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FEATURED

**WILLIAM SONNY HODGES
CLAIMING HISTORY
WITH SAGINAW'S
FIRST BLACK BEER
TRUCK DRIVER**

COMMUNITY, PG 25

Remember The Trojans & The Lumberjacks



ARTHUR HILL AND SAGINAW HIGH STATE CHAMPIONSHIP TEAMS WERE RECOGNIZED AT THE "FINAL SHOWDOWN" GAME ON FRIDAY, FEB. 16



**A WINNING MENTALITY
EARNED LIDDELL THE
POSITION AS FIRST BLACK
GARBER GENERAL MANAGER**

COMMUNITY, PG 26



By DAVE SLAGGERT
FORMER ARTHUR HILL BOYS
BASKETBALL COACH

When Jerome Buckley asked me to write a story about my upcoming book, *Remember The Trojans & The Lumberjacks* plus do a recap of the final "Game of Legends" I was both honored and grateful to do so. The Trojans and Lumberjacks rivalry is very near and dear to my heart. My first faint memory of these great battles was 73 years ago at the age of 3, sitting on my Saginaw High Super Fan, Dad's lap watching the legendary Trojan Webster Kirksey work his magic. 46 years later I became Arthur Hill's head basketball coach and had the great honor to coach Jason Richardson, DeeAndre Hulett and many other Lumberjacks greats.

February 16th, 2024 was the final Saginaw High/Arthur Hill regular season showdown, classic game and it didn't disappoint. The Lumberjacks pulled out a convincing 84-52 victory over the Trojans, but the big winner of the evening was the city of Saginaw in the historic finale to honor the Hill and High. The Lumberjacks came out on fire and led throughout in route to victory. The Trojans, however, still finished with a 164 to 114 edge in victories over the Lumberjacks in Michigan's longest running boy's high school basketball rivalry (114-years.) The Hill was led by Lyna Brooks with 16 points, Di'onQuavis Hardy 15 points, 10 rebounds and 8 assists, DeQuavion Terry and Tyler Dorsey each added 10 points with Dorsey also pulling down 9 rebounds. The Trojans were led by Fransco Lee Jr. with 15 points and 6 rebounds and Brandon McCune with 8 points.

It was a great daylong celebration and tribute at a sold-out Dow Events Center.

**CONTINUES ON PG 2,
SHS/AHHS**

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Cover Story, SHS/AHHS



The atmosphere was electric and activities included an afternoon celebration in the Red Room for over 500 “special guests.” Later the Lady Saginaw United team defeated Flint Carmen Ainsworth 48-43 in the opener of the historic “Game of Legends” night at the Dow.” Raegen Byrd led the Phoenix with 18 points and Brittany Johnson scored 12 points and had 12 rebounds. Throughout the 2 games there were special acknowledgments and introductions of former great players, coaches,



state champion teams and other dignitaries. The fans showed up and showed out and cheered their lungs out for the, Sweet, Sweet Black and Gold and the Sweet, Sweet Blue and Gold! It gave me goosebumps to see it one last time.

Under the direction of Saginaw Public School’s Director of Athletics Corky Thompson, it was an unforgettable and gala event. He and his planning committee of: Marshall Thomas, Dave Slaggert, Clifton Ryan, Jack Tany, Don Durette and Otis Ray helped make the “Game of Legends” a truly special and unforgettable event!

I’ve decided to share a couple of excerpts from my book to give you a sneak peak before it’s released next month.

(Excerpt No. 1)

The 114 year Saginaw High/Arthur Hill hoops rivalry, indeed, does include 18 times when the Trojans or the Lumberjacks won authorized State Champion or State Runner-

up Trophies. It was not, however, just an intense rivalry between two great Saginaw high schools and their five feeder junior highs: Central Jr., Arthur Eddy, Webber, North and South. In the early years it included a deep-rooted rivalry between two sides of the Saginaw River: the “East Side” and the “West Side.”

I grew up an “East Side” kid, living at 2717 Glenwood Street, right around the corner from Webber Elementary and Junior High Schools. My family were rock solid Saginaw High fans with my dad and sister graduating from the “High.” While growing up in the 50’s it was clear that the “West Side” was the more affluent side and the “East Side” was where the majority of the working class, including most minorities, lived. There were real resentments and racial tensions as Arthur Hill was almost 100% white and Saginaw High was diverse with a growing African American and Hispanic population. Saginaw was, for a long time, a racially segregated city with the Saginaw River being the dividing line.

Things, however, started changing in the 1970’s with open enrollment and with some minority families moving to the “West Side.” Saginaw evolved like many other American cities, but had its issues along the way. Those dynamics added to the tension that carried over into the schools and basketball games. How Saginaw was a microcosm of what was going on nationally could be a book in its own right. In keeping “Remember The Trojans & The Lumberjacks” real, however, one couldn’t



**CONTINUES ON PG 3,
SHS/AHHS**

Continued from page 2, SHS/AHHS



leave out that part of the story and its significant impact on the rivalry.

(Excerpt No. 2)

With the conclusion of “The High” and “The Hill” rivalry scheduled for 2024 when the two schools consolidate, my inspiration was to honor this iconic cross-town Saginaw competition in a special way. What better way to extract the essence and truth in our remembrance than to capture first-

hand accounts from as many of the Trojan and Lumberjack hoop coaches as possible?

In the summer of 2021, I reached out to Marshall Thomas and all remaining living head coaches that had coached in this amazing and memorable rivalry: Gary Lee, Dick Goodman, George Kubiak, Lou Dawkins, Greg McMath, Tony Davis and Julian Taylor. All were enthusiastic to honor and pay tribute to “The High” vs. “The Hill,” Michigan’s Greatest High

School Hoops Rivalry. The results of this historic collaboration are woven into the 672 pages of the book.

(Excerpt NO. 3)

In the 1961-62 season Retro Mr. Basketball Ernie Thompson was clearly the leader with a band of totally committed teammates who were willing to play their roles. The chemistry was great, much better than the year before. Playing key roles on that squad included Brian Best, Lovell Humes, Bruce LaBreche, Bob Speer, Woody Kellum, Clarence Jackson and Tom Humes.

When I asked Ernie specifically about the Saginaw High, Arthur Hill rivalry, he said he didn’t see rivalries, he just saw every game, every opponent as individual challenges. Well, that season Arthur Hill represented a huge challenge with an outstanding team led by future (1963) Retro Mr. Basketball Craig Dill, Art Gelow and John Jahnsen. All three of the Hill games were very tough, Ernie recalled, with packed houses but the Trojans prevailed. He did say that because of Saginaw being a very segregated city at the time, that he and his teammates were “quite driven” in their approach to the games against the Hill. Once again, the Trojans finished the regular season undefeated, Saginaw Valley Champs and ranked No. 1 in the state.

Their state tournament run was made more difficult with an ankle injury to starting guard Lovell Humes, who Ernie called “spectacular.” The Trojans were, of course, a great fast break team and Humes was the recipient of countless outlet passes for scores from Ernie. Even with Hume’s injury, the Trojans ran the table in the tournament, defeated Benton Harbor for the State Championship and finished with a perfect 22-0 season!

In my High/Hill Rivalry journey compiling this historic tribute to Michigan’s greatest high school hoops rivalry it’s been exciting, rewarding, humbling and countless other emotions.... With it coming to an end my goal was to keep this epic story alive for future generations to “experience.” The amazing uniqueness and flat out “one of a kind” story just HAD to be recorded and REMEMBERED.

**CONTINUES ON PG 4,
SHS/AHHS**



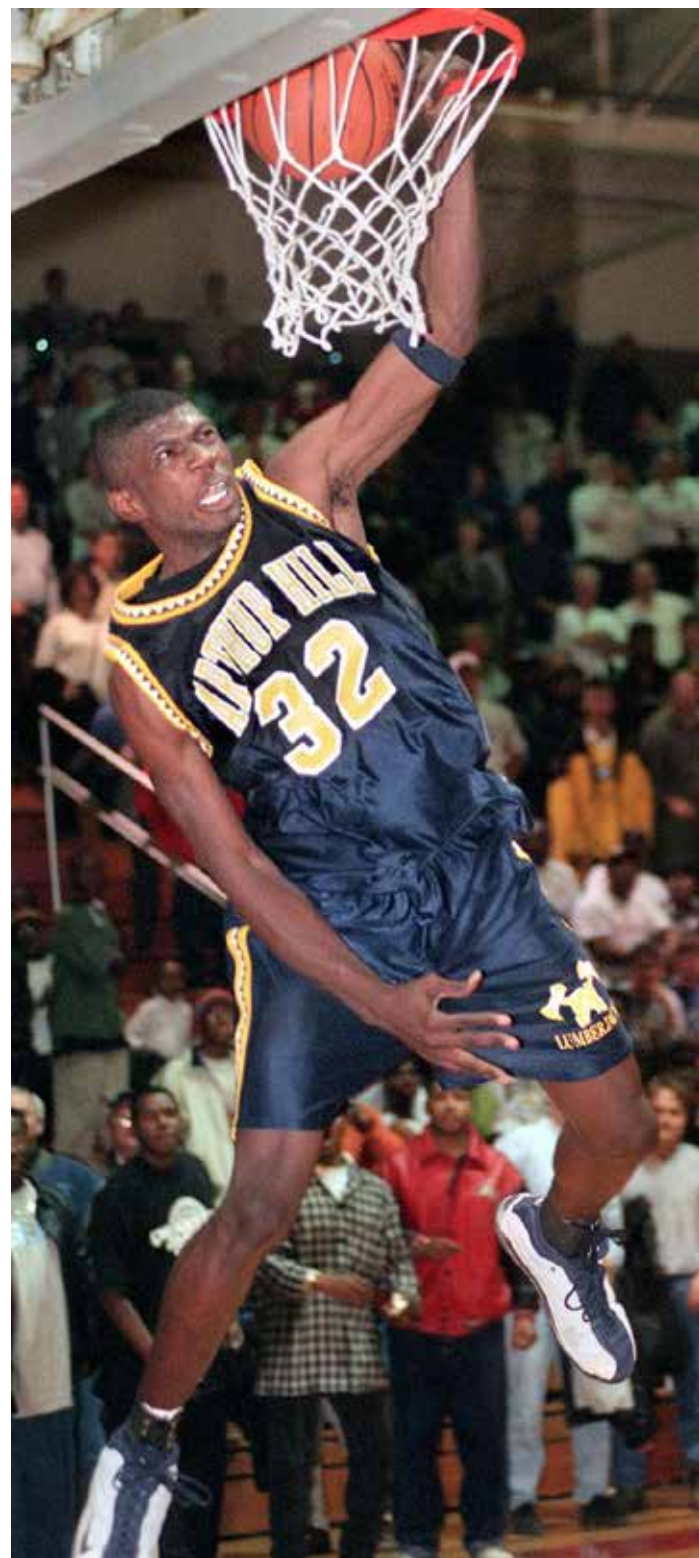
Continued from page 3, SHS/AHHS

The book is filled with first-hand accounts and behind the scene stories from all the head coaches, many of the outstanding players from both schools and even a chapter from Michigan State’s Tom Izzo! Woven into the historic fabric of the Saginaw community are so many great players, coaches and epic games. There are over 750 priceless photos and news stories that help paint the picture of classic Saginaw High and Arthur Hill battles and bring their stories to life.

My book is a non-profit effort and my way of “giving back” to the community that raised me. It was a 5-year labor of love and I really enjoyed the ride. I didn’t do this for money, just wanted this story to be passed down – people 100 years from now will know about Jason Richardson, Draymond Green, Ernie Thompson, Craig Dill and all the other great ones. Any profits we do clear will be handled by the Saginaw Community Foundation and given to a scholarship fund for students at the

new Saginaw United High School. By the way, I absolutely love the name of our new school and pray we all remain “United” for Saginaw.

To order Remember The Trojan’s & The Lumberjacks Go to Facebook Page: Remember The Trojans & Lumberjacks.... or visit the Saginaw Community Foundation website, click “Give Now” and select the book title as Fund. Cost is \$40 with an option including shipping \$52.



CONTINUES TO PG 5 FOR ORDERING INFORMATION...

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The Michigan Banner, Latino Banner and Youth Banner operates and serves as a print and online media venue committed to educating, informing and enlightening our readership regarding events and news that directly and indirectly affect the communities regionally and globally. Furthermore, to serve as a catalyst and a link for cultivating young adults as entrepreneurial and business leaders for the future.

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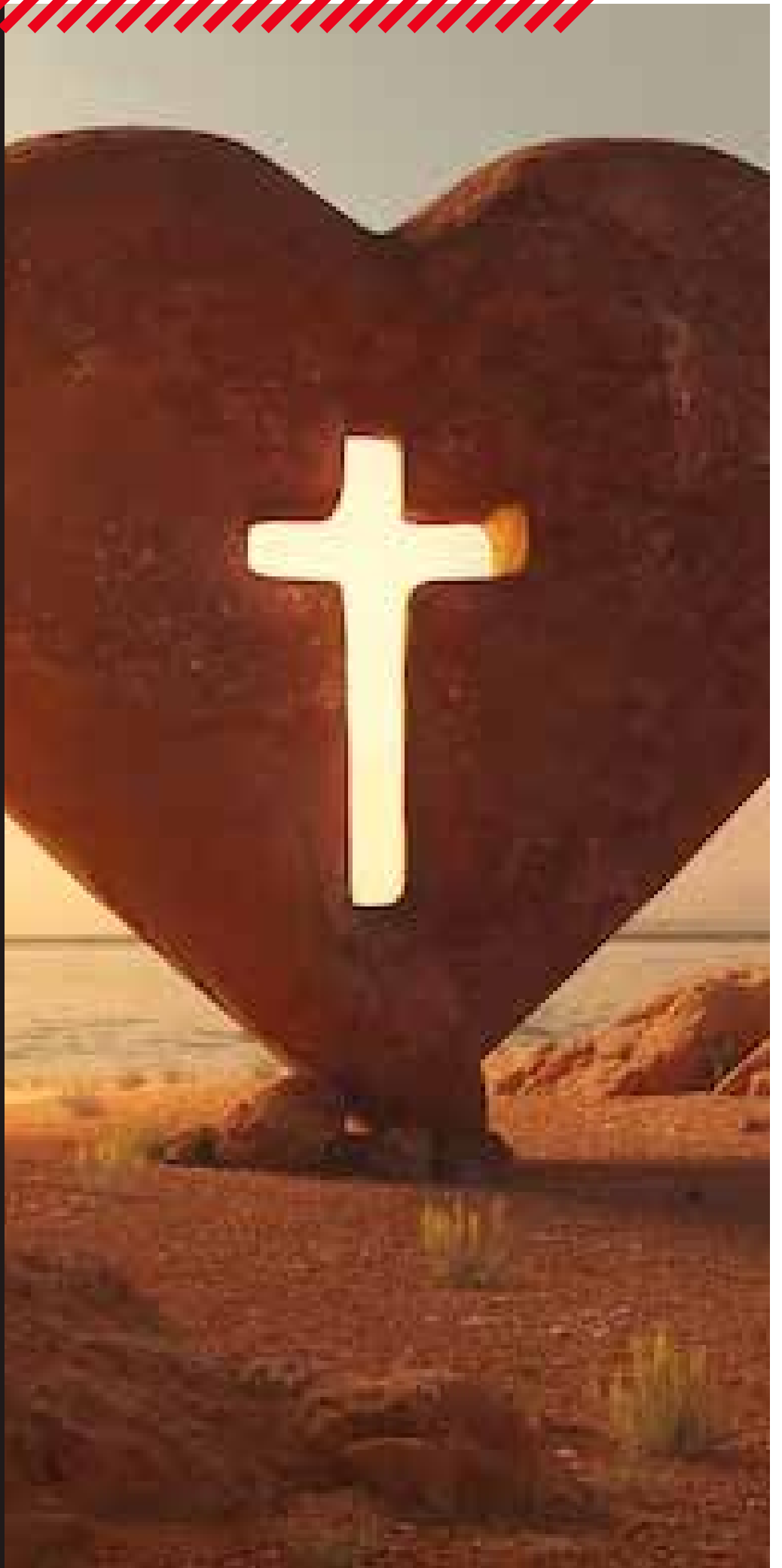
NO ORDINARY LOVE

By DONIQUA SOVIA

It's not your ordinary love. It's not shrouded in fake gift giving, while fists are being thrown. It's not based on behavior, or the mistakes that you've done, and nothing you have said can make it be gone.

