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Ebony Stocks Named Interim President & CEO of Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation

By PRESS OFFICER
PGCEDC

LARGO, Md. (Jan. 7, 2025)—Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation (PGCEDC) is pleased to announce the appointment of Ebony Stocks, CEcD, Interim President and CEO, effective January 1, 2025. With over 11 years of dedicated service to PGCEDC, Ebony brings a wealth of experience, strategic vision, and a deep commitment to advancing economic growth and prosperity in Prince George's County.

As Executive Vice President for the past six years, Ebony has been instrumental in driving PGCEDC's mission and initiatives. Her leadership has shaped programs like Grow Prince George's, Step Forward Initiative, and the Pathways Series, empowering local businesses and fostering inclusive economic development. She also played a pivotal role in the distribution of ARPA funds to strengthen the local business community during challenging times.

Ebony's expertise extends beyond local initiatives. She has spearheaded international efforts, including a successful trade mission to Nairobi, Kenya, and hosting the EmpowerHer

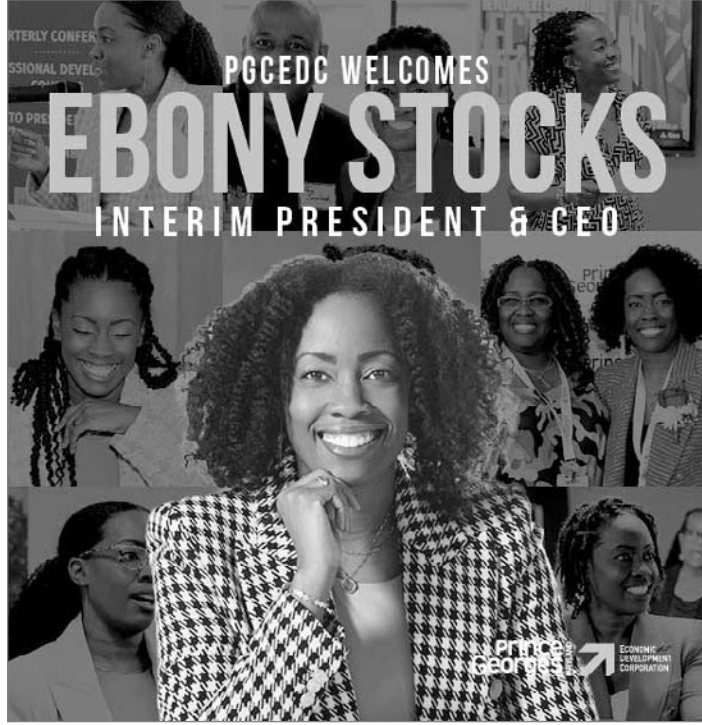


IMAGE CREDIT PGCEDC

Global Business Summit, which celebrated and supported women entrepreneurs. Her experience managing the County's \$50 million Economic Development Incentive Fund and various tax credit programs further underscores her ability to deliver impactful results.

A Certified Economic Developer (CEcD), Ebony holds a Master of Real Estate Development from the University of Maryland and a Bachelor of Science in Economics from Strayer

University. She is also an Economic Development Finance Professional and an active Maryland Economic Development Association (MEDA) member.

"Ebony Stocks' proven leadership and extensive expertise position her perfectly to guide PGCEDC during this pivotal time," said Orlan Johnson, Chairman of the PGCEDC Board of Directors. "Her ability to build strong stakeholder relationships and her commitment

to inclusive growth will ensure the continued success of our mission.

"In response to her appointment, Ebony Stocks shared, "I am deeply honored to step into this role and continue the vital work of promoting economic growth and opportunity in Prince George's County. My vision is to build on our accomplishments, strengthen partnerships, and foster an inclusive business environment where all can thrive. Together, we will ensure that Prince George's County remains a model for sustainable and equitable economic development."

As Interim President & CEO, Ebony is committed to maintaining the momentum of PGCEDC's initiatives while bringing fresh perspectives to future opportunities.

Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation (PGCEDC)'s mission is to cultivate and promote a strong local economy supporting entrepreneurs' and businesses' growth and prosperity. It is dedicated to strengthening communities through business development and job creation. For more information about PGCEDC's services to local companies, visit www.pgcdec.com.

Prince George's County Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.® Chapters

Serve the Community on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

By PRESS OFFICER
Psi Epsilon Omega Chapter

WHO: Seven Prince George's County Chapters of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated® Iota Gamma Omega (IGO) Chapter, Upsilon Tau Omega (UTO) Chapter, Psi Epsilon Omega (PEO) Chapter, Alpha Alpha Sigma Omega (AASO) Chapter, Eta (H) Chapter, Theta Nu (TN) Chapter, and the Proud Pearls of Prince George's Interest Group.

WHAT: Martin Luther King (MLK) Day of Service 2025. Local AKA chapters will host the "We Are One" AKA Service Day under the sorority's initiatives, Strengthen Our Sisterhood and Uplift Our Local Community. This is a unique opportunity for members to join together, volunteer, and make a meaningful impact in our community.

WHEN: Monday, January 20, 2025 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

WHERE: Hillcrest Heights Community Center, 2300 Oxon Run Dr, Oxon Hill, MD 20748

WHY: In honor of the unwavering support and service that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. unselfishly gave to the global community, four graduate chapters, one interest group, and two un-

dergraduate chapters of Alpha Kappa Alpha (AKA) Sorority, Incorporated® are partnering to collect new, and gently used clean coats (for children and adults), new hats, gloves, scarves and socks as well as non-perishable food and toiletry items. Members of AKA, along with their Youth Leadership Institute (YLI) scholars, will assist in distributing these essential items to members of the local community.

This event is free and open to the public. Community members will receive basic necessities while also engaging with local chapters of AKA and learning about the valuable services that they offer to Prince George's County residents. "We are committed to serving our community," said Kristi L. Matthews, IGO President. "Dr. King's legacy of love, equality and uplift remains our focus and our intention. Service is joy!" UTO President Quindella Fletcher added, "Collectively we are striving to make an impact in the Prince George's County community with a unified service initiative while honoring the legacy of Dr. King."

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Department of Parks and Recreation in Prince George's County Named Champions of Tennis Agency of the Year by Racquet Sports Industry Magazine

By PRESS OFFICER
M-NCPPC

RIVERDALE, Md. (Jan. 9, 2025)—The Department of Parks and Recreation in Prince George's County, part of M-NCPPC, has been named the 2024 Champions of Tennis Park & Recreation Agency of the Year by Racquet Sports Industry Magazine, a prestigious honor recognizing exceptional contributions to the promotion, development, and growth of tennis programs at the local level.

This award, presented by Racquet Sports Industry Magazine (RSI), celebrates agencies that provide innovative, inclusive, and sustainable tennis offerings for individuals of all ages and skill levels. The Department stood out for its exceptional commitment to enhancing recreational and competitive tennis opportunities for residents of Prince George's County.

Key Highlights of the Department's Achievements:
• **Inclusive Programs for All Ages and Skill Levels:** The department's tennis programs

cater to a diverse community, from beginners to advanced players, with a focus on accessibility, equity, and inclusion.

• **State-of-the-Art Facilities:** The Department is home to premier tennis facilities, including newly renovated courts and a range of outdoor and indoor tennis options.

• **Youth and Adult Tennis Initiatives:** A variety of youth programs have been instrumental in developing future tennis stars. Adult programs have fostered a vibrant, community-centered tennis culture.

• **Collaborative Community Engagement:** The department has forged partnerships to bring tennis into underserved areas, providing equal opportunities to all residents.

