard Collins, III to death on the campus of the University of Maryland at College Park (UMD) in 2017.

Urbanski was found guilty of First Degree Murder by a Prince George's County jury on December 18, 2019.

On May 20, 2017, 1st Lt. Richard Collins, III, an African American graduating senior at Bowie State University and a commissioned officer of the U. S. Army, was out with friends celebrating his upcoming graduation. While

waiting at a bus stop on UMD's campus, Lt. Collins was singled out by Urbanski, a member of the Alt Reich Nation social media group. Urbanski walked up to Lt. Collins and said "Step left. Step left if you know what's best for you." Collins replied "No," and Urbanski stabbed him with a knife that lodged 3 ½ inches into his chest. Lt. Collins later succumbed to his injuries and Urbanski was taken into custody.

"I want to commend my principal deputy, Jason Abbott and my homicide chief, Jonathon Church who I assigned to handle this case for their amazing work and for securing justice for 1st Lt. Richard Collins, III, the Collins' family, Bowie State University and the entire community. Today's sentencing sends a message to the entire country that crimes of hate will not be tolerated and those who engage in these crimes will face severe punishment. This was an ugly

and unprovoked attack on an accomplished young Army lieutenant who was targeted because he was Black. Today, Mr. Urbanski was held accountable for his savage and racist actions," Braveboy said. "To the Collins family: I pray that you can now find some peace and justice in the resolution of this case. I know the road has been long and I commend you for enduring and staying the course through it all. To the students of Bowie State University and University of Maryland, it is my hope that this tragedy will inspire you to draw from your own strength and lead the fight against hate so that no one else has to die because of the color of their skin."

State's Attorney Braveboy will be hosting a virtual town hall, entitled "Hate in America & At Home" in late February.

Comcast Names Michael Parker Top Executive for Beltway Region

By SANDRA ARNETTE
Comcast

BALTIMORE (Jan. 14, 2021)—Michael Parker has been named Senior Vice President of Comcast's Beltway Region where he will serve as the head executive responsible for operations, overall customer experience and financial performance for approximately 2.5 million customers in Maryland, Virginia, Washington, D.C., and parts of Delaware, North Carolina and West Virginia.

"I have had the privilege of working with Michael as our senior executive in several markets across the northeast and Midwest over the last decade. I am equally excited for him as he assumes responsibility for our Beltway region, the largest operating region in the Northeast division," said Kevin Casey, President of Comcast's Northeast Division, which includes 14 northeastern states from Maine

through Virginia and the District of Columbia. "Michael is a seasoned and proven leader with a wealth of knowledge and a passion for creating the best workplace for employees and a consistently superior customer experience."

Parker joined Comcast in 2001 and has spent the last 20 years in progressively larger leadership positions. Most recently, he was Senior Vice President of Comcast's Keystone Region serving customers in Maryland, Ohio, Pennsylvania and West Virginia. Prior, he was Senior Vice President of Comcast's Western New England Region, which included operations in Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York and Vermont. Under his leadership, the Region was recognized with numerous "Best Places to Work" awards from area media outlets. His previous Comcast roles have included senior positions for the company's Greater Chicago Region, and in systems

servicing Baltimore, Connecticut, Detroit and New York.

"I'm excited to return to the Beltway region and continue our commitment to deliver great experiences for employees and customers alike," Parker added.

Parker, who began his professional career as Illinois Assistant Attorney General, is a graduate of the National Association for Multicultural Leadership Development Program, the Cable and Telecommunications Association for Marketing's Executive Management Program, the Society of Cable Telecommunications Engineer's Tuck Executive Leadership Program, and Comcast's Executive Leadership Forum. He has been recognized numerous times over the past 10 years as one of CableFax: The Magazine's "Most Influential Minorities" and was named to the "Top 50 Under 50" list of Black MBA Magazine.



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY COMCAST
Michael Parker

Parker, a Chicago native, holds an MBA from the Kellogg Graduate School of Management at Northwestern University and earned degrees from the University of Miami School of Law and Lake Forest College. He is a graduate of the Officer Candidates School in Quantico, Virginia, and attained the rank of First Lieutenant during his service with the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve.