It's not the Hallmark kind of love, where misunderstanding causes divide. It's not the so called love that sometimes makes you question "Why" and has you lying on your pillow as to sleep you cry. It's not a love that leaves you. Nor a love that forsakes, it's love that leaves you puzzled as it's always there to partake.

Unconditional affection, nothing taken, and nothing missing. No questioning its motive as it's given to you by Jesus. The sacrifice that was made when on the cross his blood did shed, as He paved the way for each and every man. His love transcends all understanding, and it never runs out, even if we abandon, and we can come back as his love renews each and every morning.



JUSTICE FOR KIDS AND COMMUNITIES

An Overview of Juvenile Justice Reform

Wednesday, February 21, 2024
6:00 P.M. - 7:30 P.M.
SVRC Marketplace, CMURC
203 S. Washington Avenue
Saginaw, MI 48607



BLACK HISTORY MONTH

5 People who made Black History as kids/teens

was the third such arraignment to be scheduled.

The accused, John A. Baker, was arrested last September and was accused of committing Night-Time Burglary, a charge which

NAACP to represent the defendant. Dr. G. A. Rogers, dentist and president of the Anniston branch NAACP has led a campaign to secure support for defending Baker.

Girl, 15, Convicted Under Alabama Segregation Law

Montgomery, Ala — Claudette Colvin, age 15, student at Booker Washington High School, Montgomery, was convicted for refusing to give her seat to another white passenger boarding the same bus. Prior to the trial in Juvenile Court, she was given 3 charges, Assault and Battery Disorderly Conduct, and Violating

ATTENDS MEETING IN CHICAGO

the Chapter 6, Section 11 of the City Court. However when the case came up for trial the presiding Attorney, Mr. Thetford asked for an Amendment to the charge which was in effect saying the girl was violating the segregation law of the State of Alabama. This was upheld by Judge Hill, who was presiding over the case at Juvenile Court. The Amendment was sustained under violent observation of the Defense and the Defendant. The girl was placed on



CLAUDETTE COLVIN

By MB STAFF

Throughout history, Black kids and teens have achieved remarkable milestones and made significant contributions in various fields, breaking barriers and paving the way for future generations. Here are 6 examples of Black youth who were historical firsts:

Ruby Bridges - At the age of six, Ruby Bridges became the first African American student to integrate William Frantz Elementary School in New Orleans, Louisiana, in 1960. Despite facing harassment and threats, Bridges bravely attended school each day, symbolizing the courage and resilience of the Civil Rights Movement.

Claudette Colvin - Nine months before Rosa Parks famously refused to give up her seat on a segregated bus, 15-year-old Claudette Colvin did the same in Montgomery, Alabama, in 1955. Colvin was arrested and became one of the first Black women to

challenge segregation laws in court, setting the stage for the Montgomery Bus Boycott.

Dorothy Counts - In 1957, 15-year-old Dorothy Counts became one of the first Black students to integrate Harding High School in Charlotte, North Carolina. Her enrollment was met with violent opposition and harassment from white students, but Counts remained resilient, paving the way for desegregation in schools across the South.

Yolanda Denise King - The eldest daughter of Martin Luther King Jr. and Coretta Scott King, Yolanda Denise King, made history as a teenager by becoming the first African American to hold the position of Miss Teenage America in 1971. She used her platform to advocate for civil rights and social justice causes.

Joetta Clark Diggs - Joetta Clark Diggs made history as the first high school girl to break the 2-minute barrier in the 800-meter run. She achieved this milestone as a

teenager in 1979, setting a national high school record that stood for nearly 20 years. Clark went on to become a four-time Olympian and a respected advocate for youth sports.

Kathryn Bigelow - While not specifically a teenager at the time of her historic achievement, Kathryn Bigelow made history as the first woman to win the Academy Award for Best Director for her film "The Hurt Locker" in 2010. As a teenager, Bigelow showed early talent and passion for filmmaking, eventually breaking barriers in a male-dominated industry.

These examples represent just a few of the many Black youth who have made historic firsts throughout history. Their courage, resilience, and determination have helped advance the cause of equality and justice, inspiring future generations to strive for excellence and pursue their dreams, regardless of race or background.

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BLACK HISTORY



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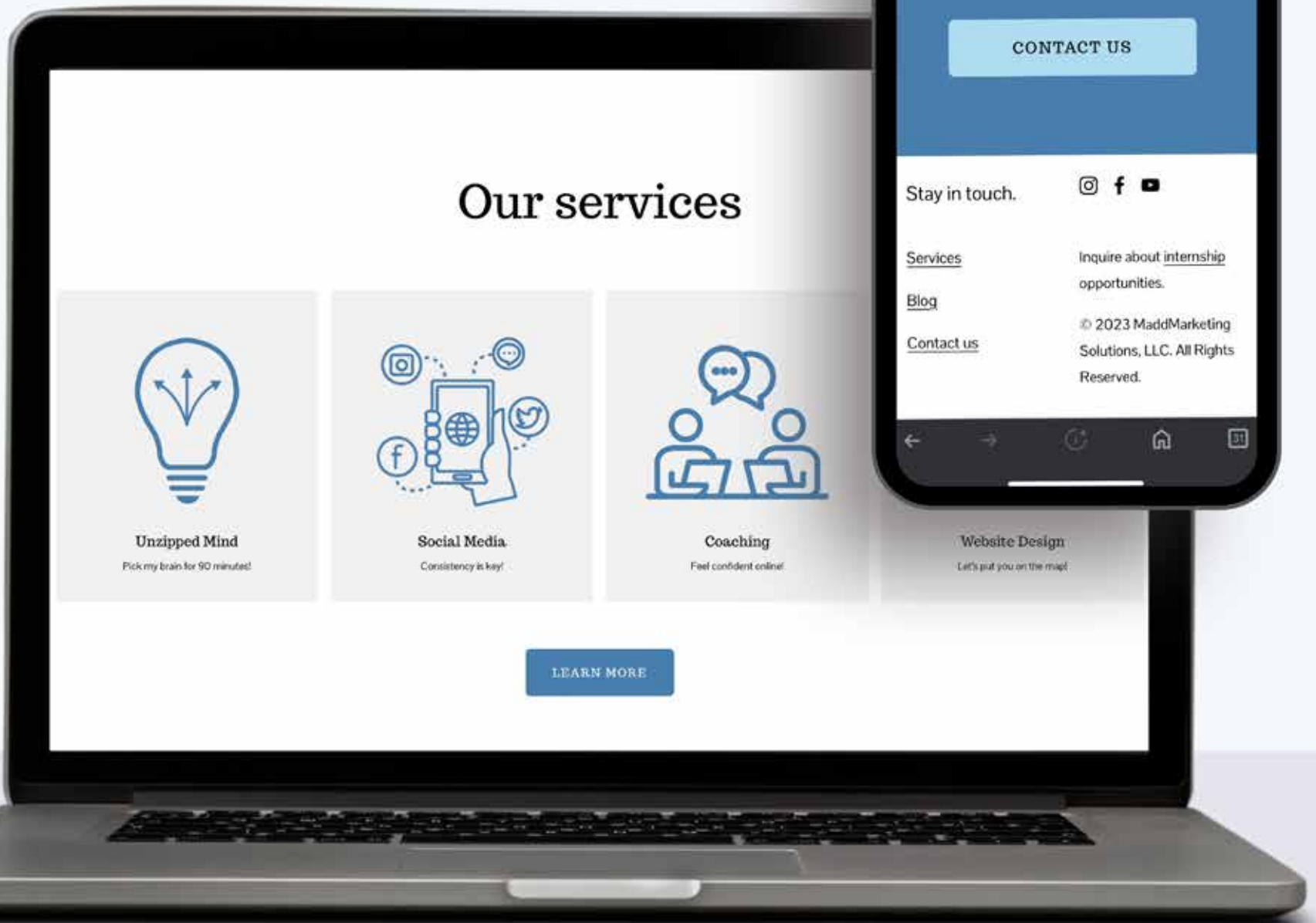
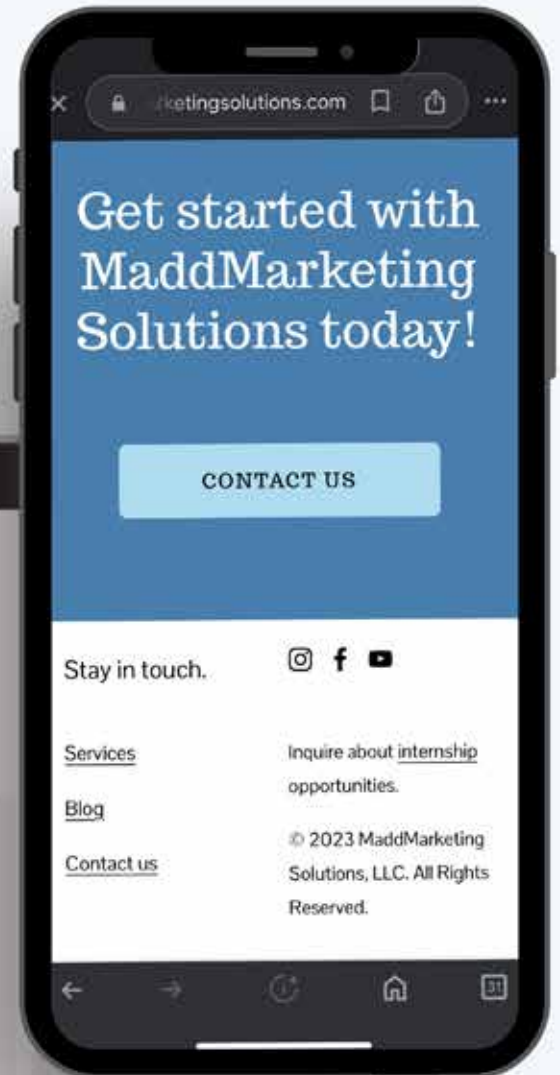
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BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Embracing Diversity: The Rich History of Afro-Latinos



COURTESY PHOTO

By MB STAFF

The history of Afro-Latinos is a complex and multifaceted narrative that spans centuries and encompasses a rich tapestry of cultures, identities, and experiences. Afro-Latinos, also known as Afro-Latin Americans or Black Latinos, are individuals of African descent who have roots in Latin America and the Caribbean. Their history is deeply intertwined with the legacy of slavery, colonialism, resistance, and cultural exchange, shaping the vibrant and diverse societies that exist across the region today.

The presence of Africans in Latin

America dates back to the early colonial period when millions of enslaved Africans were forcibly transported to the Americas to work on plantations and in mines. From Brazil to the Caribbean islands, African slaves played a vital role in the development of the region's economy, contributing their labor and expertise to industries such as sugar, coffee, and tobacco. However, their contributions often went unrecognized, and they faced exploitation, oppression, and systemic racism at the hands of colonial authorities and slave owners.

Despite the harsh conditions they endured, Afro-Latinos preserved their cultural heritage, traditions, and languages,

blending African customs with indigenous and European influences to create vibrant and dynamic cultural expressions. From music and dance to religion and cuisine, Afro-Latinos have made enduring contributions to the cultural landscape of Latin America, enriching the region with their creativity, resilience, and resilience.

Throughout history, Afro-Latinos have also played a crucial role in social and political movements for justice, equality, and liberation. From the Haitian Revolution, led by Toussaint Louverture, to the abolitionist struggles in Brazil and the civil rights movements in Colombia and Cuba, Afro-Latinos have been at the forefront of efforts to challenge systemic racism and oppression and to build more inclusive and equitable societies.

In recent decades, there has been a growing recognition and celebration of Afro-Latino identity and culture, fueled by the rise of social movements, increased visibility in media and the arts, and a growing interest in Afro-Latin American studies. Today, Afro-Latinos can be found across the Americas, from the bustling streets of Rio de Janeiro to the vibrant neighborhoods of San Juan, proudly embracing their heritage and shaping the future of their communities.

However, Afro-Latinos continue to face challenges and discrimination due to their race and ethnicity, including economic inequality, limited access to education and healthcare, and marginalization in political and social spheres. Addressing these disparities requires a concerted effort to dismantle racist structures, promote diversity and inclusion, and elevate the voices and experiences of Afro-Latinos in all aspects of society.

The history of Afro-Latinos is a testament to the resilience, creativity, and diversity of the Latin American and Caribbean region. From their origins in the transatlantic slave trade to their ongoing struggles for justice and equality, Afro-Latinos have made enduring contributions to the cultural, social, and political fabric of the Americas. By honoring their legacy, celebrating their achievements, and standing in solidarity with their struggles, we can build a more inclusive and equitable future for all.



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+ COMMUNITY

Imposter syndrome



By **JASMINE BUCKLEY**
ELA TEACHER

“Do I deserve to be here?” Someone with imposter syndrome may ponder if they are worthy of the environment they inhabit. Perhaps “un”worthy of an opportunity secured. Or possibly- worthy but potentially less worthy than another worthy candidate. All of these anxious feelings may be symptoms of a phenomenon called “imposter syndrome”.

Imposter syndrome is the “*persistent inability to believe that one’s success is deserved or has been legitimately achieved as a result of one’s own efforts or skills.*”

- Oxford Languages dictionary

5:30AM, a harshly toned ringtone blasts her out of her REM, (the deepest stage of sleep). Her eyes burst open in shock as her cognizance becomes intact again. It’s time to begin another day. For a quick moment, there’s a surge of excitement that floods her entire body. In the same few seconds fear arises. With a deep breath, she throws the blanket to the side and stretches before beginning her morning routine. It’s 7:45AM. She walks into work with a smile. Enthusiastically greeting coworkers as they pass in the hallway has become her work identity though the moment they are fully passed the smile fades with a deep sigh.