"This recognition is a testament to the hard work, dedication, and passion of our team and the entire community," said Adrienne Harris-Moore, Division Chief of the Aquatics and

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Gov. Moore Forecasts Huge Cuts to the State Budget This Spring

By JACK BOWMAN and
EMMA TUFO
Capital News Service

As the General Assembly starts its new legislative session this week, one big thing is on the mind of Maryland lawmakers: fixing a massive budget deficit that may call for tax hikes and cuts to beloved programs.

Gov. Wes Moore said on opening day of the General Assembly that a "season of hard choices" is beginning, and that balancing the budget is the top priority in the coming weeks and months. He said he would put forth a budget proposal that includes \$2 billion in cuts.

"I inherited a structural deficit that is the largest we have seen in two decades," Moore said at a panel hosted by The Daily Record. "We didn't actually address the structural issues."

One issue that Moore and other Maryland lawmakers are facing with Trump taking office is a potential rollback of federal dollars flowing into the state, a reality that would make eliminating the \$3 billion deficit all the more challenging.

"Frankly, we have been building budgets based on the fact that trillions of dollars were coming from the federal government," Moore told Daily Record journalist Jack Hogan. "That's not



GIUSEPPE LOPICCOLO/CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE.

Gov. Wes Moore speaks with Daily Record reporter Jack Hogan at a panel on Jan. 8, opening day of the 2025 legislative session.

happening anymore."

Speaking at the same event, Senate President Bill Ferguson echoed Moore's commitment to balancing Maryland's finances, adding that addressing the deficit will be the number one priority for the General Assembly.

"The budget is going to drive a lot of the decision making," said Ferguson, who represents Baltimore City. "I think the expectation for the 2025 session is, we've got to figure out the budget first and foremost, and everything else is going to be secondary to that."

The legislative session opened Wednesday with pomp and circumstance, with Moore addressing both chambers and

members publicly praising their parties' leaders. Ferguson and House Speaker Adrienne Jones were reinstated as Senate majority leader and House speaker, to shouts and applause from their supporters.

All the while, the grim specter of the deficit—and the significant measures that will have to be taken to address it—hung over the proceedings.

Moore said that many of the planned cuts will be focused on making government operations more efficient.

"There is a lot that government can do to make sure we are tightening our belt, that we are being more efficient, that we are being swifter and faster,"

Moore said.

The second part of improving efficiency, he added, is to ensure that funds flow towards goals and programs that are "effective and sustainable," leaving those that don't match that description on the cutting room floor.

One area that could potentially see cuts is transportation. Michael Sakata, the president and CEO of the Maryland Transportation Builders and Materials Association, said he believes that such cuts would run counter to the state's goals of building a more robust economy.

"We need to remain competitive by investing in transportation," Sakata told Capital News Service, saying that, in a post-COVID world, people are commuting to work from farther away. They rely on efficient highways and infrastructure to get to their jobs, he said.

Sakata is not the only one with concerns about Maryland's potential cutbacks.

Moore's \$2 billion dollars of planned cuts still leave a third of the deficit untouched, without a clear plan as to how it will be addressed. Maryland Republicans are concerned that Democrats may implement tax hikes to address the remaining \$1 billion.

Speaking at a news conference for Republican leadership, Senate Minority Leader Stephen Hershey Jr. said that Republi-

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TOWNS *and* NEIGHBORS

In & Around Morningside-Skyline

Saying hello and goodbye to our 39th President

Jimmy Carter was inaugurated on January 20, 1977, and—as usual back then—I was there. I was standing in line on Pennsylvania Avenue, waiting for President and Mrs. Carter to pass by in the Inaugural Parade.

Their car approached. It stopped in front of us. The Carters climbed out and began to walk in the Parade. We all cheered. I reached into my pocket for a snack—and pulled out nuts. The man behind me leaned over and asked for the shells.

Only then it dawned on me—I was shelling peanuts as I watched a peanut farmer from Georgia—now President of the United States—parading past me, down Pennsylvania Avenue.

I was reminded of that event again as I watched, on TV, his hearse make its way to Andrews Air Force Base, to fly over my house, on its way back to Plains, Georgia.

It’s long-awaited Snow Time in Morningside

Every winter I hope for snow. I was born and grew up in Michigan—and we had SNOW. Lots of it. Every winter. I miss it.

So, when I woke Monday, January 6, and looked outside—there was snow. It was so beautiful. I didn’t want anything to disturb it. I wanted it to last forever.

Then, my Washington Post didn’t arrive.

For three days.

In my antiquated state (95), I couldn’t leave the house—not even to check the mailbox. And my sack of birdseed was emptying fast.

The snow was beginning to lose its enchantment. I’m now ready for melting.

But I suspect some of you have a snow story to tell. Email it to me at muddmm@gmail.com.

The shovelers

Years ago, when it snowed, I’d have half a dozen boys out front looking to make some money shoveling my walk. But not now. Not a single boy showed up.

But a girl did.

She did such a good job on the sidewalk that, after I paid her, I suggested she come back the next day as the sidewalk would need it again. The next day, she returned, with her sister. They did the sidewalk again, and the driveway.

They are Kamiya Wilcox, a sophomore at Wise, and Kyra Wilcox who attends Drew-Freeman Middle School in Suitland. The Wilcox family lives on Reamy Drive in Morningside.

I can recommend them if you need shovelers for the next snowfall.

The price of snow

Conor McHale, who works at Eastover Auto Parts, thought this says it all about what snow time in Washington is like. He

by Mary McHale 301-735-3451

wrote,

“I thought you would be amused by these stats from Eastover: In the past week, we have sold: 2650 pounds of road salt, 55 wiper blades, 40 gallons of windshield washer fluid and 30 cans of windshield de-icer spray.”

Snow can be expensive!

Town of Morningside

I checked with Karen, and she reports that Morningside did a great job through the snow. They had three trucks going, keeping the roads open.

The new McDonald’s, which is in Morningside at Allentown & Suitland Roads, is about to open its doors. Will you be the first in line for a Big Mac?

Morningside will be closed Monday, January 20, for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. It will re-open Tuesday, January 21 for the monthly Town Meeting at 7 p.m.

For information about All Things Morningside, call 301-736-2300.

Milestones

Happy Birthday to Dennis Seaman, Linda Cullinan, Jan. 19; June Nicholson, Gina Glagola Hull and my sister Stella Thelen, Jan. 20; my grandson Jason Shearer, Jan 22; Mark Foland, Jan. 23; Claire Kennedy and my father, Dr. Richard Dyer Mudd, Jan. 24; Kenneth Brown and Michelle Willis, Jan. 25.

by Audrey Johnson 301-922-5384

Brandywine-Aquasco

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY

Martin Luther King Jr. Day (officially Birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr., and often referred to in shorthand as MLK Day) is a federal holiday in the United States observed on the third Monday of January each year. King was chief spokesperson for nonviolent activism in the Civil Rights Movement, which protected racial discrimination in federal and state law and civil society. The movement led to several groundbreaking legislative reforms in the United States.

Born in 1929, Martin Luther King Jr.’s actual birthday is January 15 (which in 1929 fell on a Tuesday). The earliest Monday for this holiday is January 15 and the latest is January 21. The Monday observance is similar for those federal holidays which fall under the Uniform Monday Holiday Act.

The campaign for a federal holiday in King’s honor began soon after his assassination in 1968. President Ronald Reagan signed this holiday into law in 1983, and it was first observed three years later on January 20, 1986. At first, some states resisting observing the holiday as such, giving it alternative names or combining it with other holidays. Official observance in each state’s law as well as federal law occurred in 2000.