Maryland Department of Health Launches Operation Courage Mental Health Program for Frontline Workers, First Responders

By PRESS OFFICER
Maryland Department of Health

BALTIMORE (Jan. 11, 2021)—The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) today announced Operation Courage, a new support services program designed to address the growing and long-term mental health care needs of frontline workers and first responders amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The program launched with a new website and an online assessment designed to encourage workers to get needed help.

"We are grateful for the many courageous Marylanders who continue to risk their own safety for others every day—we know it's not getting easier," said MDH Acting Secretary Dennis R. Schrader. "From inside hospitals to grocery stores, employees are working under prolonged and extreme stress. Through Operation Courage, we will support those who continue to answer the calls of a country in crisis, to help them weather this prolonged storm, and to emerge as mentally healthy as possible."

Operation Courage offers a free online assessment followed by a free consultation, which includes an initial 15-20 minute conversation, de-escalation for people experiencing an immediate crisis, and may include recommendations for self-care or referrals to other services, de-

pending on the level of need. After the initial call, people who decide to engage are then offered up to six-weeks of therapy consisting of an evaluation, treatment plan, psychotherapy and ongoing assessments as needed.

The program will accept insurance and waive co-pays. A sliding scale fee schedule and discounted rates are also available to individuals who are uninsured.

"Serving on the front lines of this pandemic is not without a cost; one CDC study shows that 54 percent of surveyed essential workers report at least one adverse mental or behavioral health symptom," said Dr. Aliya Jones, Deputy Secretary of MDH's Behavioral Health Administration. "First responders in particular are trained to be brave, but the psychological burden of risking your personal safety over a prolonged period of time is traumatizing."

Operation Courage is the latest BHA initiative to support the mental health needs of COVID-19 pandemic frontline responders. Ongoing initiatives and programming include the Maryland COVID-19 Crisis Support Program for employees of Maryland's long-term health care facilities, Mental Health First Aid training and the BHA/MedChi Behavioral Health Webinar Series: Helping the Helpers and Those They Serve.

Operation Courage is made possible in part by funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

"My wife is an internal medicine doctor who takes care of Covid patients," said Dr. Nithin Krishna CEO of Psych Associates of Maryland, the organization that led the development of Operation Courage. "Before the pandemic she would come home from work and embrace her family and roll around on the floor with our five-year-old. Now she comes home, takes off the PPE and sits by herself. She goes to work every day because it is the right thing to do, but I know how hard it can be to stay brave."

To learn more about Operation Courage—or to take the free online assessment—visit www.theoperationcourage.com.

Information and resources regarding COVID-19 are available at covidlink.maryland.gov.

The Maryland Department of Health is dedicated to protecting and improving the health and safety of all Marylanders through disease prevention, access to care, quality management and community engagement. Follow us on Twitter @MD-HealthDept and at Facebook.com/MDHealthDept.

Schools from A1

istered and managed by the Excellence in Education Foundation for PGCPs.

"It is vital that we continuously invest in our students' future and today's announcement will allow us to do just that," said Dr. Monica Goldson, Chief Executive Officer. "Throughout this process, Prince George's County Public Schools has remained committed to our goal of supporting our students at every stage of their educational experience, ensuring they have every tool needed for success. We cannot afford to wait another 10 years to provide our students, teachers and communities with new state-of-the-art facilities. I look forward to working with Prince George's County Education & Community Partners to complete an investment that is long overdue."

"We are Prince George's Proud that the school system's Alternative Construction Finance Program is already producing excellent benefits to our students and teachers," said Prince George's County Executive

Angela Alsobrooks. "This new endowment fund will provide critical internships, apprenticeships and other opportunities for our young people, preparing them to successfully enter the workforce or college."

"The County Council welcomes this next critical step toward employing creative strategies to build six new schools in the County to meet the needs of our students and communities," said Council Chair Calvin S. Hawkins II (At-Large). "We are excited to celebrate the community benefits of this unique public-private partnership which is providing important educational and economic opportunities as part of the groundbreaking Alternative Construction Finance Program."

"This is an important step toward realizing new critical school improvements for Prince George's County while offering new educational resources to support its students," said Darin Early, Managing Director, Public Private Partnerships, Gilbane Development Company and Principal-in-Charge, Prince George's County Education & Community Partners. "Gilbane Development Company and Gilbane Building Company are honored to be a part of this innovative

partnership that will modernize schools for 8,000 students while driving local participation and apprenticeship opportunities, and boosting economic inclusion."