Imposter syndrome is “*when you’re in a room with other people and you feel like you’re not supposed to be there. But you are.*”

- Jerome Buckley II



What do you do when you feel that you are not worthy of being in the same room with incredibly amazing and influential people? “Am I influential?” “I don’t know if I am.” “It’s probably just luck.” What do you do when you feel that you have fooled others into thinking you are more capable than you really are?

Imposter syndrome was first identified in high-achieving women, but it affects individuals of all genders, backgrounds, and fields. It can lead to self-sabotage, anxiety, and burnout. Imposter syndrome can be difficult to overcome, but recognizing and reframing negative thoughts, seeking support, and acknowledging accomplishments can help individuals overcome this self-limiting belief and embrace their true abilities.

Its. Not. Real.

If you have ever experienced feeling like you were not worthy of the space that you worked diligently to be in, then take a moment and jot down all the reasons why you qualify. Be intentional about reminding yourself of your power and worth always. If you are in a wonderful space, the reason you are there is because you are wonderful as well.

“*Prepare yourself mentally for new things that may come your way that may seem overwhelming, but know that you are built for it. Consistency is key.*”

- Jerome Buckley II

+ COMMUNITY

Some dream of making dough, The Bread Gal bakes it happen

By HASANI ALI

Maria Austin truly has a baker's heart.

Finishing second place in dessert and first in display in the American Culinary Federation Chef competition, Austin loves that her work has paid off as one of the best chefs in the area.

"This is my 12th year competing and it felt really good," she said. "Even though I have done this competition so many times, it's still stressful and nerve racking because you never know what the chefs will come up with so there's always an unknown."

The competition took place last week at the Bavarian Inn Lodge, located in Frankenmuth – with the theme, "Culinary Salute to Mardi Gras."

Austin competed against seven other pastry chefs and 22 chefs in total.

The Pittsburgh, Pa., native honed her skills from the time that she was a young child. Having someone show her the ropes in the kitchen, it took very little time to determine her professional fate.

"I lived with my grandmother when I was younger and she baked all the time," she said. "I began to learn how to bake and that eventually turned into me making dinner after school. It was actually such a great stress reliever for me."

Austin did develop a love for dance as she grew older, but the love quickly dissipated as her expertise in baked goods began to grow.

After graduating high school in 2008, she attended Le Cordon Bleu Institute of Culinary Arts in Pittsburgh. To complete her education, she traveled to Orlando, Fla., to gain experience at Disney World for an internship.

Surprisingly, Austin left Florida to move to Saginaw, Mich., with something other than a certification to show for it.

"I met my husband in culinary school," she said. "We both went down to Disney for our internships and he proposed to me while we were down there."

Married for 12 years and two children, Austin loves that she started her career in Saginaw. Though the city is much smaller than Pittsburgh, it was an opportunity for her to try something different as she began her career and her family.

"I know that Saginaw is flat," she said jokingly as she compared the city to Pittsburgh. "It was something different and I wanted to try something new as I was expanding my career."

Both Austin and her husband, Jacob, start-



MARIA AUSTIN

ed their career at the Bavarian Inn. The husband is now an executive chef.

Austin gained experience as the executive pastry chef for Shari at the Willard Hilton in Auburn, the executive chef and pastry chef for the Golden Glow Ballroom and the Saginaw Country Club, where her husband was the executive chef before leaving for the Bavarian Inn Lodge.

Taking a bold leap of faith, Austin started a business in the middle of the Covid-19 pandemic.

"I started Mama Mia's Pastry during the pandemic and it started out doing orders from home," she said. "Word of mouth got around and business really began to pick up."

Austin and her husband both serve as mentors to students at the Saginaw Career Complex.

Opportunity struck in 2022 as she received insight from her silent investor that Mitch Delemeester, the owner of, "The Bread Guy," located at 411 Hancock St. was ready to sell his business.

"The initial conversation started on the first of July," Austin said. "We were able to close by November so it happened pretty quickly. Best decision I've ever made."

Delemeester stayed on board with us for 45 days during the transition. Austin learned all of the recipes to keep his goods on the menu and as time went on, she slowly began to add her own twist and flavors to some of the items.

"Personally, it was surreal," she said. "I was still in disbelief that it was happening. We actually didn't announce the change in ownership for quite some time in the beginning."

Though Austin has four full-time employees, she still gets help from students that come

in to complete their internship from SCC. She compares her business as a theatre production as the staff put on a stellar performance before the door opens.

"My favorite part of the day is seeing people's reactions when they eat what we make," Austin said. "So much goes on behind the scenes that happens before the customers walk in the door. It's like putting on a show for your clients. Watching them take their first bite and seeing their initial reaction, it brings me joy to see them enjoy what we're making."

Mastering the daily operation as a pastry chef, Austin had to learn the business side on the fly.

"Bookwork has been a challenge, but I've been learning along the way," she said. "And also estimating how much product to make each day. The weather differs and the events around the city occur at different times, so you never know who is going to come in so it's tough to say how many goods to make in the morning."

Acquiring a business nearly two years ago, Austin is looking to expand the brand by 2025.

"Looking to have a second location by next year and being able to serve more of the local restaurants in the area," she said.

Austin is proud that she took the time to gain the experience that she earned prior to becoming a business owner.

"If you want to start your own business, definitely go out and gain experiences and other establishments so you can get different ideas on how to perfect your craft," she said. "If it wasn't for all of the experience that I have, then I wouldn't be where I am today."

For any updates or menu changes, visit The Bread Gal on Facebook and Instagram.



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+ COMMUNITY

African American women on the forefront of history



By **DEZIRAE ROBINSON, PT, DPT**

"I am grateful to be a woman. I must've done something great in another life."
~Maya Angelou

Past, present, and future, women have been on the forefront of history. From inventors, to activists, to writers, to scientists, women have made huge advancements in history, many of which we utilize or adapt in today's society. As we learn and celebrate during this Black History Month, let us acknowledge some of the African American Women that have changed history.

Closed-circuit television system for surveillance, also known as CCTV was invented by Marie Van Brittan Brown, in 1966. Brown and her husband, Albert Brown, worked long, varying hours, her as a nurse, and him as an electronics technician. Concerned with her safety at night, Brown invented what is known today as a Home Security System, with the assistance of her husband. In 1969, they received a patent for their invention which consisted of a sliding camera to take pictures through 4 peepholes of varying heights which then displayed on television monitors, and consisted of two way microphones for Brown to communicate with the person outside. Brown's security system also included a remote to unlock her door from a safer distance, and a button for emergencies that would alert the local authorities. The next time you are securing your home, or communicating through your Ring cameras, keep in mind Mrs. Marie Van Brittan Brown.

As you continue to read this article and this newspaper, and enjoy the writings of many talented men and women, we should acknowledge those that paved the way and opened the doors for many of us today. One brilliant African American woman deserving of recognition is Zora Neale Hur-



MARIE VAN BRITTAN BROWN

ston. The daughter of enslaved peoples, Hurston was an educated Black woman, regarded as "one of the foremost writers of the 20th century." Hurston used her studies in anthropology and interest in black folklore to portray the stories of black culture in her fiction writing. Hurston is most recognized for her work *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, for "breaking literary norms" by focusing on the experience of a black woman.

Not unlike writers, it can be challenging to be a black person or person of color finding representation in healthcare, both as a provider and patient. After losing her father to injuries during WWI, Mrs. Bessie Blount Griffin became a registered physical therapist. After being punished in school for writing with her left hand, Griffin went on to work with amputee soldiers during WWII, teaching them unique ways

to adapt, such as writing with their feet or teeth. It is because of this work that Griffin went on to develop a portable electronic apparatus, designed to deliver mouthfuls of food one bite at a time. Griffin received a patent for her invention in 1951, but later released her patent rights to the french government for use in military hospitals after the United States government expressed no interest in manufacturing it. To this day, African Americans represent about 8% of physicians, and about 5% of physical therapists. Though we have a long way to go, many men and women just like Mrs. Bessie Blount Griffin are working to change the face and quality of healthcare.

As you continue your celebrations in power this month, continue to keep the names of these women and many others whose brilliance have, are, and will change history.



+ COMMUNITY

Untitled



By CHARLES B

Freshwater alters
 Slow decomposition
 in the water
 Filling the space
 between the aural
 friction of molecules
 Waving me to + gether
 To where the Lord guides
 God is the wind
 blowing through mercurial mouths
 Hermes + the gang
 Ringleader +
 composer for Apollo
 Using what they learned
 in Mali
 Students of Timbuktu
 Water rolls across my face
 collected by the sun
 Swept away by playful photons
 Feeling free
 to be themselves in my gaze
 They play in the red of my sight
 How divine
 to be cleansed by water + fire
 at the same time

I am
 the stars in the water
 gleaming the most
 at the zenith
 of each curve rolling
 atop Hades
 Always moving toward

the soil,
 the rocks
 to wet the earth and
 spread the good news
 That the savior is come
 A message reigned from the sun
 A new day is near;
 it is here
 The Sun has come to
 deliver us from the darkest places
 of our mind
 Things that ought to be left behind
 And Mami Wata
 delivers me to the dirt
 gentle and light as
 all births should be

All knees shall bend
 and all heads shall bow
 to receive a crown in
 Glory
 Breathe it in
 the light
 Receive the gleam through the root
 A mature inception;
 an idea;
 an answer
 Feeling my inner waters gush
 Crashing against the earth of
 my body
 Mimicking the cosmos
 I am heaven

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1984 **40** 2024

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+ COMMUNITY

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Claiming history with Saginaw's first Black beer truck driver

By HASANI ALI

To William Earl Hodges, becoming a driver salesman for Max True was an answer to a call that he received from Ruben Daniels, head director at First Ward Community Center.

Little did he know, it was his gateway into the history books as he was the first black beer truck driver for the city of Saginaw.

"Sonny" Hodges was born in Alabama and raised in Quincy, Fla. He lived with his grandmother as a young child after his parents passed away, two weeks apart from each other.

Once his grandmother passed away in 1957, he moved to Saginaw to live with his oldest sister who became his primary caregiver until he finished school.

The multi-sport athlete graduated from Saginaw High School in 1965.

Hodges played basketball for Saginaw High in 1964 and 1965 but ended up receiving a track scholarship at Western Michigan for high jump, though he ultimately decided that college was not for him.

"I used to feel bad for not being cut out for college," he said. "But now I don't feel bad about it at all. I found a fulfilling job that didn't require a college education.

Before receiving a call from Daniels, Hodges was five months in, working as an inspector for Nodular Iron by M-13.

It wasn't the ideal career, but it was something that he did to keep a steady income coming in.

"I hated it, it was kind of boring," he said. "I didn't like being in one building all day. My definition of having a good job was being outdoors and going different places."

Becoming a driver salesman for Max True back in 1967 sounded like the opportunity for Hodges to have the type of job that he was looking for.

"It was a big deal to me," he said. "I had never seen a black man on a beer truck in the city of Saginaw,"

The only other black truck driver in the city during that time was Thomas Hall, who is now deceased, who worked for Coca-Cola.

Studying to obtain his chauffeur's license, Hodges took home the DOT study guide and studied thoroughly to pass the exam.

After years of diligent service, Hodges was ready for a promotion as he was promised a position as a Goodwill man – a sales representative that had advertisements on the company vehicle and would travel to local bars and



WILLIAM SONNY HODGES AND FAMILY

restaurants to sell beer products and put-up displays.

Once he found out that the position was given to another person that came in from another company, Hodges decided to find work with Grant Grocer Co. in 1970, which is now Sysco Food Service today.

He completed 27 years of service for the company and retired as a unionized truck driver in 1997.

Having this profession at the height of the Civil Rights Movement didn't cause any tension amongst the clients as Hodges was quite respected.

"It wasn't bad at all as a black driver," he said. "I wasn't disrespected by anyone as people really enjoyed my company whenever I stopped into town. I got along with all of my customers. Even on the bad days, I refuse to allow a customer to make me upset."

Hodges traveled across Michigan, minus the upper peninsula. One of his favorite places to stop along his route was Houghton Lake.

"I made a lot of friends up there and I still have friends there now," he said. "A friend of mine that owns several cottages in the area offers me one whenever I come to visit."

As a retiree, Hodges still travels to Houghton Lake to go fishing with friends and family.

Closer to home, Hodges had befriended Terry Thomas, owner of Halo Burger franchise, which was another one of his favorite stops.

"I've eaten every Halo Burger that he had," he said happily.

Working 14-hour days, Hodges began his

work day at 5 a.m. Usually home every night, Hodges had rare occasions where he had to stay overnight in a city up north, typically Gaylord or Cadillac, before heading west to Grand Rapids.

Before retiring, Hodges spent the final years of his career training other drivers.

Married 56 years to barber Freddie Hodges, Sonny acknowledges his wife for duty at home while he was on the road.

"Have to give my wife a lot of credit, she really took care of everything while I was gone," he said. "The best thing about my job was that I was home to spend time with my family on the weekends. I have a strong woman as she made sure the boys got to school before going to work at the barbershop and dinner was ready by the time I got home."

The parents of two sons, now 56 and 52-years-old are now spending as much time as they can as a family.

"I try to do as much as I can," he said. "Between me, my wife and my son, I stay pretty busy between doctor's appointments and such. We go to church and we enjoy time together."

The youngest son is now disabled after serving 11 years in the Navy. The oldest is now retired from Nexteer.

Hodges has something to hang his hat on after making an impactful decision 57 years ago that is now a part of Saginaw's history books.

"Never thought that I would be making history for the city of Saginaw," he said. "I felt quite proud of my work and so many people have acknowledged me for that."

+ COMMUNITY

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

A winning mentality earned Liddell position as the first Black Garber general manager

By HASANI ALI

Back in high school, Parys Liddell was the type of young man that would quit on a long-term goal if he didn't see the rewards immediately.

Not seeing the bigger picture, Liddell couldn't even explore his interest in track and field at Saginaw High School as his counselor deemed him academically ineligible to participate.

He dropped out at 15-years-old and decided to work at a car wash part time. Ironically, he needed to return to Saginaw High in order to obtain a worker's permit, which gave him the ability to work 20 hours a week during the school year.

"Do you even go to school here anymore?" He recalled a school administrator asking him while he was in the office.

"No, but I need permission from you in order to work," Liddell responded.

While being a student at Saginaw High, Liddell had a knack for people and a love for cars.

"I was always looking up new vehicles," he said. "I was always comparing cars and showing my friends different websites and magazines."

With limited options to advance in any career, the Saginaw native made a wise choice by returning to school and earning his GED in 2009, the same time he would have graduated with his classmates.

He didn't know what he didn't know – but what he was about to find out was that his love for people and cars was about to open an entire new world to him.

Working as a porter in the detailing department, he met the owner of Saginaw Valley Ford Lincoln, Gil Johnson.

Never seeing an African American male as an owner of a dealership, something in his mind clicked where he could follow in Johnson's exact footsteps.

Building his relationship with the owner, the young 17-year-old young man told Johnson that he wanted to be just like him and own a dealership.