Proposals: The idea of Martin Luther King Jr. Day as a holiday was promoted by labor unions in contract negotiations. After King’s death, Representative John Conyers, a Democrat from Michigan, and Senator Edward Brooks, a Republican from Massachusetts, introduced a bill in Congress to make King’s birthday a national holiday. The bill first came to a vote in the U.S. House of Representatives in 1979. It fell five votes short of the number needed for passage. Two of the main arguments mentioned by opponents were that a paid holiday for federal employees would be too expensive, and that a holiday to honor a private citizen would be contrary to longstanding tradition (King had never held public office). Only two other figures have national holidays in the U.S. honoring them: George Washington and Christopher Columbus. Information from Wikipedia.

2025 MLK HOLIDAY DC ANNUAL PEACE WALK & PARADE

The Annual MLK Holiday DC Peace Walk & Parade will be IN-PERSON on Saturday, January 18, 2025, at the Entertainment & Sports Arena, 1100 Oak Drive, Southeast Washington, DC 20032. Theme: Commit To the Noble Struggle for Equal Rights Doors open at 10:30 a.m. IMPORTANT: The MLK Parade will take place indoors at Entertainment & Sports Arena and tickets are required to enter. Tickets can be bought online. Organized by www.mlkholidaydc.org.

TEEN VOCAL SHOWCASE AUDITION 2025

Teen Vocal Showcase Audition 2025 presented by M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation will be held on January 18, 2025, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Registration is free. Pre-teens ages 10–12 and teens 13–18, must be 18 yr. by March 30, 2025. This

event is free. Must attend and show proof of Prince George’s Public Schools via school ID, school max, etc. Audition Video Fee is \$10 (email address required) Audition Attire is DRESS TO IMPRESS taken on day of audition. Location is Public Playhouse, 5445 Landover Road, Cheverly, Maryland 20784.

Calling all Youth Teen Vocalists. Prince George’s County participants will have a chance to perform and complete in a showcase at historic Publick House for prizes. First place prize \$1,000, second place prize \$500.00. Audition Music: Acapella, song selection-no lyrics, music on thumb drive for audition. Must come prepared to sing song day of audition. Audition time allotted is five minutes, time slots from 10:05 a.m.–3 p.m. Tickets www.pgparks.com/event_list/teen-vocal showcase.

ANNUAL PRE-BIG FOOTBALL DAY SPAGHETTI DINNER

St. Philip’s Church Baden Parish will have their Annual Pre-Big Football Day Spaghetti Dinner Sunday, February 2, 2025, at 11 a.m. Donation \$8.00, children 10 and under \$4.00. Pre-orders and pre-paid only. Dinners include Homemade spaghetti (Beef or Turkey), salad, garlic bread, homemade desert. Pre-orders accepted until January 26, 2025. Cash App available-\$stphilip-schurcbaden. Address: 13801 Baden Westwood Road, Brandywine, Maryland 20613. Telephone is 301-888-1536. Contacts are Michele Chase 240-882-3369, Doretha Savoy 301-233-3136, Vivian Rich 804-301-9530.

VALENTINE’S DAY BRUNCH

Brunch is in the air at (SAARC) Southern Area Aquatics & Recreation Complex, 13601 Missouri Avenue, Brandywine, Maryland 20613. Telephone 301-782-1442/ TTY: 301-699-2544. Join us for a morning of food and fun at our Valentine’s Day Brunch Friday, February 14, from 9:30 a.m.–11 a.m. FEE: \$12 PARKS DIRECT: SPPD-SPEC-GA-20250214.

FALL FACTOR FITNESS WITH GALA

Come and partake in exercise that builds leg strength and improves body mechanics and balance, which is all important to reducing falls on Tuesday, February 18, 2025, from 11–11:45 a.m. Free in Program Room B at (SAARC) Southern Area Aquatics & Recreation Complex, 13601 Missouri Avenue, Brandywine, Maryland, 20613. Telephone 301-782-1442/ TTY: 301-699-2544.

CELEBRATING US FASHION SHOW

Just us for a family fun event while we showcase various styles, African Attire, Urban Style, Smart Casual, semi formal-formal. Saturday, February 22, 2025, from 2 p.m.–4 p.m. Admission: Adults \$15, children 5–17: \$5 (under 5 Free). Address is St. Philip’s Episcopal Church, 13801 Baden Westwood Road, Brandywine, Maryland 20613. Proceeds: Benefits St. Philip’s. Ticket Contacts: Mrs. Butler 301-520-3145, Mrs. Hall 703-201-3863, Mrs. Somerville 240-682-3657.

Two Poetry Tributes to Honor Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

By J. JOY “SISTAH JOY” MATTHEWS ALFORD
Prince George’s County Poet Laureate Emerita (2018–2023)

Saturday, January 18, 2025 (1–3 p.m.)— “A Drum Major for Justice”—A free in-person poetry tribute honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. at National Harbor.

This free poetry tribute to Dr. King is presented by Inaugural Prince George’s County Poet Laureate, Sistah Joy, in partnership with the Prince George’s Arts and Humanities Council (PGAHC) and The Coalition for the Performing Arts, Inc. (CAAPA) at Art’s-tination, the PGAHC gallery and performance venue at National Harbor. Arts-tination address: 162 Waterfront Street, Oxon Hill, MD 20745.

“A Drum Major for Justice” will include performances by 5 Guest Poets: Brenda Bunting, Hiram Lawew, Janique Muckelvene, Sylvia “Ladi Di” Beverly, Sekeithia Johnson; and Moderator, Sistah Joy. Soprano, Karen Wiggs-Wilbanks and Djembe drummer, Doc Powell will also perform at the family-friendly event, which is open to all ages, particularly youth and teens. Light refreshments will be served. This hybrid event, which includes Featured Poets, also includes a limited Open Mic.

Facebook announcement of “A Drum Major for Justice” and information about the poets and artists can be viewed at <https://www.facebook.com/events/1730838804431536>

Monday, January 20, 2025 (1–3 p.m.)— “Collective Voices” Free Virtual Poetry Tribute Honoring The Life and Legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.”

January 20, 2025, is the date of the official national celebration of the 96th birthday of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Collective Voices, a socially conscious poetry group, invites poets to share poems honoring the life and legacy of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr at this free virtual poetry tribute, a “hybrid” (featured poet, and Open Mic) event.

Dr. King lived a life of service, fighting for and ultimately giving his life for social justice. Poems should honor Dr. King’s legacy. All ages, especially youth and teens, are welcome to participate in this free virtual family-friendly tribute honoring the life and legacy of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Facebook announcement and Zoom link for Collective Voices’ free virtual poetry tribute honoring Dr. King is available at <https://www.facebook.com/events/2320329005004031>.

St. Philip’s Little Chapel Food Pantry Distribution

The 3rd Sunday of the month distribution of the St. Philip’s Little Chapel Food Pantry will be **Sunday, January 19, 2025**, from 9–noon, while supplies last. We will have fresh produce as well as non-perishables and a limited supply of frozen items. We are located at the corner of 6th and Prince George Streets, Laurel, MD, behind the church sanctuary on Main Street, next to the playground. Pantry clients are encouraged to bring their own reusable shopping bags for the client choice items, while supplies last.