"We are pleased to have reached commercial and financial close on this critical project and to be a part of the new scholarship, internships and apprenticeships program announced today," said Mac Bell, Managing Director, Infrastructure Investments, Fengage. "We are honored to partner with PGCPs to deliver this much-needed infrastructure for Prince George's County and its students, and we are committed to ensuring the benefits of this project extend beyond the buildings, in support of student development and community businesses through the endowment fund and work and training opportunities."

Prince George's County Public Schools, the second-largest school system in the state, has the second-oldest buildings in Maryland. More than half of the 208 schools are over 50 years old.

For more information on the PGCPs Blueprint Schools initiative, visit www.pgcpblueprintschools.com.

COMMENTARY

Marion Wright Edelman

President Emerita,
Children's Defense Fund



ChildWatch:

Stay Awake!

As Americans everywhere remain on guard against continued chaos and violence leading up to Inauguration Day, it's instructive to honor Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday even in turbulent times by returning to Dr. King's own words. His last Sunday sermon, delivered at the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C., on March 31, 1968, was called "Remaining Awake Through a Great Revolution."

Dr. King said the title was based on the old story of Rip Van Winkle, who fell asleep for twenty years and slept right through the American Revolution: "One of the great liabilities of life is that all too many people find themselves living amid a great period of social change, and yet they fail to develop the new attitudes, the new mental responses, that the new situation demands. They end up sleeping through a revolution." He warned us that during upheaval in our own times we must

not do the same.

Dr. King talked about the "great revolution" he was seeing: "In a sense it is a triple revolution: that is, a technological revolution, with the impact of automation and cybernation; then there is a revolution in weaponry, with the emergence of atomic and nuclear weapons of warfare; then there is a human rights revolution, with the freedom explosion that is taking place all over the world." As usual his words feel prophetic, and Dr. King's description of a necessary revolution in racial justice is especially relevant right now:

"The hour has come for everybody, for all institutions of the public sector and the private sector, to work to get rid of racism. And now if we are to do it we must honestly admit certain things and get rid of certain myths that have constantly been disseminated all over our nation. One is the myth of time. It is the notion that only time can solve the problem of racial injustice. And there are those who often sincerely say to the Negro and his allies in the white community, 'Why don't you slow up? Stop pushing things so fast. Only time can solve

the problem. And if you will just be nice and patient and continue to pray, in a hundred or two hundred years the problem will work itself out.'"

Dr. King continued: "There is an answer to that myth. It is that time is neutral. It can be used whether constructively or destructively. And I am sorry to say this morning that I am absolutely convinced that the forces of ill will in our nation, the extreme rightists of our nation—the people on the wrong side—have used time much more effectively than the forces of goodwill. And it may well be that we will have to repent in this generation, not merely for the vitriolic words and the violent actions of the bad people, but for the appalling silence and indifference of the good people who sit around and say, 'Wait on time.' Somewhere we must come to see that human progress never rolls in on the wheels of inevitability. It comes through the tireless efforts and the persistent work of dedicated individuals who are willing to be co-workers with God. And without this hard work, time itself becomes an ally of the primitive forces of social stagnation. So we must help time and realize that the time is always ripe to do right."

The violence we are seeing today comes as our nation is on the verge of a potential revolution of our values and institutions. In the November elections and the January Georgia Senate runoffs, Black voters and other voters of color once again literally put their lives on the line in order to demand a new future. The riot at the Capitol was the deadly response from the newest generation of ex-

treme rightists and White supremacists clinging desperately to old vestiges of power. This time they are allied with Republican political leaders fighting to overturn a lawful election. The apologists for the insurrectionists and every person still willing to condone the politicians who incited and sympathized with them prove that in the face of today's violent forces of ill will we are still surrounded by the appalling silence of "good people." But there is also a bold new generation of antiracist Americans who are telling us they will no longer wait on time. We all must heed Dr. King's call, stay vigilant, and be prepared to be determined co-workers with God to ensure progress and right prevail. The time is ripe to do right.