PARYS LIDDELL

"Let me show you how to get there," Liddell recalled Johnson's response.

While working at the dealership, Liddell's initial plan was to enlist in the Army to make a comfortable living, but failed the exam twice.

"I wasn't going to the military because I was a huge patriot," he said. "My only plan was to enroll in the Army to make a living and get out of the 'hood.'"

Liddell's father, now 75, was an electrician, yet also didn't finish high school. He respected his father's craft and knew that he could find a way to make a good living.

"My dad never earned his high school diploma, but he was a very smart man," he said. "I saw a lot of myself in him and he is a person who made a good living as a blue-collar worker."

Preparing to take the third exam for the Army, Johnson convinced Liddell to go to college rather than the military.

He went on to graduate with an asso-

ciate degree from Davenport University in Accounting, bachelor's degree in Automotive Marketing and Management and a master's degree in Strategic Management at Northwood University – all while doing this working full time while supporting his family.

Upon graduating, he looked back on all the support that he had pushing forward to further his education.

"Honestly it was overwhelming," Liddell said. "I had so many people believe me when I didn't even believe in myself. I'm a product of mentorship. I have some good people around me that pointed me in the right direction."

His wife Taylor, who he married in July of 2017, pushed him beyond his limits and influenced him to go back to school.

"She was the reason that I went back

**CONTINUES ON PG 26,
LIDDELL**

+ COMMUNITY

Continued from pg 27, Liddell

for my master's degree," he said. "She held me accountable for everything that I wanted. I didn't want to go back for my master's, but she saw the vision clearer than I did when it came to working on owning my own dealership."

He also attended the Ford-sponsored NADA Academy – a prestigious program that develops current and future leaders to operate a successful and profitable automotive business.

In 2019, Liddell earned a position as a salesperson for Avis Ford in Southfield, an African American owned dealership.

As a salesperson turned Financial Manager, Liddell contributed to cutting the delivery time in half – shortening the time from when the customer walked in the door and walked out with a vehicle.

Due to a stellar performance in service of the automotive industry, Avis Ford earned the President's Award in 2021 & 2022.

"It's definitely a proud feeling when your team is winning," he said. "It was something special to be a part of."

The Automotive News nominated Liddell

with the "40 Under 40" honors -- being only one of three people from Michigan to have received the award.

"Earning that award will set me apart from the rest when it's time for me to actually acquire my own dealership," he said.

While working for Avis, his reputation and story became a buzz amongst those in the automotive industry.

One name in particular that heard about him was Richard Garber, owner of Garber Automotive Group. Knowing what Liddell was capable of, he proposed an offer knowing that the collaboration could propel into something special.

"They created this general manager position for me," he said. "He believed in me and my story and actually tried to hire me three times. I was stuck at the ceiling at Avis Ford, but God put it on my spirit to at least speak to Mr. Garber as he heard wonderful things about me and wanted to get me on board."

Acknowledging the rare accomplishment, Liddell is the first black General Manager for Garber Automotive Group in Michigan out of the 26 dealerships in total

– the only other black General Manager is in Rochester, N.Y.

Having a home in Southfield and not wanting to commute, Liddell is currently living in a townhome five minutes from the dealership in Saginaw.

As a product of mentorship, Liddell wants to give the advice to others that he wishes someone would've given to his teenage self.

"I had a quitter's mindset," he said. "If you have the patience and tenacity to work towards something, it'll fall into place for you. If it's something that I truly want, then I'll never quit again."

Making black history is an accomplishment for Liddell, but he's far from content as he's looking to open the doors to others just like him.

"It means that there's more to come for me," he said. "I'm the first, but I don't want to be the only one. I want more of us to have that opportunity. I'm working to create a way for those to come behind me by opening as many doors as I can."

#TeamUp for the Dow GLBR grant program returns for 2024; Applications now open for local nonprofits

Local nonprofits can now apply for the 2024 #TeamUp for the Great Lakes Bay Region grant program, tournament officials with the Dow Championship announced today. Nonprofit organizations can apply online at www.dowchampionship.com/community-impact through March 15th. The LPGA tournament remains committed to donating to charities across the Great Lakes Bay Region and has awarded more than \$2 million to local nonprofits since its inception in 2019.

"At the heart of our event's mission is '#TeamUp for the Great Lakes Bay Region,' fostering enrichment through charitable giveback. We take pride in supporting local organizations and making a significant impact in our community," said Heather Gallegos, Director of Community Affairs at Dow. "The tournament and these groups together create a lasting positive influence throughout the Great Lakes Bay Region. We are committed to amplifying this im-

act in the coming year."

Each year, #TeamUp for the Great Lakes Bay Region selects seven organizations across each of the region's counties (Saginaw, Bay, Midland and Isabella). An additional eight nonprofits are also selected based on the services they provide on a regional level. Since 2019, the tournament's charitable giving programs have supported more than 60 nonprofits across the Great Lakes Bay Region, such as the Isabella Community Soup Kitchen of Isabella County. The nonprofit was awarded a bonus donation of \$11,000 after last year's event for being paired with the 2023 champions, Cheyenne Knight and Elizabeth Szokol.

All 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations in the Great Lakes Bay Region are invited to apply. Nonprofits will be chosen based on their organization's impact on science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education; sustainability; inclusion, diver-

sity and equity (ID&E); community resiliency; and/or innovation. Once selected, each of the 36 nonprofits will be paired randomly with one of the 72 teams competing in the 2024 LPGA event. A total of \$237,000 will be donated through this program with each selected nonprofit guaranteed to receive at least a \$4,500 grant. Additional grant opportunities will be announced at a later date.

Selections are expected to be announced at the end of April. Tournament staff will continue to #TeamUp with the Midland Area Community Foundation, Bay Area Community Foundation, Saginaw Community Foundation and the Mt. Pleasant Area Community Foundation and the Dow Great Lakes Bay Region Grant Team to manage the program.

The Dow Championship will return to Midland Country Club June 24 – 30, 2024. Visit www.dowchampionship.com for more information about this year's event.

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Making choices and facing consequences announce creation of a new tool to fight gun violence and the drug epidemic

By **HON. M.T. THOMPSON & PROF. MONICA R. NUCKOLLS**

The Hon. M.T. Thompson, Jr., and Cooley Law School Professor Monica R. Nuckolls announce the release of their revised drug education and crime prevention program called Making Choices And Facing Consequences. It consist of four volumes: Weapons In School, Drugs And Alcohol, Who Can Stop The Bullying? and Gangs-N-The Hood.

Thompson and Nuckolls say they are tired of the deafening echo of gunfire in the community they grew up in, the weeping and crying of mothers and one funeral procession after another. Prof. Nuckolls states “we cannot afford to normalize the persistent crisis of gun violence and drug overdoses. Swift and immediate action is needed.”

Gun Violence Death Rate Continues To Grow

Gun violence is the number one threat to our children. It kills more children than Covid, the flu or RSV. According to the Children’s Defense Funds’ 2023 report entitled “The State Of America’s Children 2023” gun violence is the number one cause of death for children ages 1-19. The death rate increased by nearly 40% from 2017 to 2021 and is still increasing. In 2021 we lost 13 children a day. The highest number ever recorded.

Black Children Are Dying At A Higher Rate

During the period of 2017 to 2021, Black children and teens were six times as likely to die from gun violence as their White peers. In 2021 the gun related death rate for White children was 3.3 per 100,000. For Black children it was 20.5 per 100,000 children. The majority were Black boys.

Black Youth Suicide Rate Continues To Accelerate

From 2000 to 2020 Black youth from 10–19 years old experienced a 78% increase

in suicides. Black children 5-12 years old are twice as likely to commit suicide as their White peers. Black teen suicides are growing at an alarming rate. Researchers attribute this to adverse childhood experiences.

Saginaw’s Children Face The Threat Of Violence Every Day

Saginaw’s children are growing up in one of the most violent communities in the country. Saginaw has one of the highest homicide rates in the country. There were a total of 24 murders in 2020. That is 50.2 for every 100,000 people, well above the national homicide rate of 6.5 murders per 100,000. In 2020 there were 2,154 violent crimes reported for every 100,000 people in Saginaw, compared to 399 per 100,000 nationwide.

In 2021 Saginaw passed Detroit for the fourth most violent crime rate in the country. FBI data shows nearly 1,100 violent crimes in Saginaw in 2021. Saginaw had 19 homicides in both 2021 and 2022. In 2021 18 of the 19 homicides involved gun violence. In 2022, 16 of the 19 homicides involved gun violence. Three homicides occurred in Saginaw during the first four days of 2024. Saginaw needs a gun violence prevention program like Making Choices.

The Opioid Epidemic

Drug and alcohol abuse constitutes a major threat to the minds, strength, and future of a growing number of our children. The chemical plague, which is sweeping through the country, operates like an infectious disease and crosses all classes, social, cultural, and racial lines. From the heart of the poorest city to the outer limits of the richest suburbs, the testimony is the same. We are losing more and more children to drugs. It doesn’t matter if it’s the butcher, baker or candlestick maker’s son or daughter. Fentanyl overdose deaths have increased every year for the past ten years. In 2022 fentanyl was responsible for 200 deaths per day. Over 250,000 Ameri-

cans have died from fentanyl since 2018. It doesn’t matter if it’s fentanyl, oxycontin, codeine or crack. The result is the same. We are losing more and more children to drugs. Our children need a drug education and prevention program like Making Choices.

Making Choices Can Be Major Tool In Fight Against Gun Violence And Drugs

Making Choices is a mentor text book. It is field-tested and evidence based. Thompson says, “we believe that if you put a tool like Making Choices in the hands of a loving and caring mentor (parents, teacher, coach, Sunday school teacher) you can change the direction of a young adults life.” It presents hard to talk about subjects like gun violence, drugs, bullying and gangs in a very unique and engaging way. It’s hypothetical stories and questions are designed to generate an in depth discussion of the life altering choices and consequences presented by gun violence and drugs. These are discussions that every child in our community should participate in.

Schools And Local Government Must Play A Major Role In Fight Against Gun Violence And Drugs

Our schools have more daily contact with our children than any other public or private institution. They must accept responsibility for exposing our children to the kind of anti-gun violence and drug abuse materials contained in Making Choices.

However, the schools cannot do it alone. Nor can they afford the kind of effort it will take. Our local governmental entities, including the City of Saginaw and Saginaw County must step forward and fund more crime and drug prevention programs. The world won’t get no better if we just let it be. Our children deserve the chance to have a childhood free from violence and drugs and a community with leaders who ensure that they are safe in their schools, neighborhoods, and communities.

+ COMMUNITY



The economy in 2024

By CHRIS DOUGLAS

The economy in 2023 proved surprisingly resilient. The year ended with the unemployment rate at 3.7% and an average of 225,000 new jobs created per month. Gross domestic product (GDP), which is the value of all final goods and services produced in the economy, grew by 5.2% in the third quarter of 2023 and projected to have grown by 2.4% in the fourth quarter. GDP growth is what is meant by economic growth. Third and fourth quarter economic growth was extremely robust. Inflation continues to edge downward towards the Federal Reserve's 2% target as inflation is currently at 3.3%.

A quick word about inflation. Inflation means how quickly prices are rising, on average, across the economy. Nine percent inflation, which is what inflation peaked at in June 2022, meant that prices were rising by an average of 9%. Something that cost \$1 would thus cost \$1.09 at the end of the year. When inflation falls to 2%, prices are still rising, but only by an average of 2%. Something that cost \$1 would cost \$1.02 by the end of the year. Thus, when inflation falls, prices are still rising, just not as quickly.

Many people believe that inflation falling means prices are falling. This is not

what happens when inflation falls. Prices will never get back to where they were prior to the pandemic. This is why inflation is such a serious problem and why the Federal Reserve severely dropped the ball by letting inflation spike. Any purchasing power that is lost when there is a burst of inflation is gone forever. Inflation is a tax on everyone that they never get back.

With that said, if the 2024 economy is like 2023, we will certainly take it. The question is, will it? That is a hard question to answer since the economy is in unprecedented territory. There has never been a situation where \$5 trillion in spending, which is what the three rounds of COVID "stimulus" sums to, has been dumped into the economy and then interest rates substantially increased to bring down the inflation that resulted. To put this in perspective, amount of the government spent on COVID stimulus exceeds the amount the government spent fighting World War II.

Harry Truman was the president at the end of World War II and famously wanted a one-handed economist so the economist could not say "on the other hand." I think it is impossible to give an economic forecast for 2024 without being a two-handed economist. On the one hand, it seems likely that the low unemployment and strong economic growth will contin-

ue into 2024 while inflation continues to slow. Unemployment and inflation data is released monthly while gross domestic product data is released quarterly. Thus, it is too early to know what these figures are for January 2024.

Data on initial claims for unemployment, meaning the first time someone files for unemployment insurance, is released weekly so we have the first reading for this for 2024. Data for the week of January 13, 2024 found that only 187,000 people filed for unemployment insurance for the first time, 20+ year low. This suggests that the labor market remains robust. The Cleveland Federal Reserve district bank conducts an inflation forecast and is currently forecasting that inflation is at 2.3%, which is very close to the Federal Reserve's 2% target. These are encouraging signs that the economy remains on its way to a "soft landing," which means inflation is reduced without triggering a recession. When the Federal Reserve under then-chair Paul Volker raised interest rates in the early 1980s to "break the back" of the 1970s inflation, a severe recession resulted where the unemployment rate hit nearly 17% in Michigan. This "hard landing" is why

**CONTINUES ON PG 31,
ECONOMY**

Continued from pg 30, economy

many forecasters worried about a recession in 2023. Fortunately, that did not materialize.

To complete Harry Truman's two-handed economist, on the other hand, there are red flags in the economy that have me concerned. If these flags do not lead to a problem in 2024, I worry that they will at some point in the future if they are not addressed and I see no political will to address them.

A major red flag is that as interest rates increase, interest payments on the national debt become more expensive for the federal government. The federal government is currently paying \$1 trillion in interest annually on the national debt. This is the second largest expenditure item in the federal budget, behind only Social Security. The government spends more on interest on the national debt than what it spends on the entire defense budget. Interest payments on the national debt will only increase as the government continues to add \$1.5 trillion annually to it and national debt financed that is financed at low interest rates rolls-over at a higher interest rate. Interest payments on the debt consume about 40% of all personal income taxes paid and arguably provides no benefit to taxpayers, since they represent past spending rather than current spending on things like infrastructure that might benefit taxpayers. It is not optional for the federal government to make these interest payments because if they don't, it would trigger a default, followed by a financial crisis and severe recession.

Calling current federal budgeting 'irresponsible' is greatly understating the situation, which is another red flag. Economic theory says the government should run deficits when the economy is bad and a surplus when the economy is good, so that the budget is balanced over the business cycle. As I previously discussed, the 2023 economy was strong, so the federal government should be moving to at least balancing the budget. However, the federal budget is nowhere near balanced and balancing it in the short or medium run appears impossible. The government continues to run \$1.5 trillion dollar annual deficits while the unemployment rate is below 4%. This is an unprecedented amount of debt to

add to the national debt while the economy is strong. Congress and the president spend as if they face no budget constraint. Whenever there is discussion of spending billions or hundreds of billions of dollars, there is never a discussion on how this will be paid for. It is just tacked-onto the national debt, which will eventually be paid for by future generations.