—St. Philip’s Episcopal Church

Marietta House Museum Presents:

A Screening of “The Bell Affair”

By STACEY HAWKINS
Marietta House Museum

Join us on **Friday, January 24**, 7–9 p.m. for a screening of “The Bell Affair” written by William G. Thomas, III and Kwakiutl Lynn Dreher. The Bell Affair: A Film about the Largest Attempted Escape” features Daniel and Mary Bell who sued for their freedom in the District of Columbia and then led one of the largest escape attempts in American history. About to be separated, the Bells were forced to make a terrifying choice.

This program will be hybrid. Following the screening, Dr. Doster will lead a Q & A session. Ages 8 & up. \$5/ person. Ages 12 & under Free. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Walk-ins are welcome. Registration is required for online participants to receive the TEAMS link. Please register at this direct link: <https://tinyurl.com/4e2fn72u>

Thank you to the Prince George’s County Historical Society for their support of this program. For more information, please call 301-464-5291 or email mariettahouse@pgparks.com

Marietta House Museum is located at 5626 Bell Station Road, Glenn Dale, MD. 20769 and is a property of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission.

Public School Athletic Field Reservations Now Available Through M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation, Prince George’s County

By PRESS OFFICER
M-NCPPC

RIVERDALE, Md. (Jan. 7, 2025)—The M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation in Prince George’s County is happy to announce the migration of athletic field reservations from Prince George’s County Public Schools to pgparks.com/fields. The one-stop shop offers a convenient, 24/7 online booking system for individuals, sports teams, and organizations to secure time on the county’s top-quality artificial

turf fields. To streamline the process, the Department entered into a joint agreement with the Public Schools for the construction and operation of athletic field permitting.

The process features an intuitive interface that allows users to easily check field availability, make reservations, and manage bookings in a few simple steps. Whether you are booking an athletic field for a youth league or organizing a community event, the platform is designed to meet the needs of all types of users.

Key Features of the Reservation System:

- Real-Time Availability: View open time slots and request fields
- Easy Online Process: Make reservation requests from any device, anytime
- Flexible Payment Options: Secure online payment for all reservations
- User Accounts: Track your bookings, receive reminders, and manage payments
- Field Information: Access details on field capacity, bathroom type, and sport

“We are glad to offer this new, accessible way for people to reserve public school athletic fields,” said Bill Tyler, Director of the Department of Recreation in Prince George’s County. “Our goal is to make the booking process as seamless and efficient as possible, and we believe this migration will greatly enhance the experience for sports teams, event organizers, and community members.”

Reservations can be made now at pgparks.com/fields.

COMMUNITY

Curlee Raven Holton Finding a Voice Through Printmaking

By KATE TAYLOR DAVIS
Pyramid Atlantic Art Center

HYATTSVILLE, Md. (Jan. 7, 2025)—“Finding a Voice Through Printmaking” is a retrospective of print work by internationally renowned artist Curlee Raven Holton. The exhibition shares over 50 works that represent a variety of print techniques and subjects.

“Finding a Voice Through Printmaking” opens **Friday, January 24**. On Saturday January 25, Pyramid will host an artist talk from 3–4 p.m. and a reception from 4–6 p.m. (free, RSVP requested). The exhibition runs through March 2, 2025 in Pyramid’s Helen C. Frederick Gallery. Gallery hours are Wed & Thu, 10–8 p.m. and Fri–Sun, 10–6 p.m. Pyramid is located at 4318 Gallatin Street, Hyattsville, Maryland 20781. For more information and an RSVP link, visit

pyramidatlantic.org or call 301-608-9101.

Holton’s work is powerful, tapping into the quiet, subliminal idea of Art as a mighty oracle and artists as sages. Many of Holton’s works ponder flashing visions wrapped up in a single image. Brimming with irony, sadness, and humor, Holton’s titles play narrator to mythological-like action. His compositions are broad and searching; images to lean on, and to lean into. Each grants a great view of all that lies beyond here and often offers answers that bring on more questions. The works assembled encompass nearly 40 years of Holton’s artistic career.

Of the exhibition Holton remarks: “Robert Blackburn the renowned master printmaker would often say ‘that each of us have a log to bring to the woodpile.’ It was his way of acknowledging the validity of each artist’s perspective and contribu-

tion to the whole. The Printmaking medium and its diverse forms has allowed me a constant potential for change and alteration. The art of printmaking and its dynamic variations provide a creative medium allowing for the intersections of studio based art practices and new technologies. This intersection has the capacity to generate visual awareness in new and distinct ways. This matrix has offered me as an artist the freedom to produce creative mutations and alterations that generate singular or multiple images that speak most effectively to my intellectual, creative and aesthetic concerns.”

An artist-scholar, Holton is an internationally renowned printmaker and painter whose work has been exhibited professionally for over 30 years in more than 60 one-person shows and over 100 group shows in such prestigious national and international venues as the 7th Interna-

tional Biennale in Cairo, Egypt; Taller de Artes Plásticas Rufino Tamayo in Oaxaca, Mexico; the Cleveland Museum of Art, and the Whitney Museum of American Art. His work is in the permanent collection of many museums including the Cleveland Museum of Art, Allentown Art Museum, Philadelphia Art Museum, National Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Art, The Library of Congress, and Yale University Art Gallery. Holton established the Experimental Printmaking Institute at Lafayette College in 1996 after having studied with Robert Blackburn of the Printmaking Workshop in New York City. In 2006 he founded Raven Fine Art Editions. In 2010 he became the director of the David C. Driskell Center at the University of Maryland until retiring in 2023.

Founded in 1981, Pyramid At-

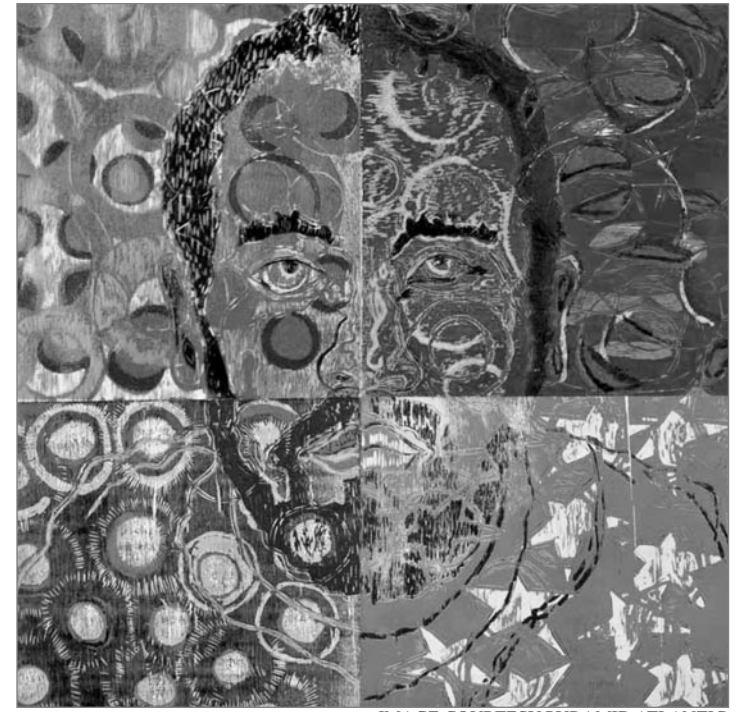


IMAGE COURTESY PYRAMID ATLANTIC

Cycles of Life, 2000. Relief wood cut, 40 x 40 in.

lantic is a nonprofit contemporary art center. Our mission is to sustain and elevate a welcoming arts hub in Hyattsville, MD that champions contemporary printmaking, papermaking, and book arts. We equip, educate, and exhibit while prioritizing artistic integrity, cre-

ative growth, and inclusivity. Our vision is to anchor an arts community that recognizes and uplifts the importance of artists, the intrinsic values of working with your hands, and the economy of artist-made work.

pyramidatlanticartcenter.org

M-NCPPC Prince George’s County Planning Department Announces Applications Now Open for Spring 2025 Neighborhood Planning Academy

By PRESS OFFICER
Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

LARGO, Md. (Jan. 7, 2025)—The Prince George’s County Planning Department of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) announces that applications for the spring 2025 cohort of the Neighborhood Planning Academy are now open. The program offers a unique opportunity for community-minded residents to learn about urban planning and actively shape the future of Prince George’s County. The curriculum covers essential topics in urban planning, community engagement, and sustainable development. The program also aims to empower residents to actively engage in planning and decision-making processes in their communities.