In this same sermon Dr. King retold the parable of the rich man Dives, who went to hell, and the poor, sick man Lazarus, who laid outside Dives's gate hoping for crumbs from his table. Dr. King said Dives didn't go to hell because he was rich; he went to hell because he refused to see his neighbor: "Dives didn't realize that his wealth was his opportunity. It was his opportunity to bridge the gulf that separated him from his brother Lazarus. Dives went to hell because he passed by Lazarus every day and he never really saw him. He went to hell because he allowed his brother to become invisible."

Dr. King said he feared America might make the same mistake, and once again his words are prescient as ever. America—stay awake!

—January 15, 2021

Marc Morial

President and CEO, National Urban League



To Be Equal:

Capitol Insurrection Reveals "Cancer" of Racism Within the Law Enforcement Establishment

"The Capitol coup is the mirror we needed to overcome our warped sense of American exceptionalism. Becoming a truly equitable democracy requires work. It requires actively working against ideological forces that try to make America great for only a few. It means realizing that the American Civil War and Nazi Germany began just like this. It means being courageous to admit that what happened at the Capitol is who we are as the United States. It means realizing that being silent on this issue is accepting the side of white supremacy. So, if you are worried, scared, or fearful, you should be. How will we respond to fight for the soul of America?"

—Rashawn Ray,
University of Maryland Sociology Professor

This week I was called to testify before the Congressional Black Caucus at an emergency hearing entitled "January 6, 2021: U.S. Capitol Insurrection: White Supremacy on Display."

I used the opportunity to shine a light on the

stark disparity between law enforcement response to attack on the Capitol and the response to Black Lives Matter protests over the summer.

On June 2, 2020, racial justice protesters peacefully gathered at the Lincoln Memorial to protest the death of George Floyd and other Black Americans at the hands of police. They were met with row upon row of military police in fatigues and armor lining the Memorial's steps.

The day before, on June 1, at least nine military and police aircraft hovered in the sky. Two helicopters eventually swooped low in a tactic usually reserved for combat zones, battering the protesters with tropical storm-level winds.

Park Police infamously unleashed tear gas and fired rubber bullets to clear a nonviolent crowd from Lafayette Park so President Trump could stage a photo-op.

D.C. Metropolitan Police arrested 316 protesters on June 1, 2020

"The FBI knew that extremists were preparing to travel to Washington to commit violence and

"war" on January 6. The insurrection was openly plotted on social media. One post on the platform 8kun declared "We will storm the government buildings, kill cops, kill security guards, kill federal employees and agents."

There were no National Guard troops in riot gear awaiting them. No military helicopters. There was no tear gas deployed as the mob shoved its way past barricades. Vastly outnumbered police stepped aside and allowed the mob to storm the Capitol.

D.C. Metropolitan Police made only 61 "unrelated" arrests on January 6. U.S. Capitol Police arrested just over a dozen.

Many Capitol Police executed their duty bravely and with honor. Officer Eugene Goodman, for example, is being hailed as a hero for luring a mob away from the Senate Chamber. However, another officer did exactly the opposite, offering the rioters directions around the building as he donned a "Make America Great Again" cap.

January 6 may have been one of the most egregious examples, but it was certainly not the first. Again and again and again: In the eyes of far too many law enforcement officers, Black people are considered a threat simply for existing, while violent white people are cossetted, protected, pampered and indulged.

Even the author of the FBI report warning of the mob's murderous intent worried that a show of force might encroach on the rioters' free speech rights. Lt. Gen. Walter E. Piatt, director of the Army Staff, rebuffed requests for National Guard assistance because he didn't like "the visual"—a concern nowhere in evidence during Black Lives Matters protests.

In fact, much of the violence at racial justice protests over the summer was instigated by white supremacists and far-right extremists, yet this vio-

lence was used to rationalize military-level crackdowns on peaceful protests.

"Operation Relentless Pursuit" and "Operation Legend"—cynically named for a 4-year-old killed in a shooting that had no link to racial protests, sent federal officers to override local law enforcement in Black communities.

Far from trying to contain a violent insurrection where the symbols of white supremacy were on full display, police officers are under investigation for actively participating.