It is hard to overstate the severity of the problem. The federal government could cut military spending zero and the budget would still be in deficit. The government could eliminate everything it does besides pay interest on the national debt, Social Security, Medicare, and defense and the budget would still be in deficit. The government could increase income taxes by 50% and the budget would balance, but this assumes everyone would just pay these higher taxes rather than engage in tax avoidance, which seems unlikely.

Balancing the budget would take a combination of spending cuts, including cuts to things like Social Security, Medicare, and defense, and tax increases. This simply will not happen given the political divide in this country. If one party proposed this, they would be immediately attacked by the opposition party in the next election and likely suffer significant electoral losses. The long-term risk is that the federal government loses its ability to borrow if the market begins to fear that the government is unable to repay what it has already borrowed. If this happens, the government would instantly have to balance its budget through draconian spending cuts and tax increases, which would trigger a severe recession. The longer both parties put-off finding a way to balance the budget, the greater the chances we could face such a crisis.

Another risk is that inflation does not continue to decrease in 2024, which would put the Federal Reserve in a tough spot. The market expects the Federal Reserve to cut interest rates in 2024 by upwards of 1.5 percentage points. This expectation assumes inflation continues to fall, giving the Federal Reserve breathing room to make these rate cuts. However, inflation unexpectedly increased in December 2023. What if it continues to increase into 2024? This would force the Federal Re-

serve to have to pull back from the expected rate interest rate cuts or increase them, which would likely trigger an adverse market reaction and possible recession, or the Federal Reserve would have to back-off its inflation fight and tolerate higher inflation. Many people bought homes in 2023 at high prices and high mortgage interest rates with the expectation that interest rates would fall in 2024, allowing them to refinance. If rates do not fall and monthly payments become unaffordable, we could see similar stresses in the housing market that we saw in 2008-09.

Every recession in the last fifty years has been preceded by higher interest rates as well as a higher price of crude oil. Thus, as long as interest rates remain elevated, the risk of a recession is there. Likewise, a sudden spike in the price of oil could also trigger a recession. I was concerned about a recession in early 2022 when oil hit nearly \$110/barrel following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The price of oil then moderated and there was no recession, but geopolitical events are a risk for 2024.

There have been numerous geopolitical catastrophes post-COVID, from the United States' disastrous withdrawal from Afghanistan, to the brutal Russian-Ukrainian and Israeli-Gazan wars. All of these are humanitarian catastrophes that arguably could have been prevented. Thus far, they have not led to economic disruption. There is always a risk that could change, for instance, if the Israeli-Gazan war spills-over to the broader Middle East and disrupts oil production or shipping routes. The severe recessions of 1973-75 and 1980 were caused by oil production disruptions due to Middle Eastern conflicts.

I remain cautiously optimistic about 2024, given the strong performance of the U.S. economy in 2023. I would rest easier about the economy if the budget was balanced (or at least on its way to being balanced), interest rates could moderate, and peace was pursued around the globe. Until political leaders in the United States choose to pursue this path, I worry that at some point, these issues will catch-up to the economy and lead to significant economic hardship.



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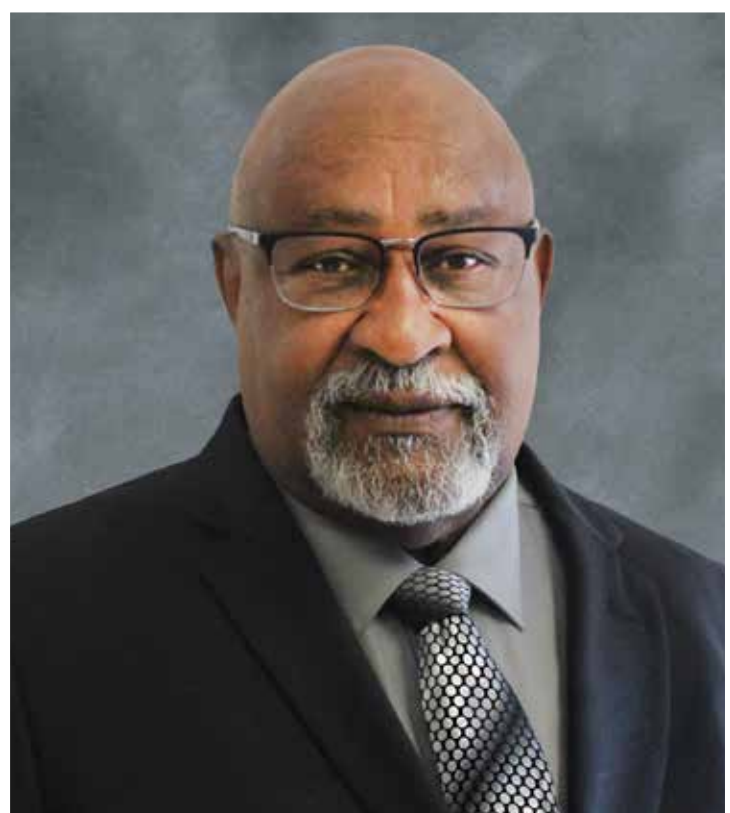
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+ FAITH BASED

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MINISTRY WITHOUT WALLS - 3783 MANNION RD, SAGINAW, MI 48603

Join us at Ministry Without Walls

By **PASTOR JOHN DUNN**
MINISTRY WITHOUT WALLS

Ministry Without Walls recently returned to our building at 3783 Mannion Road with a new vision. The last couple of years, the direction of the world, and the pandemic starting with Covid have all certainly become eye openers. After seeking God for His direction and His will, we are expanding our vision. Today, we clearly understand that the Church is our community.

The assignment that God has given to us is to “Break Down Walls”, bringing both spiritual and those who work in the community together.

Our vision is for Ministry Without Walls to be:

- A place where the Spirit, Soul and Body becomes whole
- A place where resources are available to those in need
- A place where church, volunteers

and community professionals work together to accomplish the will of God.

- A place where love flows, and judgement is absent
- A place where privacy is protected
- A place where safety is a priority
- A place where the whole person is important

Our ongoing teaching and seminars will include:

- Outreach
- Growing Spiritually
- Mental Health
- Healthy Living
- Finding Purpose
- Money Matters
- Entrepreneurship
- Boys to Men
- Women of Wisdom
- Discipleship

We understand that the mission field is not a country far away. It is around the corner, down the street, in our community. We also know that the vision given to us will not be easy to accomplish. We know that we can not do it alone. It will take a “village”.

We are committing our resources, time, talents, people, and our connections to tear down the “walls of the church”.

If our vision is connecting with you on some level and it appeals to you and sounds like something you might want to be a part of, we invite you to join us at 11:00 on Sundays to meet us personally so we can answer any questions you might have.

God bless You, come experience for yourself, Join us!!

Pastor, John Dunn
Ministry Without Walls
3783 Mannion Road
Saginaw, MI 48603

+ FAITH BASED

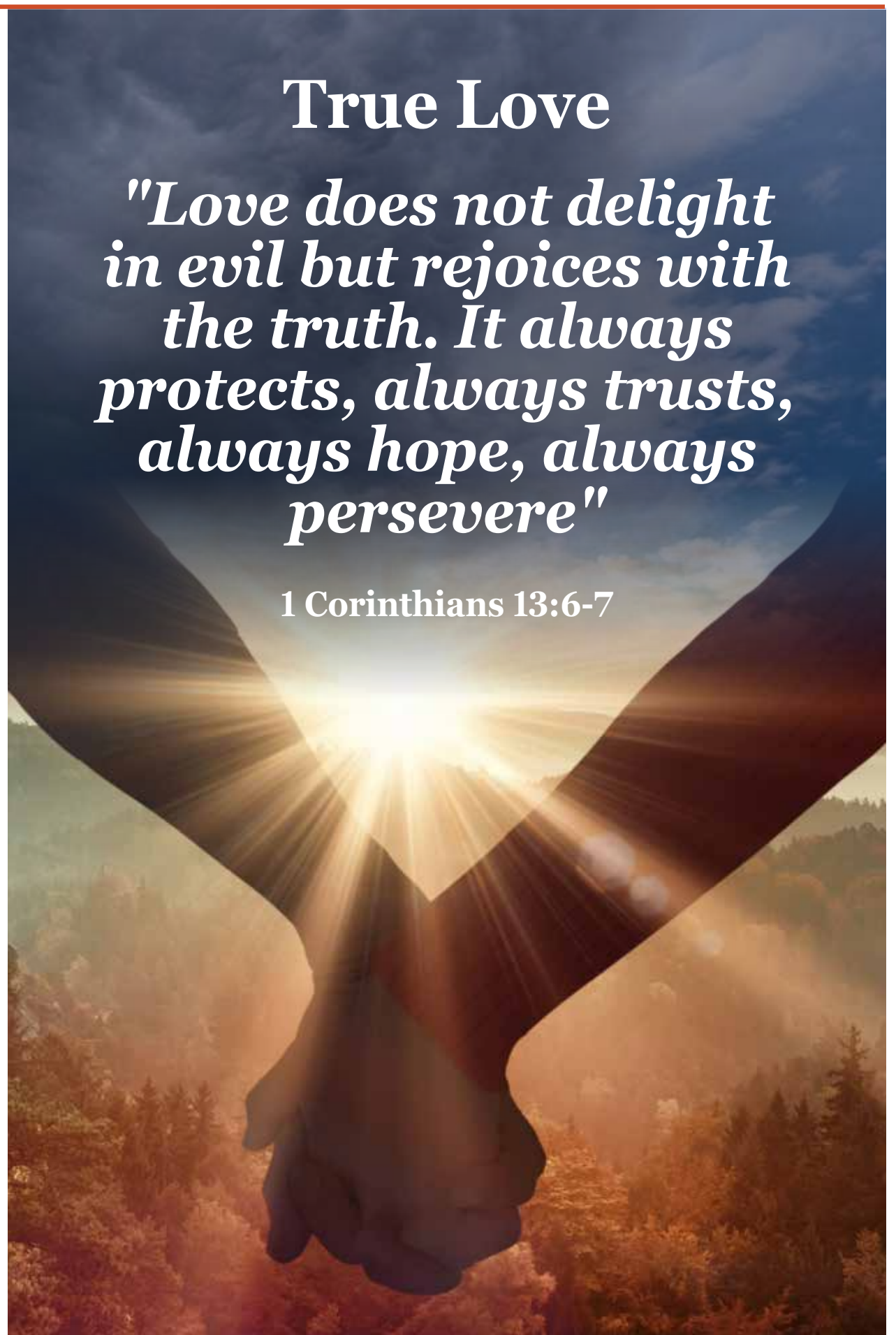
MICHIGAN BANNER
SERMONETTE SERIES

By MINISTER CAROLYN CARTER
TOWNSEL

In these verses of Scriptures, we find Apostle Paul contending with several issues in the Corinthian church. He recognized that these problems were stemming from the Believers having heart trouble. They were void in their understanding of true love. To combat the heart issues Paul taught that love does not enjoy or *“delight in”* evil actions, rather true love finds joy in truth and righteousness.

True love rejoices in what is right and good. Everything that conceals sin or seeks to justify wrongdoing is at the opposite end of the spectrum of godly love. Love does not sweep sin under the rug. Love does not try to find ways to get away with ungodly behavior, and it does not put up with injustice. On the contrary, it cherishes truth, celebrates godly behavior, and promotes virtue. True love has nothing to hide.

Additionally, “not to delight in evil” carries the notion of not gloating over someone else’s guilt. It is much too common for people to rejoice when an enemy is guilty of a crime or caught in a



True Love

“Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hope, always persevere”

1 Corinthians 13:6-7

sin. As believers, we should never find ourselves reveling for or enjoying the fall of another. This is not God’s Love. Love rejoices in the virtue of others, not in their vices. Sin is an occasion for sorrow, not for joy.

Beloved, **“True Love”** is endless

and unbroken, continuously unchanging and dependable, never wavering or doubting, nor holding back. **“True Love”** protects, trusts, hopes, and persevere. This is the love that God desires that we have one for another.

Blessings To All...

+ CHURCH DIRECTORY

A



Agape Faith Bible Training Center
Rev. Dr. Joseph Rodriguez
8121 Dixie Highway
Birch Run, MI 48415
(989) 777-3200 Ext. 20

B



Bethel AME Church
Rev. Dennis Laffoon
535 Cathay St.
Saginaw, MI 48601
989-755-7011



Bethlehem Temple Church of the Apostolic Faith
District Elder Curtis E. Johnson, Pastor
3521 Webber St
Saginaw, Michigan 48601
989-755-8381



Bread of Life Harvest Center
Senior Pastor Rodney J. McTaggart
3726 Fortune Blvd.
Saginaw, MI 48603
989-790-7933

C

Christ Disciples Baptist Church
Founder Pastor Eddie Benson
Pastor Genevieve Benson
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Christ Fellowship Baptist Church
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PastorD818@gmail.com



Christ Image Community Church
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Saginaw, MI 48638
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christimage.us

F



Faith Harvest Church
Bishop Ronald E. Chipp
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office@faithharvestministry.org



Faith Ministries Church
Rev. Dr. Anthony Revis
3420 E Ashman St.
Midland, MI 48642
989-837-7777
faithministrieschurch.org

G



Glimpse Of Hope Ministries
Pastor Leslie D Lewis
2211 S. Outer Dr.
Saginaw Michigan 48601
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g.ministries@aol.com



Glory House Ministries
Pastor Jim House
3660 Hermansau Rd.
Saginaw, MI 48603
(989) 752-4769

Grace Chapel Church
Pastor James Nelson
2202 Janes Ave.
Saginaw, MI 48601
989-755-3212

Greater Williams Temple
608 E Remington St
Saginaw, MI 48601
989-755-5291

H



Holy Communion Gospel Center
Pastor Charlene Washington
1245 E. Genesee
Saginaw, MI 48607
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J

Jacob's Ladder
Pastor Dennis Barlow
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Saginaw, MI 48602
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Life in Christ Ministries
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Messiah Missionary Baptist Church
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New Beginnings Deliverance Ministry
Pastor Roy & Evelyn Baldwin
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New Birth Missionary Baptist
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New Covenant Christian Center
Pastor Ron Frierson
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Saginaw, MI 48601
989-752-8485



New Hope Missionary Baptist Church
Rev. Dr. Willie F. Casey
1721 Tuscola Street
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New Life Baptist Ministries
Dr. Craig Tatum
1401 Janes Ave.
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989-753-1151
newlifelcm.com

New Mt. Calvary Baptist Church
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Saginaw, MI 48601
989-754-0801

P

Prince of Peace Baptist Church
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825 North 24th Street
Saginaw, MI 48601
989-754-2841

R

Radiant Church of God
Pastor Adolfo & Erlinda Martinez
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Saginaw, MI 48602
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www.radiantchurchofgod.org



Resurrection Life Ministries Full Gospel Baptist Church
Pastor Carolyn L. Wilkins
2320 Sheridan Avenue
Saginaw, MI 48601
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Saint Paul Baptist Church
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Facebook: St Paul MBC Family Connection



Second Baptist Church
Pastor-Elect Marcelle T. Smith
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Bay City, MI 48708
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T



Transforming Life Ministries
Pastor William Brown
523 Hayden
Saginaw, MI 48601
989-754-9573



True Vine Baptist Church
Pastor Paul E. Broaddus
2930 Janes Street
Saginaw, MI 48601
989-752-0751

U



United Missionary Baptist Church
Rev. Cedric Nickson
4290 Lamson Street
Saginaw, MI 48601
Church: 989-759-9411
Pastor 810.223.2987

V



Victorious Belivers Ministries Church
Pastor Chris V. Pryor
624 S. Outer Dr.
Saginaw, MI
989-755-7692

W



World Outreach Campus of Greater Coleman Temple Ministries
Supt. H.J. Coleman Jr.
2405 Bay Rd.
Saginaw, MI 48602
989-752-7957

Z



Zion Missionary Baptist Church
Pastor Rodrick Smith
721 Johnson
Saginaw, MI 48607
989-754-9621

+ FUNDRAISING GOODTIMES

Consensus is number one

By MEL AND PEARL SHAW

What does it take to achieve fundraising success? Is it hiring the right person? Writing a perfect grant? Becoming the darling of the powers-that-be? Nope. Fundraising success begins with consensus amongst leadership regarding the organization's mission, vision, goals, strategic direction, and financial position. If you are not all on one page, it will be hard to move forward.