The free, seven-week course offered by the M-NCPPC Prince George’s County Planning Department supports residents, municipalities, non-profit organizations, and the business community in understanding how the development process works, how to better engage, and how to advocate for community goals and visions.

The spring 2025 session runs on Wednesdays

from March 19–April 30, 2025, from 6:30–8:30 p.m. The first six sessions will be conducted virtually via Microsoft Teams. The final session includes an in-person graduation with capstone project presentations that highlight newly acquired skills and planning knowledge. **The application deadline is January 31, 2025.** Applicants will be selected from each councilmanic district for geographic diversity.

Since the launch of the program in the fall of 2023, approximately 130 community-minded Prince George’s County residents and stakeholders have been selected to participate in the Neighborhood Planning Academy. Spaces are limited! To apply and learn more about the NPA program visit <https://academy.pgplanning.com/>. For any questions, please email PGCNPA@ppd.mncppc.org.

The Prince George’s County Planning Department of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) is responsible for preserving, protecting, and managing the county’s resources through high-quality planning services and growth management guidance. Our mission is to promote economic vitality, environmental sustainability, design excellence, and quality develop-

IMAGE CREDIT M-NCPPC

ment that promotes healthy lifestyles in Prince George’s County. Visit our website, www.pgplanning.org, to learn how you can become engaged in shaping the future of your community. Assistance: The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission encourages the participation of persons

with disabilities in all its programs and services. To receive a disability accommodation call the Public Affairs Office at 301-952-3038, email PublicAffairs@ppd.mncppc.org, or complete the online form.

The Banneker-Douglass-Tubman Museum Presents “Sacred Spaces” Featuring Jabari Jefferson: A Groundbreaking Exhibition Honoring African American Heritage and Sustainability Opens February 2025

By PRESS OFFICER
Banneker-Douglass-Tubman Museum

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (Jan. 6, 2025)—The Banneker-Douglass-Tubman Museum proudly announces “Sacred Spaces,” Jabari Jefferson’s debut museum exhibition, opening on February 8, 2025. This exhibition will feature never-before-seen works on canvas, striking sculptures, and a large-scale community installation created in collaboration with local Annapolis students and residents. Through his innovative approach to oil paint, mixed media, and augmented reality, Jefferson masterfully transforms salvaged materials, including textiles, books, soil, and clothing, into provocative artworks that challenge our notions of value and disposability.

This new body of work by Jefferson is a powerful meditation on history, memory, and the continuing power of Black cultural spaces. By drawing parallels between the throwaway culture of fast fashion and the historical marginalization of Black scholarship, Jefferson exposes systematic patterns of devaluation. His practice serves a dual purpose: breathing new life into discarded materials while asserting the fundamental importance of Black intellectual and spiritual traditions.

“As people lose their land, homes, and livelihoods, and as elders—the custodians of memory, stories, and wisdom—pass on, gaps emerge in our collective record,” says Martina Dodd, Curator of Collections and Exhibitions at the Banneker-Douglass-Tubman Museum. “In this precarious moment, ‘Sacred Spaces’ emphasizes the urgency of recording, preserving, and engaging with the spaces, objects, and histories that embody sacredness. By honoring places like the former Mt. Moriah AME Church (now the Banneker-Douglass-

Tubman Museum) and the stories they hold, the exhibition calls for collective action to protect and sustain the cultural and historical legacies of Black communities for future generations.”

“Sacred Spaces” celebrates African American heritage while advocating for sustainability in art. This exhibition bridges history and innovation, offering Maryland and the broader DMV area a transformative year-long experience. Chanel C. Johnson, Executive Director of the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture that operates the museum shares, “My hope is that our visitors are inspired to learn more about their own family history and Black history in Maryland in its shaping of America.”

“Sacred Spaces” Exhibition Highlights:

- **Interactive Elements:** Throughout the exhibition, visitors can engage with Jefferson’s sustainable practices through an Augmented Reality (AR) installation created in collaboration with Baltimore artist Scott Tucker.
- **Community Partnerships:** Community art-making workshops and collaborations with the youth of the Housing Authority of the City of Annapolis & BDTM Robinwood Arts Leadership Program will provide unique educational opportunities and strengthen ties to the Maryland community.
- **Public Programming:** Stay tuned for exhibition-related public programming throughout the year that dives into exhibition themes and annual celebrations through engaging and interactive experiences.

Jabari Jefferson comments regarding his first museum exhibition, “I developed this relationship with the museum starting in 2020, which exposed

me to the behind the scenes of Black history and its juxtaposition with racial tension and hyper gentrification. It was essential to collect lived-with material in abundance from Maryland communities in order to create one-of-a-kind artworks that tell stories of overlooked narratives. I am honored to celebrate legacies and be a part of Maryland’s art history!”

Premiere Date:

- Sacred Spaces Opening Reception & Black History Month Celebration: **February 8, 2025**, 12–4 p.m.

Experience ‘Sacred Spaces’ and witness Jabari Jefferson’s masterful blend of artistry, history, and sustainability. This exhibition promises to be a cornerstone cultural event for 2025, celebrating the enduring legacy of Maryland’s African American communities and redefining what art can achieve.

About Jabari Jefferson:

Jabari Jefferson (b. 1994) is a Washington, D.C., DMV-based mixed media oil painter whose vibrant works blend painting, sculpture, and found materials such as fabric, paper, books, ink, and paint. His creative process revolves around recycling, repurposing, and recontextualizing discarded items, transforming them into contemporary art. Jefferson collects materials like clothing, children’s books, and other found objects sourced throughout his travels, incorporating them into richly layered compositions of painted figures and mixed media environments. He actively seeks out previously owned items from his surrounding communities, repurposing them into meaningful components that enrich his dynamic palette of materials.

Guided by the belief in the transfer of energy from a material’s previous owners, Jefferson’s work draws inspiration from ritualistic practices. His subject matter explores themes of self-discovery, the African Diaspora, Afro-past and futures, spirituality, mythology, and racial politics. Centering Black subjects, Jefferson’s pieces depict them in solitude as well as within community, surrounded by expressive, abstract, and figurative elements.

With a distinctive maximalist approach, Jefferson seamlessly integrates shapes, landscapes, and recognizable objects, leaving subtle clues to his influences within his dynamic compositions.

The Banneker-Douglass-Tubman Museum (BDTM) (84 Franklin St, Annapolis, MD 21401) is the state of Maryland’s official museum of African American heritage and culture, operated by the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture. Named for three incredible Marylanders who changed the course of history—Benjamin Banneker, Frederick Douglass, and Harriet Tubman—BDTM serves to document, interpret, and promote African American history and culture through thought-provoking exhibitions, engaging public programs, and accessible artifacts and archives for public research, in order to improve the understanding and appreciation of America’s rich cultural diversity for all. Housed in the former Mt. Moriah AME Church, the museum structure was built in 1874 by free and newly emancipated African Americans and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The museum is open to the public Tuesday–Saturday from 10 a.m.–4 p.m. Admission is free. Visit <http://bdmuseum.maryland.gov>. Follow us on social media: Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube.