On January 6, we witnessed a violent mob motivated by racial resentment, by a conspiracy theory rooted in the effort to invalidate Black votes. The mob was met with empathy and deference from a law-enforcement and military establishment that harbors white supremacists among its own ranks.

The national reckoning over racially-motivated police misconduct and brutality that began this summer cannot move forward until the institutions entrusted with public safety and national security rid themselves of the cancer within. We cannot heed the hollow cries for "unity" from the very collaborators who fanned the flames of insurrection and promoted racist lies. You cannot cure cancer by ignoring it. It must be cut out and burned away.

Reform efforts such as the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act are a necessary step, but only one part of the solution. We must use every means at our disposal to shine a light on racial injustice and fully commit, as a nation, to a zero-tolerance policy with regard to white supremacy in law enforcement and the military.

We are truly at a crossroads in America. The precedent we set here will have a profound impact on future generations. The world is watching.

—January 14, 2021

Statement of Senate President Bill Ferguson on the Passing of Senate President Emeritus Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr.

Today, I join all Marylanders in mourning the passing of a champion of the Senate of Maryland, Senate President Emeritus Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr.

Mike was a family man, and his Senate family joins his family in mourning his passing. For over 50 years, Mike served the people of Maryland in the General Assembly - first as a staffer to the Prince George's County Delegation; then as a member of the House of Delegates, a member of the Senate, Chair of the Judicial Proceedings Committee; and for 32 years, as President of the Maryland Senate. He concluded this extraordinary period of service as Senate President Emeritus.

It is impossible to think of the Maryland Senate and not think of Mike - not just because of his historical longevity - but because each member of the Senate has his or her own Mike story. Whether it's the Senator who he quietly consoled through family

matters, the Senator who he mentored to compromise and pass legislation, or those who experienced the personal care of Mike to truly listen to their concerns. There are thousands of former Senators, Delegates, staffers, and constituents in the 27th District that he has impacted for the better, and who each have their own Mike Miller story. I expect we'll hear many of them in the days and weeks ahead, and I hope the public will listen and get a glimpse of the impact Mike made.

Stepping down from the Senate was one of the most difficult decisions of Mike's life. He wanted to be with his colleagues serving the people of the 27th District, but the physical burden was too much to bear. So, Senator Miller—demonstrating what he had preached so often—stepped down to make sure his district could have the best representation possible. This may have seemed like a small sacrifice to the outside world, but anybody who knew Mike

knew the decision did not come easy. It came only from love for the Senate, the State of Maryland, and its people.

At his core, Mike was who you saw. He was a hard worker, he was ethical, and he brought love of policy areas—especially education and the Chesapeake Bay—to the Senate. As a result of his tenacity and spirit, he was able to shepherd vitally important legislation to the Senate floor, through the House, and to the Governor for signature.

Mike would often talk to whoever would listen about how lucky he was to have such a supportive family, and my heart breaks for his wife Patti, his children Tommy, Amanda, Michelle, Melissa, and Melanie, his 15

grandchildren, and his large extended family - including those who were related, but also to those of us who were lucky to know him as family. We all mourn his passage and celebrate his life together.

On this day of his passing, let it be known, Senator Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr. spent every single day of his life as a public servant working as hard as possible to ensure others had the ability and means to live a life with purpose, just as he did his.

—January 15, 2021

Council Chair Calvin S. Hawkins, II, Expresses Condolences Upon Passing of Senate President Emeritus Thomas V. "Mike" Miller, Jr.

The Prince George's County Council extends its sincere condolences to the family and loved ones of the Honorable Thomas V. "Mike" Miller, Jr., Maryland Senate President Emeritus, upon his passing after a valiant battle with cancer.

To his wife, Patti; son, Tommy; daughters, Amanda, Michelle, Melissa, and Melanie;

sisters and brother; and fifteen grandchildren, the Council is so sorry for your great loss.

Our thoughts and prayers are with you at this difficult time.

We also offer our thoughts and prayers to the entire Maryland Legislature, especially to the members of the Maryland Senate. Senator Miller was the longest-serving Sen-

ate president in the history of the state legislature, and despite his serious health challenges, he forged ahead, serving the citizens of the state of Maryland and in Prince George's County.

Senator Miller is a native son, who leaves an impactful legacy of leadership and service for Maryland and Prince George's County.

The Prince George's Post

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