Successful fundraising begins long before a fundraising plan is ever created. It starts with your organization's vision and mission. These two items are at the core of non-profit operations. It is the vision and mission that drive your strategic direction and goals. And it is the strategic direction that influences fundraising and the use of funds.

Once the vision and mission are established, it is the chief executive's responsibility to ensure they are understood and that the board and employees are in agreement with them. Sometimes we find that the vision, mission, and strategic direc-

tions are documented, but that they exist primarily on paper. Discussing these helps bring them back into focus and allows for consensus — or dissenting viewpoints — to develop.

If you find it challenging to secure understanding and agreement, don't worry — it is better to know now rather than later. Take the time to talk things out. Encourage questions — especially the hard questions that no-one wants to ask. True agreement is something that takes time to develop and needs to be retained over the years. And sometimes things change. If your vision, mission, and strategic plan need revising, take the time to do so. This may require the assistance of a strategic planning consultant so that all parties can participate fully in the brainstorming and planning processes. If it does, it is worth the investment: working from a plan helps ensure that resources are used effectively and that all members of the organization are working in concert toward agreed upon goals.

When you begin discussions on how much money your organization needs to raise, you will refer to your strategic plan to map out what you are seeking to achieve over the coming years. This is the starting

point from which you begin to map out costs and fundraising goals. Understanding the strategic plan allows leaders — executives and board members — to make informed financial projections. Understanding the organization's financial position and projections informs fundraising and assures that the organization is engaged in proactive fundraising instead of "emergency fundraising."

Without consensus you may find that you can raise some money, but not the money you need. Donors and funders are always listening, and when organizational leaders share differing or conflicting stories they know that you don't know where your organization is headed and what you are seeking to accomplish. They may still give, but it won't be at the level they would if they had confidence in your leadership.

We encourage you to invest the time and effort to reach full understanding and agreement — your organization's sustained success depends on it.

Excerpted from Prerequisites for Fundraising Success by Mel and Pearl Shaw.



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Mel and Pearl Shaw are authors of four books on fundraising available on Amazon.com. For help growing your fundraising visit www.saadandshaw.com or call (901) 522-8727.

+ EDUCATION



COURTESY PHOTO

1st Anniversary of the MSU tragedy



By **CRAIG DOUGLAS**
RETIRED EDUCATOR

It was February 13, 2023 a little past 8:00 o'clock in the evening when all hell broke loose at Michigan State University.

My alma mater.

We all remember where we were when we heard.....A gunman let loose with a fire-storm of bullets at MSU. Three students died, and five more were injured. The ripple effect impacted tens of thousands of students and alumni, not to mention the entire nation and much of the free world.

On the one-year anniversary, what can be done to support everyone who will observe the milestone in one way or another?

What we know is, we all grieve differently in various ways. Therefore there is not a single pathway to support people who are impacted. To paraphrase a friend, we need to meet people where they are at. Realizing, of course, people are at unique and differing places in terms of the MSU tragedy.

A resource I am citing for this work is GriefShare as found on the website, www.griefshare.org.

[griefshare.org](http://www.griefshare.org). I will abstract three concepts from their extensive work for this segment.

1. Special days trigger grief.

The 1st anniversary is indeed, one type of day that will likely trigger grief.

Thus the impact for parents, friends, and educators is to be "on guard" for signs such as moodiness (especially sadness) and being upset. If/when these signs surface, be supportive by listening and paraphrasing. Sometimes when we are hit by grief, we are comforted by a hug, smile, or simple reassurance.

2. You cannot go back.

The tragedy happened, and it may seem like a bad dream from which one wants to awaken.

Sadly, this is not the case. The MSU campus cannot return to the way it was before. Its landscape has forever changed. More cameras and other security safeguards have been installed. Locks have been changed and other preventive measures taken.

And everyone (I mean, "everyone") cannot go back, either. Everyone has been impacted in one way or another. We cannot go back. None of us can.

Cold truth....the sooner we accept that, the closer we nudge towards healing.

3. You cannot stay here.

Someone once said, "yesterday is gone and you cannot stay 'today'." This means we need to be looking "ahead," one day/ one week/ one month at a time.

To accomplish this takes strength and courage. It takes faith, for me it is in God who loves me. Prayer. For others, it may be similar reflective and/or meditative practice that is prayerlike. Bottom line: there needs to be a source of strength for the simple reason is there will be times of sorrow and waves of grief that will overcome each of us on some level.

But we cannot "stay here" we must forge ahead. At our own speed and with our own self-doubts. With tears and sorrow.

Grief has no ending, and we all need to push through to tomorrow.

May all of us acknowledge the 1st anniversary in our own way, by remembering the friend and family of the three victims and five wounded. By recognizing that all students, faculty, alumni, and members of "Spartan nation" will grieve tomorrow.

Resources:

<https://www.cnn.com/us/live-news/michigan-state-university-shooting-updates-2-14-23/index.html>

<https://www.griefshare.org/>



THE POWER OF THE PROMISE DEPENDS ON ALL OF US!

Support the Saginaw Promise with a
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The Power and ability of the Saginaw Promise to affect
change through postsecondary education, depends on
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Since 2012, the Saginaw Promise has awarded
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The Saginaw Promise asks you to invest in Saginaw and its students with a gift
of support to the Saginaw Promise today! The Saginaw Promise is working to
provide the opportunity for and to eliminate barriers to postsecondary education to
impact the future of Saginaw, its economy and the lives of its students. **Please join
us as a community partner with your gift of support!**

To donate visit:
<https://form.jotform.com/221173527315147>
or visit the Saginaw Promise website
or contact our office at **(989)755-0545.**

Thank You

It takes a village...all of us to care for our community and our children....

Saginaw Promise | www.saginawpromise.org | (989) 755-0545





COURTESY PHOTO

Saginaw Promise... a scholarship to impact the future of Saginaw and its students!

Education is something that will last a lifetime and will open doors to life and career opportunities! The Saginaw Promise is working to affect Saginaw's future, its economy and quality of life by eliminating barriers to postsecondary education with information and a scholarship for students who live in the Saginaw Promise Zone.

- Scholarships may be used at technical/trade Schools, community colleges or universities to earn a program certificate or degree.
- Scholarships are available up to two years.
- Parental income or GPA are not considered. (Students must maintain the standards of the institution they enroll with.

- Students who complete the application have up to six years from high school graduation to use their scholarship.
- Visit www.saginawpromise for organizational and scholarship information and details or telephone the Saginaw Promise at (989) 755-0545.

Eligible Students:

Students must live in and graduate from a high school in the Saginaw Promise Zone (which consists of the cities of Saginaw, Zilwaukee, Kochville and that part of Buena Vista designated to the Saginaw Public School District) and students must meet the residency and school attendance requirements to apply

How to Apply?

- Complete the online Saginaw Community Foundation "Scholarship Application"—check off the Saginaw Promise and complete FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid-- when it becomes available online.
- Scholarship application deadline is February 9, 2024

Note: If you or know of someone who has completed the scholarship application and has used some or none of their Saginaw Promise scholarship, the student has up to six years from high school graduation to apply to use their Saginaw Promise scholarship. Telephone the Saginaw Promise office at (989) 755-0545 to determine your scholarship status.

+ EDUCATION



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Despite staffing challenges, Saginaw Intermediate School District's Early Childhood Department continues to provide students and families across the Great Lakes Bay Region with a variety of resources!

Despite staffing challenges, Saginaw Intermediate School District's Early Childhood Department continues to provide students and families across the Great Lakes Bay Region with a variety of resources!

The Saginaw ISD Early Childhood Services Department provides an array of resources for children and families throughout Saginaw County including home visits, preschool programming, and community support. Programs are designed to strengthen families by providing high-quality learning environ-

ments and support for their children while sharing access to essential family resources. Our programs include the following:

- Birth-5
- Early On
- Great Start Collaborative
- Great Start Readiness Program
- Great Start to Quality Eastern Resource Center
- Healthy Families America

- Head Start/Early Head Start
- Michigan Adolescent Pregnancy and Parenting Program (MI-APPP)
- Michigan Tri Share Child Care Program

Our largest programs encompass our preschool programming. The Early Head Start (EHS) program serves 156 students

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in 6 classrooms and several homes while our Head Start (HS) program serves 859 students in 51 classrooms and 17 sites. Our Great Start to Readiness Program (GSRP) serves over 1,100 students across Saginaw county in local school districts, community based organizations and charter schools. These programs are essential to providing our youngest, most vulnerable learners the experiences they need to build a firm foundation for future academic success. It's impossible to do this alone and we value our partners at the local, state and federal level helping us in our pursuit for funding, support and legislative advocacy for high quality services.

Despite staffing challenges, SISD continues to keep the provision of these services at the forefront of what we do. These challenges are not prevalent just in our county, but across the state of Michigan. Research shows that the early foundational years of a child's life are of the greatest importance due to (but not limited to) the following:

- There are 700 to 1,000 new neural connections forming every second in a child's brain,
- Genetics in addition to life experiences help shape the developing brain,
- The foundation is key for future cognitive abilities, and
- Vocabulary at age 3 can predict 3rd grade reading achievement.

Implementation of high quality programs depends on a quality workforce. Providers locally and across the state know all too well the challenges we have and continue to experience being able to recruit and retain highly qualified staff. We are in need of individuals with a passion to provide much needed services to our students and families across Saginaw County. We encourage you to review the Saginaw ISD current preschool openings at www.sisd.cc and select "Join Our Team!" at the top right corner of the

page to see all of our openings for the following positions:

- Head Start Lead Teacher
- Head Start Associate Teacher
- Program Service Aide
- Home Visitor
- Early Head Start Lead Teacher
- Family Service Advocate
- Program Support Secretary

The credentials required for these positions range from a high school diploma to advanced degrees and certifications. Below you will find a list of our sites as well as our partner sites providing EHS, HS and GSRP services. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact Dr. Ericka Taylor at (989) 399-7423 or by email at etaylor@sisd.cc. Please, join our team in providing much needed services to the children and families within Saginaw County!

Early Head Start/Head Start Locations:

- Adams Avenue
- Arrowwood Elementary
- Birch Run (North Elementary)
- Birch Run Annex
- Brucker
- Brunkow
- Building Blocks Child Care & Preschool Center
- Chesaning
- Claytor
- Hemmeter
- Jerome
- Kinder Kare Center
- Merrill
- Murphy Farm
- Saginaw Career Complex
- St. Peter & Paul
- Valley

Great Start to Readiness Program Locations

- Birch Run Area Preschool
- Bridgeport-Spaulding Preschool
- Building Blocks Childcare & Preschool Center
- Carrollton Early Childhood Center
- Chesaning Union Schools Latchkey and Preschool
- EduPlay Discovery Center
- Francis Reh Public School Academy
- Hemlock Child Development Programs
- Merrill Community Child Development Center
- Michigan Child Care Centers, Inc.
- Roaring Lions Learning Center
- Saginaw Preparatory Academy
- Saginaw Public Schools
 - Arthur Eddy Academy
 - Henry Doerr Early Childhood
 - Herig PreK & B/ATB
 - Kempton PreK & B/ATB
 - Jessie Loomis Preschool
 - Merrill Park PreK
 - Rouse PreK
 - Stone Preschool
 - Zilwaukee Prek & B/ATB
- St Charles Children's Center
- Wee Care Christian Children's Center

⁴Head Start Program Information report (2019-2020); Kids Count Data Book (Michigan, 2021); U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment Statistics (2020); Great Start Readiness Program State Evaluation Annual Report (2019-2020).

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SAGINAW PUBLIC SCHOOLS IS EXCITED TO ANNOUNCE



Eric Gordon

Principal of
Saginaw United High School



MR. GORDON'S JOURNEY TO THE PHOENIX

Saginaw Public Schools is pleased to announce that Eric Gordon, has been selected as the principal of Saginaw United High School.

Mr. Gordon has over 24 years of experience as an educator in various roles, beginning his career as a classroom aide at Heavenrich Elementary School. Following that experience, Mr. Gordon became a teacher, Dean of Students and Assistant Principal at Central Middle School. Mr. Gordon also served as the Principal of Arthur Eddy Academy where he led the transformation efforts to pull the school out of low performing status. He is currently the Principal at Saginaw High School.

Mr. Gordon's educational training and credentials includes an Associates' Degree from Delta College, a Bachelor Degree of Arts in Math and Science from Saginaw Valley State University, and a Masters Degree in Educational Leadership from Saginaw Valley State University.

During his tenure as Principal, Mr. Gordon has increased student academic achievement on state and local assessments, increased graduation rates and improved the overall school culture and climate.

Mr. Gordon is a Saginaw native, who has grown into a transformational leader through the experiences garnered in Saginaw Public Schools. These experiences have fed his passion, commitment, and focus as it relates to educating students. Supportive, demanding, hardworking and results driven are all words used to describe his leadership. He is excited to galvanize all stakeholders toward the one goal of ensuring that all students at the new Saginaw United High School leave READY to be competitive in a 21st century economy.

Saginaw Public Schools

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Saginaw Intermediate School District (ISD) is an educational service agency that provides effective and innovative leadership, services, resources, and programs throughout Saginaw County school districts since 1962. Saginaw ISD's **Early Childhood Services** department offers an array of support for children and families, including home visitation, preschool programs, and community resources.



Scan the QR code to learn more about Saginaw ISD's Early Childhood programs and family services. You may also contact Executive Director Dr. Ericka Taylor at etaylor@sisd.cc.