COMMENTARY

Marc Morial

President and CEO, National Urban League



To Be Equal:

Trump Is Poised to Launch an Unprecedented Attack on Racial Justice. The National Urban League Is Ready to Fight Back

“Every nation’s history includes unsettling truths that many would prefer to forget or deny. But true patriotism demands confronting the truths of our history—no matter how embarrassing or dishonorable—and undertaking the difficult work of learning from the lessons of our past in order to move forward. For the United States, that work requires reckoning with our shameful legacy of racial subjugation of Black people in this country—from slavery and Jim Crow to mass incarceration and police violence—as well as our long history of express discrimination against other people of color, women, and LGBTQ persons.

Without uninhibited discussion and examination of that legacy, we are ill-equipped as a nation to address its ongoing manifestations in present-day forms of discrimination and bias.”

—National Urban League v. Trump

At the current rate of progress, it will take between 100 and 300 years for Black Americans to achieve parity with white Americans.

First annually and now biannually, the National Urban League publishes the Equality Index, a calculation of the social and economic status of African Americans relative to whites. Rooted in the Three-

Fifths Compromise of 1787, which counted enslaved African Americans as “three-fifths” of a person, the Index would be 100% under full equality. Currently 75.7%, the Index has moved less than 3% in 20 years, indicating a 180 year wait to achieve parity.

That squares with the findings of a McKinsey study showing it will take between 110 and 320 years at for “Black Americans to reach a level of economic prosperity and quality of life that’s on par with that of their White neighbors.”

President-elect Donald Trump and his allies are determined to make sure that it takes even longer.

At the end of his first term, Trump issued an executive order banning policies that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion for federal agencies, contractors, and grant recipients. The National Urban League immediately filed a lawsuit; Trump lost reelection and President Biden overturned it immediately upon taking office.

This time around, Trump isn’t waiting to start stamping out racial justice initiatives. He’s vowed to rescind President Biden’s Executive Order On Advancing Racial Equity, issued on his first day in office.

Seizing on the widely-accepted myth that increasing diversity is synonymous with “anti-white discrimination,” the Trump administration plans to use civil rights laws to reinforce white privilege in every facet of society, public and private. Pete Hegseth, Trump’s nominee for Defense Secretary has promoted the racist fallacy that the long-overdue elevation of Black officers to senior leadership positions compromises military readiness.

In fact, Trump’s proposed cabinet includes only one Black member, a former NFL player whose only qualification to head the Department of Housing and Urban Development is his history of opposing affordable housing, protection for poor tenants, and aid for the homeless.

Trump will eliminate federal funding for any school that promotes racial equity or confronts the reality of racism in the nation’s history. He has even vowed to direct the Department of Justice to pursue federal “civil rights cases” against them.

He plans to resurrect the failed 1776 Commission, which historians reviled as a plot to “elevate ignorance about the past to a civic virtue.

Hoping to avoid attacks from the incoming administration and its most fanatical defenders, many private corporations are retreating from their commitment to DEI. The board of Costco, in contrast, recently rejected an anti-DEI shareholder proposal.

While post-election surveys show that Trump’s election was largely a misguided reaction to the cost of groceries, Trump and his allies have taken it as an endorsement of their every vicious and bigoted policies. Americans overwhelmingly support corporate diversity policies. President Biden’s administration—like most diverse institutions, was more innovative, adaptable, resilient, and able to solve problems more quickly because of its diversity.

If the incoming administration doesn’t realize the benefits of DEI early on, the National Urban League and our civil rights allies are on hand to hold it to account.

—January 10, 2025

NAMI Maryland to Host Award-Winning Broadway Pianist in One-Night Musical Event Exploring Life With a Mental Illness

By PRESS OFFICER (NAMI) Maryland

COLUMBIA, Md. (Jan. 13, 2025)—The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Maryland is hosting Broadway pianist Zak Sandler in his groundbreaking one-man show Inside My Head: The Musical, on Wednesday, January 22, 2025, at the University of Maryland College Park’s Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center. The autobiographical performance explores one person’s journey with bipolar. “This event will be unlike any other,” said Kate Farinholt, NAMI Maryland Executive Director. “Throughout the year, NAMI Maryland delivers a variety of informative and enlightening events that help people across this state understand what it means to live with a mental illness. Mr. Sandler’s musical performance showcasing his personal journey will put a

unique spotlight on the challenges and successes he has faced living with bipolar disorder,” she said.

Inside My Head begins with Sandler’s first manic and depressive episodes during his junior year at Yale University. On stage, pre-recorded voices simulating his mania and depression will sing to him like they’re inside his head. Sandler’s original and deeply personal production will take the audience on a journey that examines the deepest, most vulnerable parts of a person and reveals how individuals can move from shame and denial to self-love and acceptance. General admission tickets for the live performance are \$20.00. VIP tickets, which include VIP seating at the event and access to a pre-event networking reception, are \$100.00.

<https://namimd.org/inside-my-head-the-musical/>

Serve from A1

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, “Life’s most persistent and urgent question is: ‘What are you doing for others?’” In response to his call to do more to uplift local communities, these AKA chapters will collectively provide needed resources in Prince George’s County.

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Incorporated®, an international service organization, was founded on the campus of Howard University in Washington, D.C. in 1908 and has more than 360,000 initiated members in graduate and undergraduate chapters located in 12 nations and territories. Since its founding, the sorority has implemented its service programs to uplift our local communities in Prince George’s County by providing needed resources.

Cuts from A1

cans will be against any such measures.

“The Republican caucus stands firm that we are not going to be supporting any type of tax or fee increases at all,” said Hershey, who represents Kent, Queen Anne’s, Cecil and Caroline Counties. “We are going to have to balance this budget strictly on finding additional cuts.”

One policy item that Republicans want to roll back is the 2022 Climate Solutions Now Act, which was aimed at reducing statewide greenhouse gas emissions.

“It’s unworkable,” said Del. Jesse Pippy, a Republican who represents Frederick County. “We’re trying to solve a \$3 billion budget deficit that’s going to balloon to \$6.2 billion by 2030 and at the same time, we’re cutting our nose off to spite our face by passing unworkable climate solution legislation that is going to cost billions of dollars to implement.”

Champions from A1

Athletic Facilities Division. “We are honored to be recognized by RSI, and remain committed to expanding our tennis programs to ensure that everyone in our community can experience the joy of the sport.”

For more information about the Department and its tennis programs, visit pgparks.com/activities-events/sports.

With over 29,000 acres of parkland, trails, athletic fields, playgrounds, and more, the M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation in Prince George’s County provides an award-winning park system through progressive, quality, innovative leadership and a commitment to its community and environment. The Department delivers first-class recreational activities and programs for people of all ages and ability levels. It strives to improve the quality of life for Prince George’s County residents and the communities in which they live, work, and raise families. The Department’s Formula 2040 Plan establishes a framework that will ensure the Department can meet future parks and recreation programmatic and facility needs, fulfilling its mission to determine the combination of land, facilities, and programs that will provide appropriate experiences for Prince Georgians in the future. To learn more, visit www.pgparks.com.

Families Salute Maryland Women of the “Six Triple Eight”

By ROBERT STEWART Capital News Service

CATONSVILLE, Md.—Nineteen women from Maryland served during World War II in the 6888th Battalion, the predominantly Black postal unit

now the subject of the blockbuster film “The Six Triple Eight.”