SAGINAW INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL DISTRICT

3933 Barnard Road, Saginaw, MI 48603
(989) 399-7473 | www.sisd.cc





About Saginaw ISD HE/EHS

Established in 1965, Head Start promotes school readiness for children, ages three to five, in low-income families by offering educational, nutritional, health, social and other services.

Head Start programs promote school readiness by enhancing the social and cognitive development of children through the provision of educational, health, nutritional, social and other services to enrolled children and families.

Early Head Start, launched in 1995, provides support to low-income infants, toddlers,

pregnant women and their families.

EHS programs enhance children’s physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development; assist pregnant women to access comprehensive prenatal and postpartum care; support parents’ efforts to fulfill their parental roles; and help parents move toward self-sufficiency.

Together Head Start and Early Head Start have served tens of millions of children and their families.

At Saginaw ISD Head Start our attentive staff is available Monday through Friday to answer all your questions and make every effort to ensure you are 100 percent satisfied.

Saginaw ISD Head Start
Claytor Administrative Building
3200 Perkins Street
Saginaw, MI 48601
Phone 989.752.2193
Fax 989.921.7146

Office Hours
Monday: 8 AM - 4:30 PM
Tuesday: 8 AM - 4:30 PM
Wednesday: 8 AM - 4:30 PM
Thursday: 8 AM - 4:30 PM
Friday: 8 AM - 4:30 PM
Saturday: 8 AM - 4:30 PM
Sunday: 8 AM - 4:30 PM

For additional information concerning Saginaw ISD Head Start visit: www.saginawheadstart.org

Source: www.saginawheadstart.org



Sabrina Beeman-Jackson

Saginaw ISD Head Start/Early Head Start Program Director

“Head Start graduates are more likely to graduate from high school and less likely to need special education, repeat a grade, or commit crimes in adolescence.”

Joe Baca, former Dem. California Congressman

“Our mission is to provide high quality services, developing school readiness and family empowerment for prenatal to age five children and families by working in partnership with parents and the community.”
-Saginaw ISD HE/EHS

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CHILD CARE

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The MI Tri-Share Child Care Program (Tri-Share) is an innovative approach to increasing access to high-quality, affordable child care for working families, with the cost of child care shared by an employer, the employee, and the State of Michigan.

Current Partners

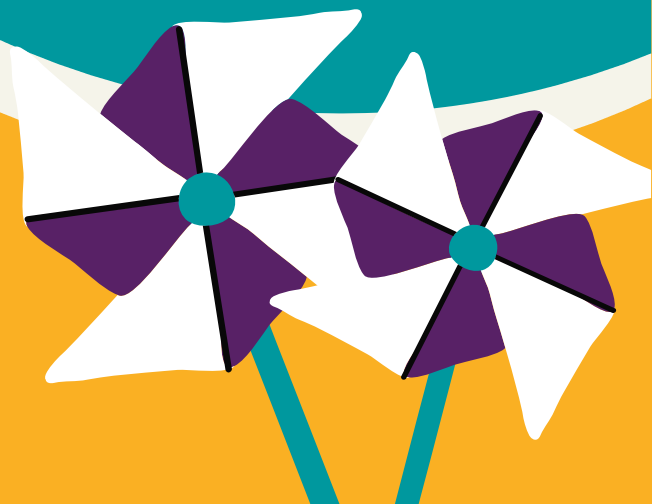
- Au Gres-Sims Schools
- Bay Arenac ISD
- Children's Discovery Academy
- Gratiot Isabella RESD
- Hemlock SemiConductor
- Ready, Set, Grow
- Saginaw ISD Head Start
- Vantage Plastics

Current Childcare Providers

- ABC Day Care
- Best Friend Preschool, LLC
- Bright Beginnings
- Children's Discovery Academy at Carrie Knause
- Christ the King - Little Knights Preschool
- Grace Christian School
- Janas Full House
- Jolene Adams
- Kinder Kare
- Lil' Sprouts
- Little Explorers Learning Center
- Little Saints
- Play, Learn, Grow (Lil' Sprouts)
- Ready Set Grow
- Swan Valley Learning Center
- The Little Red Wagon Daycare, LLC
- Trinity Lutheran Church/School
- W.R. Bush Day Care

SIGNING UP AS AN EMPLOYER:

Saginaw ISD is one of several hubs. If you are interested in signing up as an employer, please contact Dr. Ericka Taylor at etaylor@sisd.cc.



+ SPORTS

Lakers respond with 20th season win against GRCC after shocking loss

By HASANI ALI

How did the Mid Michigan College Women's basketball team respond to handling their first loss of the season?

If you guessed a 79-point blowout, then you are correct!

The Lakers were upset in conference play by Bay College, 73-66 back on Feb. 3. An offensive struggle in the third quarter resulted in a 13-point deficit which eventually put the game out of reach.

Mid Michigan responded with a sense of urgency on Feb. 7 with a vengeful 109-30 against Grand Rapids Community College.

The game was immediately out of reach after the Lakers topped the Raiders 30-9 in the first quarter. Freshman Chloe Watson topped off a 21-2 run with a two-point bucket with three minutes remaining in the first quarter.

Sophia Modderman stopped the run with a bucket of her own on the ensuing play after a foul.

GRCC was held to six points in the second quarter as Mid Michigan took a commanding 59-15 halftime lead. Kaylie Vanderhulst and Avery Jirous attempted to get the ball rolling for the Raiders with a 4-0 run between the end of the first and start of the second quarter, but the Lakers wasted no time adding onto their lead.

Though the offense was slower in the second half, Mid Michigan did not let up.

Four 3-pointers was the start of the quick 12-4 Laker run that started the third quarter. It was the best quarter for GRCC, but was still outscored by Mid Michigan, 26-10.

The Raiders (7-12 overall, 4-4 MCCA) were held to five points in the fourth quarter.

Mid Michigan pushed their record to 20-1, 7-1 in conference play. The win marked the 9th consecutive season totaling 20 wins, excluding the 2020-21 season due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Watson led the way for the Lakers with 20 points on 8-of-13 shooting, including

4-of-8 from three. Watson also had 5 assists in the game.

The 20-point performance marks the third time this season Watson scored 20 or more.

Freshman Rachel Resio went 5-of-10 shooting, adding 17 points. She also had 6 assists, 5 steals, and 4 rebounds.

Resio was perfect from the free throw line, hitting 4-of-4.

Freshman Kahli Heuker dropped her fourth double-double, going 5-of-9 shooting. She scored 15 points and pulled down 12 rebounds, half were offensive boards.

Freshman Paige Ebels continued to be a spark off the bench, scoring 11 points and dishing 6 assists. This was Ebels 5th time in 8 games scoring double digits off the

bench.

Freshman Jiarayatou Cisse scored a season-high 10 points off the bench, going 5-of-5 shooting, while also grabbing 3 rebounds.

Freshman Addysen Gray added 10 points in the contest. Gray knocked down three triples in four attempts.

The Lakers dominated defensively, forcing 28 turnovers. Offensively, the team had 30 assists on 39 made field goals.

As of Feb. 12, Mid Michigan is now 21-1, due to a forfeit by North Central Michigan College.

The Lakers will remain home on Valentine's Day to host Delta College (4-11 overall, 3-5 MCCA). Tip-off is at 5:30 p.m.



COURTESY PHOTO

+ SPORTS

Chiefs are back-to-back Super Bowl champions in OT win

By HASANI ALI

What a turnout for one of the most unanticipated Super Bowl games in quite some time.

Patrick Mahomes was Jordan-esque in overtime, connecting a 3-yard touchdown pass of a play-action pass with receiver Mecole Hardman waiting in the flats, giving the rallying Chiefs a 25-22 win over the 49ers and the club's third title in five years.

Kansas City is now the NFL's ninth repeat Super Bowl champs, the first time in 19 years.

Veteran tight end Travis Kelce is already anticipating a chance for a 3-peat as he was joined on stage by his pop-star girlfriend Taylor Swift.

"Well, you know the goal has always been to get three," Kelce screamed on stage after sharing a kiss with Swift. "But we couldn't get here without getting that two, and having that target on our back all year. How about that? We get a chance to do it three times in a row."

The least-wanted Super Bowl that was hosted in Las Vegas was exactly how the fans predicted it – boring and slow paced.

With the game picking up late in the fourth quarter and the game going into overtime was the saving grace for a lack-luster championship game.

Jake Moody booted a 53-yard field goal to give the 49ers a 19-16 lead with less than two minutes remaining in the game.

The Chiefs (15-6) answered on the ensuing drive, Mahomes connecting with Kelce for a 22-yard gain to set up the game-tying kick by Harrison Butker, a 29-yarder with only three seconds remaining in regulation.

The plot twist thickened as it was the first game that was played under the new NFL overtime rules, which assured that both teams would have an opportunity to score.

San Francisco (14-6) struck first in overtime with a 27-yard field goal by Moody, giving the 49ers a 22-19 lead.

Yet again, Mahomes and the Chiefs rallied again to an impressive comeback in a rematch of the Super Bowl four years prior.



KANSAS CITY CHIEFS

On 4th and 1, Mahomes rushed for eight yards to keep the drive alive. Next play was a 19-yard scramble to set up the winning score.

"With all the adversity we've been through this season to come through tonight. ... I'm proud of the guys," said Mahomes during a post-game interview. "This is awesome. Legendary."

Mahomes earned his third Super Bowl MVP award, becoming the fourth starting quarterback to win three Super Bowls. He joins Tom Brady, Joe Montana, Terry Bradshaw and Troy Aikman.

"I am going to celebrate tonight, celebrate at the parade and then work my way to get back in this game next year," Mahomes said. "I am going to do whatever I can to be back in this game next year. Three-peat."

San Francisco head coach Kyle Shanahan is now 0-2 in Super Bowl games with the 49ers, 0-3 including his time as

an offensive coordinator with the Atlanta Falcons.

Quarterback is aware that they had the offensive weapons to put the points on the board, but was not able to feed them in the endzone.

"We have the offense to score touchdowns and I failed to put the team in position to do that," he said.

Mahomes finished the game, going 34-of-46 passing for 333 yards and two touchdowns and an interception.

He also had nine rushes for 66 yards for the Chiefs. Isiah Pacheco finishes the game with 18 rushes for 59 yards.

Kelce pulled down nine receptions for 93 yards.

Purdy completed the night going 23-of-38 passing for 255 yards and a touchdown. Christian McCaffrey led the rushing 22 carries for 80 yards. He also had eight catches for 80 yards.

+ SPORTS



COURTESY PHOTO

Saginaw Heritage Tops Davison, 74-59, Ties for First Place in SVL Play

By HASANI ALI

Saginaw Heritage just made the Saginaw Valley League title race even closer with a convincing 74-59 win over Davison on Tuesday night.

Heritage is tied with Saginaw High sitting at 8-1 in conference play with three games apiece.

Saginaw Heritage moved one step closer Tuesday to its second Saginaw Valley League boys basketball championship.

Toledo bound Tyle Ode is committed to bringing that title back to Saginaw as they're getting ready for tournament play.

"Everyone is focused on playoffs but winning the Valley would be a great deal

for not only the senior class but the whole program and the history of this program. Even the community of Saginaw Township," said the senior forward.

"We know it's one step at a time but we went into the season knowing we could win the Valley, that we could get it done. Now we can focus on Powers and winning the Valley."

The Hawks have not won the SVL boys basketball title since 2010.

Flint Powers and Lapeer will be coming into town for Heritage on Feb. 15 and Feb. 20. Then the Hawks will close out league play by hitting the road to visit Bay City Central.

A share of the Valley championship will be guaranteed if the Hawks win out.

"It would be tremendous for us," said coach Steven Reynolds. "The turnaround this program has had, for us to come out on top in the Valley it would be great for this program.

He also stated that winning the league title would be a major reflection of the program's rebuild.

"One of the goals is to win the league and then have a strong showing in the tournament."

Heritage's victory will likely deny Davison a shot at the Valley championship.

The Cardinals, 14-4 overall, fell to 7-2 in league play and would not only need to win out for a chance to share the league, but a loss from Saginaw High or Heritage would keep their title hopes alive.

Davison's gap to win the league title has widened with the loss to Heritage.

The Cardinals will have to top their next three opponents in order to stay in the race – Bay City Western, Arthur Hill and Midland Dow.

Saginaw High is finishing the season with Arthur Hill, Grand Blanc and Flint Carman-Ainsworth.

After taking a 13-11 lead through the first quarter, Heritage began to take flight over the Cardinals.

The Hawks netted 12 straight points midway through the second to hike their lead to 28-15.

Heritage had some breathing room going into the half with a 32-23 lead.

Davison couldn't heat up and was only able to close the gap within seven points in the fourth quarter.

"We played some solid defense," Reynolds said. "We just stayed poised, stayed with the game plan, continued to play our best defense and rebound the ball. Take good shots and eventually we know they'll fall."

Joss Bradley led the way for a 15-2 Heritage with a triple double – 22 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists.

Ode added 19 points and seven rebounds, Jaylin Cooper had 12 points and seven rebounds, and Noah Arnold chipped in eight points and 10 rebounds.

Greg Lawson led Davison with 23 points, Warren Cain scored 14 and Jackson Bowden had 10 points.

+ SPORTS



MICAH CRETSINGER

SVSU's Cretsinger earns AP & AFCA All-America football honors

By HASANI ALI

Micah Cretsinger has earned his stripes on the field.

In fact, the American Football Coaches Association (AFCA) and the Associated Press announced that the junior linebacker has made both selections as a Div. II All-America.

Cretsinger also received the NCAA Div. II All-Super Region 3 honors and first team All-GLIAC as well.

The native from Jackson, Mich., led the team in tackles with 100 and had 3.5 sacks, 15 tackles for loss, three forced fumbles, and four pass breakups.

His biggest game of the season was

against Wayne State University, totaling 17 tackles, a sack and seven tackles for loss.

Cretsinger had a pick-six in the last three games of the season.

To top his historic season, his eight interceptions are tied for the most in the Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletics Conference and ranks second in all of NCAA Div. II.

"Always trying to make my next play better than the last, year three," Cretsinger said in a post on Facebook captioning his end of the season highlight film.

On top of leading the defense, he also saw some action in other areas of the field. During the last game of the season at Michigan Tech, Cretsinger had a kick return for

15 yards and a catch for 11 yards.

The 6-foot-2, 240-pounder also tied the NCAA Division II record with four interceptions returned for a touchdown.

He is the first player in the GLIAC to achieve such an accomplishment, and only the fifth player in Div. II history to reach that threshold. The last time it was accomplished was back in 2011.

Head coach Ryan Brady was ecstatic about Cretsinger's accomplishments.

"Micah has earned this great honor with years of hard work, dedication, and sacrifice," he said. "Micah has always been a team-first guy and continuously puts others before himself. He is a tremendous teammate, leader, and mentor to the younger generation within our program. Micah has made us all proud with his actions both on and off the field. He is a great ambassador for SVSU, and the best is yet to come. Congratulations Micah on this well-deserved and earned accomplishment and recognition."

According to SVSUCardinals.com, the AFCA has selected an All-America team since 1945 and currently selects teams in all five of its divisions.

The coaches of these teams hand select the players that they felt exuded the highest caliber of college football in Div. II.

The AFCA's Division II All-America selection committee is made up of three head coaches from each of the AFCA's seven districts, one of whom serves as a district chairman, along with another head coach who serves as the chairman of the selection committee.

The coaches in each district are responsible for ranking the top players in their respective districts prior to a conference call between the district chairmen and the committee chairman on which the teams are chosen.

Cretsinger is one of two GLIAC football players named to the first team for AFCA and one of five players from the GLIAC on the AP All-America roster.

Four GLIAC players were named in total between the two All-America teams. He is the only Cardinal to receive the honor this season.

+ SPORTS



DETROIT LIONS

Greg Lawson II scores 1,000 points and second all-time leading scorer at Davison

By HASANI ALI

Greg Lawson II reached a high pinnacle that's very elite to a certain group of ball players.

Humbly scoring 1,000 during his junior campaign while defeating Grand Blanc earlier in the month, it was a reflection of his hard work and resilience.

"It was big for me," he said. "I was just trying to achieve it in front of our home crowd with my friends and family in the stands."

The 6-foot-2 junior is 31 points away from becoming Davison's all-time leading scorer.

Sitting with a 14-4 record after a loss to Saginaw Heritage on Tuesday night, Lawson is getting his mind prepared for tournament play.

"My teammates and I need to win the remaining games of the season to get momentum going into the tournament," he said. "Just need to make sure we lock in

and stay focused."

Lawson II recently has been working out with NBA player Brian Bowen, who has been recently cut by the Minnesota Timberwolves.

He soaked up the pro tips like a sponge as Bowen gave him pointers to separate his game from the rest.

"From high school to the pros is a different pace in play," he said. "That euro step has really helped me create space for me to score in the open."

Gaining exposure from a professional player showed a couple areas where Lawson II can improve his game.

"My explosiveness needs some work," he said. "I can be more athletic getting around the rim and be more assertive getting to the basket."

The Saginaw native is visiting Tom Izzo and Michigan State on the 27th of this month. Next month, he will visit Mississippi State, home of Arthur Hill alumni Jimmy Bell.

If Lawson II decides to play for MSU, he will be teaming up with Jase Richardson, son of former Arthur Hill legend Jason Richardson, who is committed to play for the Spartans next season.

His father and former Lumberjack Greg Lawson set a high expectation for his son to show the elite work ethic it takes in order to become one of the best players in the state.

"From the beginning, he's always had a great work ethic," he said. "He looked up to Maurice Jones as he went to USC and Eric Davis going to Texas as it showed him how much it took in order to make it as a collegiate player. He goes to the gym before practice, he may go to the gym after practice. He's making sure that he gets extra work whenever he has time. He's apt to put in an extra 500 shots a day."

As his career is exploding as a junior, Lawson II still has a long way to go. His father is helping him keep his poise as Davison is heading into tournament play in a couple weeks.

"It's going to be tough during the play-off run," Lawson told his son in the car during the interview. "Grand Blanc is hosting the district tournament again and the team will have to focus on surviving and moving on. They escaped them earlier in the season and it won't be easier in the postseason. Those shots are going to be a bit tougher to hit. They're much easier to make when you're at home."

Feb. 16 is the final game between Arthur Hill and Saginaw High at the Dow Event Center before the two schools merge as Saginaw United.

Though the family still has tension with Arthur Hill as Lawson II's grandfather and Lawson's father, coach Greg McMath was wrongfully fired as the head coach, he's still being honored at the final game.

"It's going to mean a lot to me to see the final game between the rivals," Lawson II said. "It's going to be amazing to watch my friends compete for the last time. Still wish that we could have still been a part of the Arthur Hill family, but it's going to be monumental to witness the game nonetheless."

+ SPORTS

Dodgers name Jair Fernandez Loons Manager for 2024

The Great Lakes Loons in conjunction with the Los Angeles Dodgers have named Jair Fernandez as their manager for the 2024 season.

Jair Fernandez becomes the 11th manager in the 17-year history of the Loons. Last season, Fernandez served as skipper for the Los Angeles Dodgers Arizona Complex League team, his seventh season coaching in the organization and fourth in

Arizona.

Previously, he served as the hitting coach with the Great Lakes Loons in 2017 and 2018. The Loons hit a combined .240 in those two seasons, accumulating 192 home runs.

Fernandez, 37, debuted in minor league baseball in 2007 at the age of 18 in the Seattle Mariners organization. The Colombian-born catcher spent nine sea-

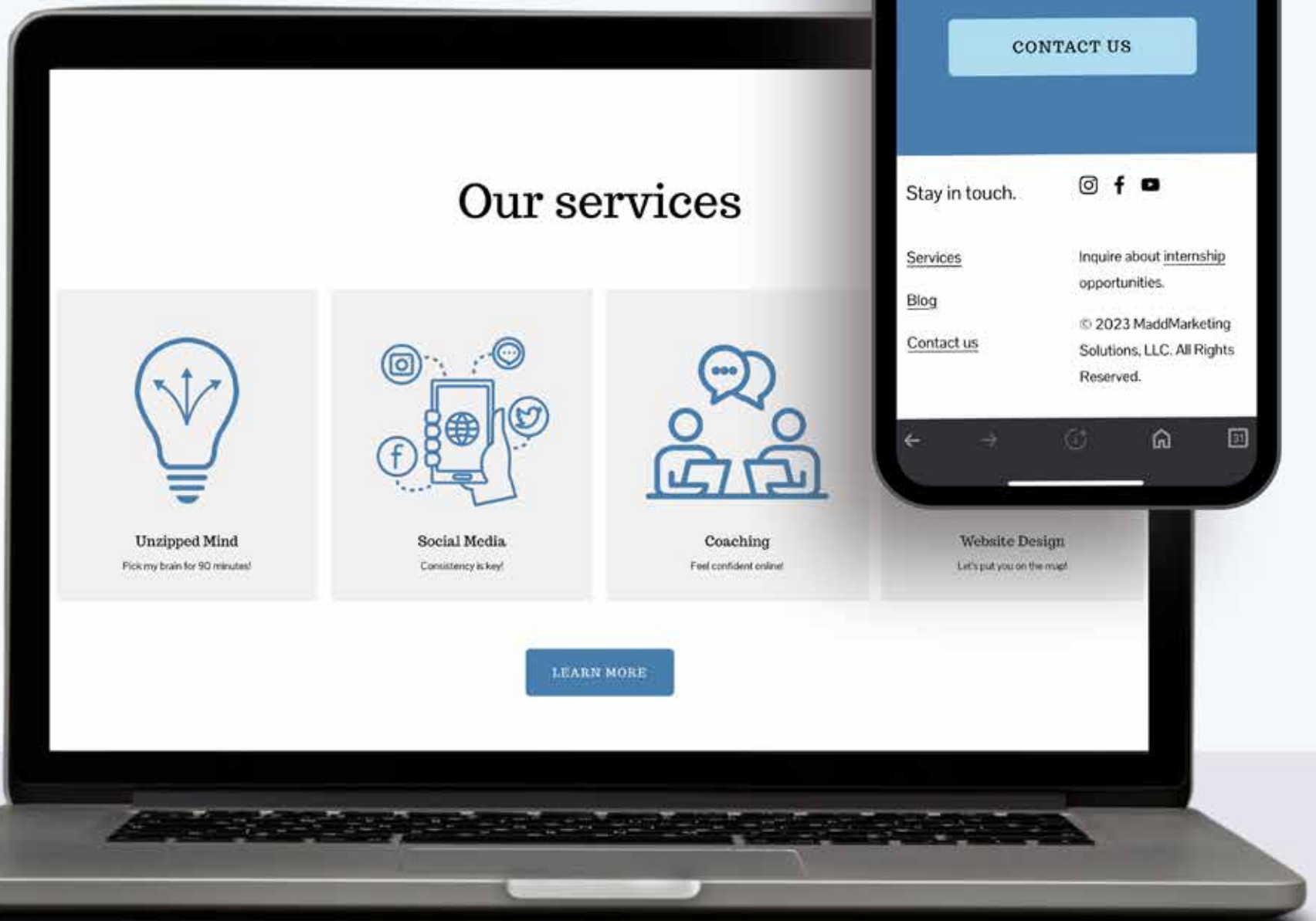
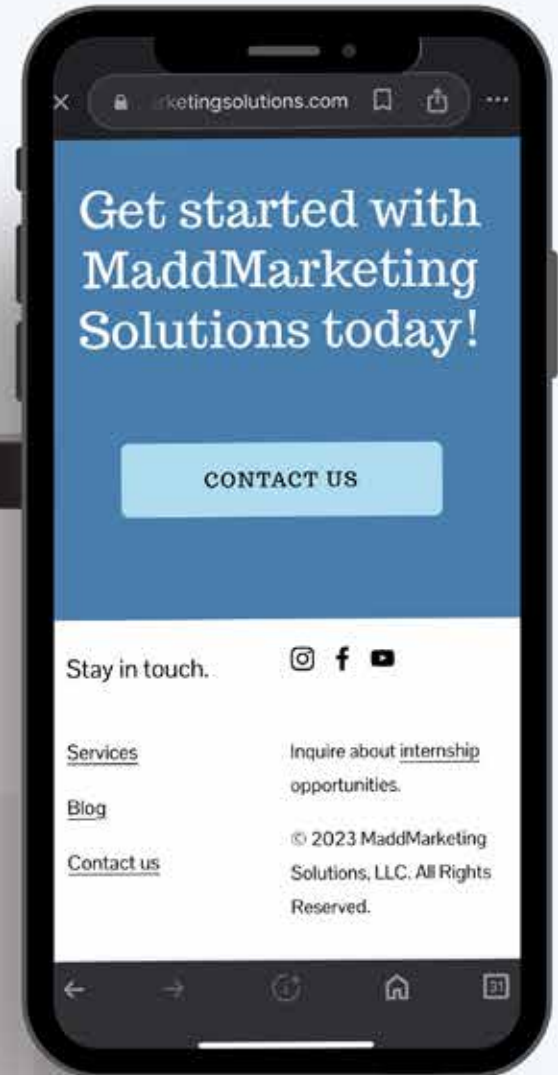
sons in baseball, making two stints at the Triple-A level. Fernandez played within four organizations including stops in the Midwest League. In 2008, he was an MWL All-Star with the Beloit Sky Carp, then affiliated with the Minnesota Twins.

The Loons and Fernandez begin the 2024 season on Friday, April 5th at Dow Diamond against the Fort Wayne TinCaps.





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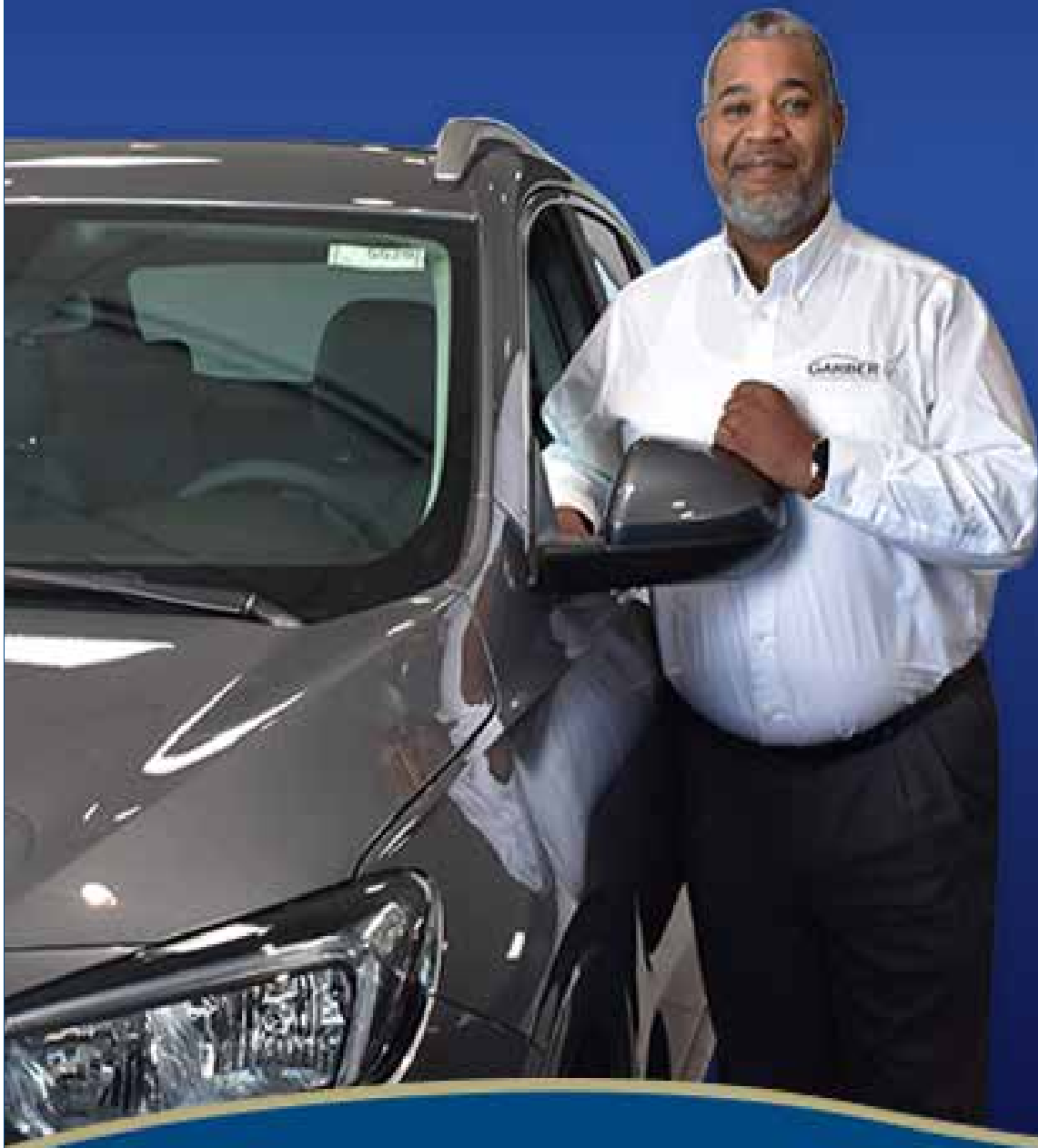
PICS OF THE WEEK

On February 3, Pamela Pugh held a kick off event for her congressional run at Retro Rocks in Saginaw, MI



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We

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*Brittany Saunders is ready to pay it forward. The Chicago native enrolled at SVSU with ambitions to pursue a teaching career. Brittany was encouraged and invigorated by other passionate educators who worked closely with her to ensure she would accomplish her goals. And she is. Even before she was set to graduate, Brittany could boast a résumé with a paid internship in a school district along with K-12 classroom experience. **Now she can't wait to begin a professional career, inspiring students with the same kind of one-on-one attention she received from her professors at SVSU.***



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