After decades of hearing their stories only as family lore, if they heard them at all, the families of these Marylanders are watching those stories come

alive—and enjoying the long-awaited recognition for their service.

“I have wanted my mother and my aunt to be honored and to be appreciated for a long time,” said Karen Taylor, “and now because of the Tyler Perry

movie the world knows what they accomplished.”

Although not main characters in Perry’s movie, Taylor’s mother and aunt were both members of the postal unit featured in the film.

The Six Triple Eight, officially the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion, deployed to Europe for roughly a year during World War II. Some 855 women came from across the U.S. to process mail in the European theater of war.

They were a twice-segregated unit, as women served separately from men at the time, and women of color served separately from white women.

The film release prior to Christmas has reanimated discussion of the unit, bringing their accomplishments into public consciousness. For descendants and family members, it’s a culmination of a multi-year effort to bring awareness to their family’s military service.

Taylor, a 78-year-old retired dental hygienist, points to her living room wall lined with pictures of family members in her Catonsville apartment. Several items, including pictures, a U.S. flag, a certificate and a movie

poster indicate a connection to the 6888th.

“These women were fighting for us,” Taylor said, “Even if someone tells you you can’t do something, you don’t let it go at that. You keep on going and prove that you can.”

Taylor says that’s how her mother raised her.

Taylor’s mother, Vivian Elzie Taylor, was one of 19 women

who enlisted in Maryland and deployed with the 6888th. After serving in Europe and meeting and marrying her husband, Elyseo J. Taylor, in Paris, she settled in Salisbury, Maryland.

She and her husband, a tanker in the first Black tank battalion, eventually divorced. Elzie Taylor

See SALUTE Page A5



Karen Taylor shows a portrait of her mother, Vivian Elzie Taylor, who served with the 6888th Battalion during World War II. She stands in front of a wall of family photos.

The Prince George’s Post

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BUSINESS AND FINANCE

Social Security Matters

Ask Rusty:

About Investing Social Security Money in the Stock Market

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

Dear Rusty: For most folks collecting Social Security, you get back what you put in within 3–5 years, so for those that scream—“SS is not an entitlement, it is my money”—that is not entirely accurate beyond 3–5 years. For me personally 4.4 years is the number. But had I been able to invest that money over the 43 years I worked at a modest 6% interest, I expect the amount would have been a lot more. And of course, the stock market averaged 9.5% over that time. Perhaps Social Security should invest in the stock market instead of U.S. Government treasury bonds. **Signed: Interested Observer**

Dear Observer: You bring up a point we frequently hear—that if, instead of paying into Social Security, I had invested the same money in the stock market I would have gotten more. That, of course, might be the case if you had the unwavering discipline to religiously invest the equivalent amount in the market, avoiding the temptation to use that investment for any other reason. And life is full of good reasons—financial emergencies, for example, or the simple temptation to buy something desperately needed, or just occasionally skipping a month to pay bills. Also, the stock market is notoriously volatile, which can create substantial angst for investors who are faint of heart. The fact is that Social Security provides guaranteed financial growth from the age of eligibility (normally 62), up to age 70 when the maximum benefit is attained. Benefits claimed at one’s full retirement age are about 24%–32% more than if taken at age 62 (depending on full retirement age), and benefits taken at age 70 are about 75% more than benefits taken at age 62. And that is guaranteed growth for those with the patience to wait longer to claim.

You may recall that the idea of investing Social Security reserves in the stock market has been floated a few times in previous years, but accompanying risks made Congress essentially unwilling to even entertain the idea. It has always been a political “hot potato” and those who suggest it are usually castigated for wanting to “give SS money to Wall Street,” so I expect it is unlikely to happen. Guess we’ll need to be satisfied with the interest on those Special Issue Government Bonds (which, by the way, returned about \$67 billion to the Social Security Trust Fund in 2023). FYI, average interest rate for new deposits to the Trust Fund in 2023 was 4.1%, and the overall effective rate of return on all Trust Fund assets was 2.4%.

Social Security has some issues and will face some financial difficulty in less than a decade unless Congress enacts program reform soon. But it is a program which most seniors rely on for a major part of their retirement income and one which keeps over 22 million Americans out of poverty. Here at the AMAC Foundation, we strongly advocate for sensible Social Security reform and we’re very optimistic about the program’s future. But Congress needs to act soon to avoid a cut to everyone’s Social Security amount in about 2033.

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.

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.

VSJ Strategies Names Its Executive Vice President

By PRESS OFFICER
VSJ Strategies

NATIONAL HARBOR, Md. (Dec. 31, 2024)—VSJ Strategies, an emerging powerhouse in government relations and business consulting, proudly announces the appointment of Arnelda Broadaway as Executive Vice President. Broadaway will play a pivotal role in advancing the firm’s mission to elevate client influence, shape public policy, and deliver impactful solutions.

Building on VSJ & Co.’s legacy of excellence in public affairs, VSJ Strategies is uniquely positioned to address the critical intersection of policy, business strategy, and advocacy. Guided by its commitment to elevating influence, driving impact, and delivering results, the firm’s mission is to empower clients by providing innovative, data-driven solutions that achieve measurable outcomes and influence decision-making across both private and public sectors. By combining strategic insight with an unwavering dedication to integrity and results, VSJ Strategies delivers tailored services that not only navigate today’s challenges but also anticipate and shape the opportunities of tomorrow.

“I am thrilled to take on this role and collaborate with the exceptional team at VSJ Strategies,” said Broadaway. “Our firm is uniquely positioned to provide innovative, tailored solutions that help clients navigate complex challenges while shaping the future of their industries. I look forward to driving progress and creating lasting value for our clients and partners.”



PHOTO COURTESY VSJ STRATEGIES

Arnelda Broadaway

Broadaway brings a wealth of experience to her position. Her distinguished career includes being appointed by Maryland Governor Wes Moore as Director of Scheduling and Operations, where she demonstrated exceptional leadership, operational expertise, and a commitment to excellence. Her ability to navigate high-stakes environments and build meaningful relationships with stakeholders will be instrumental in elevating VSJ Strategies’ influence and impact.

“Arnelda’s strategic insight, dedication to innovation, and passion for creating value make her the ideal choice for this chapter of growth and impact for VSJ Strategies,” said Veronica Jeon, CEO of V. Companies and VSJ Strategies. “As we expand our impact in government relations

and business consulting, Arnelda’s leadership will ensure that we continue to deliver transformative solutions for our clients and achieve sustainable growth.”

VSJ Strategies is part of V. Companies, a premier portfolio of businesses founded and led by Veronica Jeon. With ventures spanning strategic communications, government relations, business consulting, event architecture, and sports and entertainment, V. Companies is driven by a mission to inspire transformation, foster connection, and elevate success. Through innovation and a commitment to excellence, V. Companies delivers results that empower clients and create lasting impact.

V. Companies is a premier portfolio of high-performing brands led by Veronica Jeon, dedicated to inspiring transformation, fostering connection, and driving success. Spanning industries such as communications, government relations, event architecture, and sports and entertainment, V. Companies delivers innovative solutions that elevate brands and create meaningful impact.

VSJ Strategies is a government relations and business consulting firm committed to elevating client influence, shaping public policy, and driving strategic outcomes. With expertise in advocacy, public policy, and business consulting, VSJ Strategies provides tailored solutions to help clients navigate complex challenges and achieve sustainable progress. A part of V. Companies, VSJ Strategies builds on a legacy of excellence to deliver measurable results and meaningful change.

VSJ Strategies Appoints Johntel Greene as Executive Vice President, Government Relations

By PRESS OFFICER
VSJ Strategies

NATIONAL HARBOR, Md. (Jan. 8, 2025)—VSJ Strategies, an emerging powerhouse in government relations and business consulting, is proud to announce the appointment of Johntel Greene as Executive Vice President, Government Relations. This announcement follows the successful merger of VSJ Strategies and the consulting division of Good Governance Consulting, creating a formidable presence in Maryland’s political and business landscape.

Building on VSJ & Co.’s legacy of excellence in public affairs, VSJ Strategies is uniquely positioned to address the critical intersection of policy, business strategy, and advocacy. Guided by its commitment to elevating influence, driving impact, and delivering results, the firm’s mission is to empower clients by providing innovative, data-driven solutions that achieve measurable outcomes and influence decision-making across both private and public sectors. This merger underscores VSJ Strategies’ vision of empowering organizations through groundbreaking strategies, data-driven insights, and unmatched expertise.

“Johntel’s strategic insight, innovative approach, and unwavering commitment to equity perfectly align with the values and mission of VSJ Strategies,” said Veronica Jeon, CEO of V. Companies and VSJ Strategies. “Her deep experience, strategic vision, and dedication to innovation make her uniquely qualified to advance our government relations efforts and build on the strong foundation established by our merger with Good Governance Consulting. With the addition of Johntel to the VSJ Strategies team, we are poised to deliver transformative solutions, unparalleled results, and lasting impact for our clients.”



PHOTO COURTESY VSJ STRATEGIES

Johntel Greene

Greene brings over 15 years of leadership experience in Maryland politics and government relations. A proud product of Prince George’s County Public Schools, Greene earned her B.A. from the University of Maryland, College Park, and an MBA from Erasmus University in the Netherlands. She has held pivotal roles, including Chief of Staff to key Maryland legislators, Director of Government Relations for Maryland’s Community Colleges, and Senior Fellow with Education Pioneers. Greene’s leadership has spanned initiatives in policy advocacy, digital transformation, cross-jurisdictional collaboration, and community empowerment.

“I am honored to join VSJ Strategies during such an exciting time of growth, transformation, and impact,” said Greene. “The merger with Good Governance Consulting strengthens our ability to deliver innovative solutions that empower our clients, drive equity, and create meaningful, lasting impact. I look forward to leading our government relations team to

achieve new heights of success.”

Good Governance Consulting, known for its results-driven strategies and expertise in Maryland’s political landscape, brings a strong legacy of innovation, inclusivity, and measurable impact to VSJ Strategies. The combined firm is uniquely positioned to support clients across industries with solutions that address complex challenges and seize opportunities for progress.

VSJ Strategies is part of V. Companies, a premier portfolio of businesses founded and led by Veronica Jeon. With ventures spanning strategic communications, government relations, business consulting, event architecture, and sports and entertainment, V. Companies is driven by a mission to inspire transformation, foster connection, and elevate success. Through innovation and a commitment to excellence, V. Companies delivers results that empower clients and create lasting impact.

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Salute from A4

went to teach art at the all-Black Salisbury High School in Maryland’s then-segregated school system.

From a segregated army to a segregated school system, Elzie Taylor’s mid-century career was emblematic of the challenges Black women faced in Maryland and around the country.

She passed a lesson on to her daughter about persevering in the face of obstacles.

“My mom pushed me,” Taylor said. “She made me.”

After her mom died, Taylor began exploring the military oral history her mother had shared

with her. It wasn’t just her mother who served. Taylor’s aunt, Marian Elzie Wilson, enlisted in Pennsylvania and also deployed with the 6888th.

The more she learned, she said, the more she understood the groundbreaking territory the group charted.

And she wasn’t the only one.

Vashti Murphy Matthews, from Baltimore’s multi-generational publishing family of AFRO American Newspaper, also served overseas with the 6888th.

She was a taciturn woman who—despite a drill sergeant-like leadership style—never spoke about her time in the army, according to her daughter, Betty Schuler.

“Had it not been for me finding some pictures, we would never have known that she served at all,” said Schuler. “Not one word did she speak.”

Schuler and her cousin first learned about the 6888th when a monument was being erected in honor of the unit. Researchers and fundraisers were reaching out to descendants and media organizations, which led them to Schuler and her cousin, Frances Murphy Draper, CEO and publisher of the family business.

The Buffalo Soldier Educational and Historical Committee created a monument for the 6888th in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, outside of Kansas City, in 2018.

A few years later, Congress passed legislation

awarding the unit the Congressional Gold Medal. Maryland Gov. Wes Moore even designated March 9 as a day honoring the 6888th in Maryland.

But it wasn’t until the movie that the unit really caught people’s attention. Draper compares the Six Triple Eight to other overlooked stories about people of color.

“I think it also speaks to the ‘argument’ about the need to really teach African American history,” said Draper. “There’s a whole history of people, and the more we understand about people ... the more we understand that we have more in common than we have different.”

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Have a Safe Weekend

EarthTalk® Jimmy Carter's Q&A Environmental Legacy

By Shashwat Mishra | January 9, 2025

Dear EarthTalk:
What is Jimmy Carter's environmental legacy?
—B.N., Athens, GA

Jimmy Carter, the 39th U.S. President, made a lasting impact on environmental policy. His robust initiatives to protect natural resources and advance clean energy established the foundation for environmental policy in subsequent decades. Despite obstacles, his efforts in land preservation, energy efficiency and climate activism still impact environmental policy in the present day.

One of Carter's most significant actions, a symbolic one, was installing solar panels on the White House. And he signed the National Energy Act, which reduced U.S. dependence on foreign oil and encouraged the use of alternative energy sources. "The energy crisis is real. It is worldwide. It is a clear and present danger..." Carter stated during his presidency, emphasizing the urgency of moving to sustainable energy. Carter also created the Department of Energy in 1977 to consolidate management and energy policy. The move displayed his foresight in addressing energy security and climate issues. This laid out the ground-

work for the renewable energy sector's growth in subsequent decades.

Carter's dedication to conservation was equally effective. His administration included multiple wildlife reserves, national parks and public lands in the federal portfolio. Specifically, he enacted the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act in 1980, which protected over 100 million acres of Alaska wilderness, enlarged the National Park System and protected priceless ecosystems for future generations. Reinforcing existing environmental codification was another order for Carter. He reinforced the Clean Air and Clean Water Acts, and in 1980, signed the Superfund law to clean up hazardous waste sites.

After leaving office, Carter continued to work for the environment. Through the Carter Center, he promoted sustainable farming and clean energy. His work with Habitat for Humanity promoted affordable and sustainable housing as a foundation of environmental and social justice. "Habitat has successfully removed the stigma of charity by substituting it with a sense of partnership," Carter voiced. Carter's environmental vision faced dif-

iculties. Economic struggles limited the scope of some initiatives. Additionally, President Reagan removed the White House solar panels, indicating a retreat from Carter's vision. But his cutting-edge advocacy inspired subsequent efforts on climate change and conservation.

Jimmy Carter's environmental legacy serves as a reminder that fearlessness and long-term vision are important in addressing today's ecological challenges. His leadership continues to inspire. Ultimately, his efforts underscore the mutuality of protecting the environment, sustainable development, and social justice.

CONTACTS: The Carter Center, <https://www.carter-center.org>; Jimmy Carter Presidential Library & Museum, <https://www.jimmycarterlibrary.gov>.

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