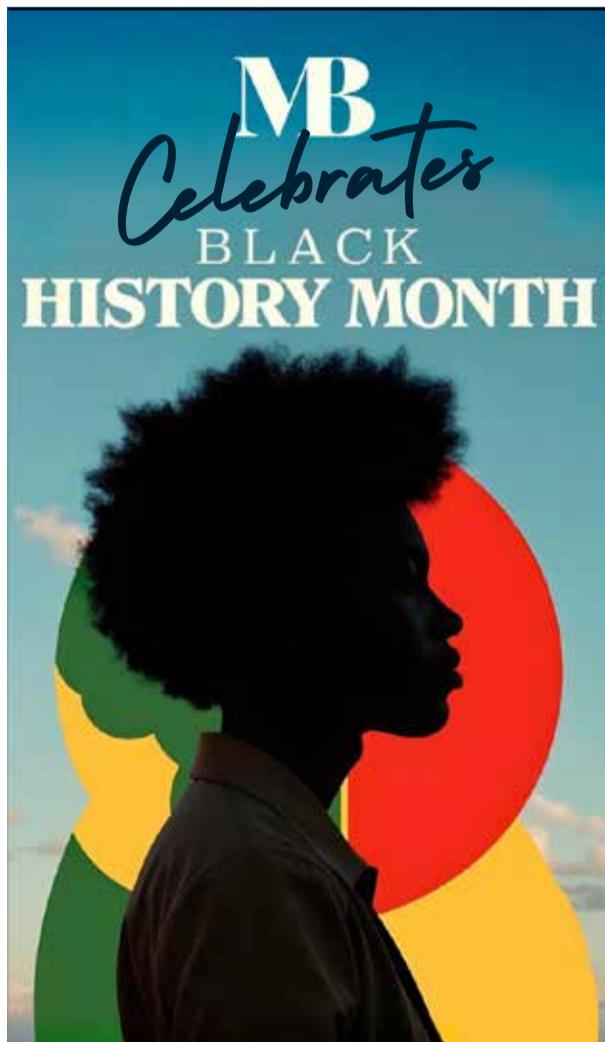




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'A Raisin in the Sun' comes to Midland for Black History Month



CENTER STAGE THEATRE'S CAST FOR "A RAISIN IN THE SUN" APPEARS ON A PROMOTIONAL POSTER FOR THE MIDLAND CENTER FOR THE ARTS PRODUCTION, DIRECTED BY GLECIA TATUM, RUNNING FEB. 27-MARCH 8, 2026.

in timeless terms: an insurance check arrives after a death, and each member of the Younger family sees a different future inside it — freedom, security, transformation — forcing hard choices about which dreams are worth the risk.

It's a familiar question in February, when communities revisit the long fight for opportunity and dignity — and when the nation's cultural institutions often return to works that did more than entertain.

Hansberry's play debuted on Broadway March 11, 1959, as the first Broadway play written by a Black woman, and it quickly became a benchmark for how race, housing discrimination and aspiration could be depicted on a major American stage. The title draws from Langston Hughes's poem "Harlem," its famous meditation on a dream deferred.

The 1959 production won the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award for best play, and Hansberry became the youngest American — and the first African American playwright — to win the honor.

In Midland, those national milestones meet regional ones.

See A RAISIN IN THE SUN, Page 2



Hoyt Library to host two Black History Month events on Saginaw's past

COMMUNITY, PAGE 16



Leola Wilson's long civil rights fight in Saginaw shows up in schools, voting rights work and a generation of local "firsts"

COMMUNITY, PAGE 22

BY MB STAFF

MIDLAND, Mich. — A play that helped change what American theater would allow itself to see — a Black family's interior life, its humor, its arguments, its grief and grit — is coming to the Midland Center for the Arts as a Black History Month season centerpiece.

A Raisin in the Sun, Lorraine Hansberry's landmark drama about the Younger family's dreams and the barriers stacked against them in

1950s Chicago, will be staged by Center Stage Theatre over two weekends: Feb. 27–March 1 and March 6–8.

The production is directed by Glecia Wright-Tatum, a longtime Great Lakes Bay theater artist and arts educator whose work has focused on building opportunity and visibility for Black performers and creatives in a region where leading roles and leadership posts have not always reflected the audiences in the seats.

On the Midland Center's listing, the story is framed

A RAISIN IN THE SUN, from cover



GLECIA WRIGHT-TATUM (CENTER) POSES WITH CAST MEMBERS IN COSTUME FROM "BEYOND THE YELLOW BRICK ROAD".



Wright-Tatum's local career spans more than three decades and includes work as a playwright, director and teaching artist. She is the founder and CEO of EVOC Productions, which she built around training and elevating Black actors and directors across the Great Lakes Bay. Her mission centers on representation — making sure young people of color see performers on stage who look like them, and can recognize the possibility for themselves: "If they can do it, so can

I," as her biography puts it.

Her faith is part of her origin story, too. Raised by an artistic father and a mother who nurtured her gifts, Wright-Tatum traces her foundation to a message her mother repeated over her life: "You can do all things through Christ who strengthens you."

Wright-Tatum's work has also broken barriers in Michigan theater. She is the first Black female director at Pit & Balcony Theatre and at the Midland Center for the Arts.

More recently, she wrote and directed *Beyond the Yellow Brick Road* for Kingdom Life Ministries International, a production that showcased her as writer and director. Wright-Tatum credits her pastors, Bishop Alvernis L. Johnson and Pastor Shantell Johnson, for spiritual guidance and support, and she describes her purpose plainly: to use her

gifts "to glorify Him."

She is also shaping the next generation in the classroom, serving as an adjunct professor in the Saginaw Valley State University theatre department, and she is pursuing an MFA in Writing for Stage & Screen, integrating that study with work alongside licensed therapists to incorporate healing-centered practices into her approach as a teaching artist and writer.

The broader pipeline is personal, too. Wright-Tatum is the mother of Sydney, a recent Spelman College theatre graduate, and Dureyah II, who earned acclaim for a lead performance in "Still Emmett Till" with Bay City Players, her biography says.

For Midland audiences, "A Raisin in the Sun" arrives as more than a revival or a classic. It is an American story with Michigan resonance — a family weighing risk against dignity, insisting

that a future can be claimed even when the system says otherwise. And in a month dedicated to Black history, its presence on a regional stage is also a statement about who gets centered, whose stories are treated as universal, and which voices get the last curtain call.

Performance information

Center Stage Theatre presents "A Raisin in the Sun" at the Midland Center for the Arts. Performance dates: Feb. 27–28 (7:30 p.m.), March 1 (2 p.m.), March 6–7 (7:30 p.m.), March 8 (2 p.m.).

The production is presented by special arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of Samuel French, Inc.

For more information visit: www.midlandcenter.org.

MICHIGAN BANNER

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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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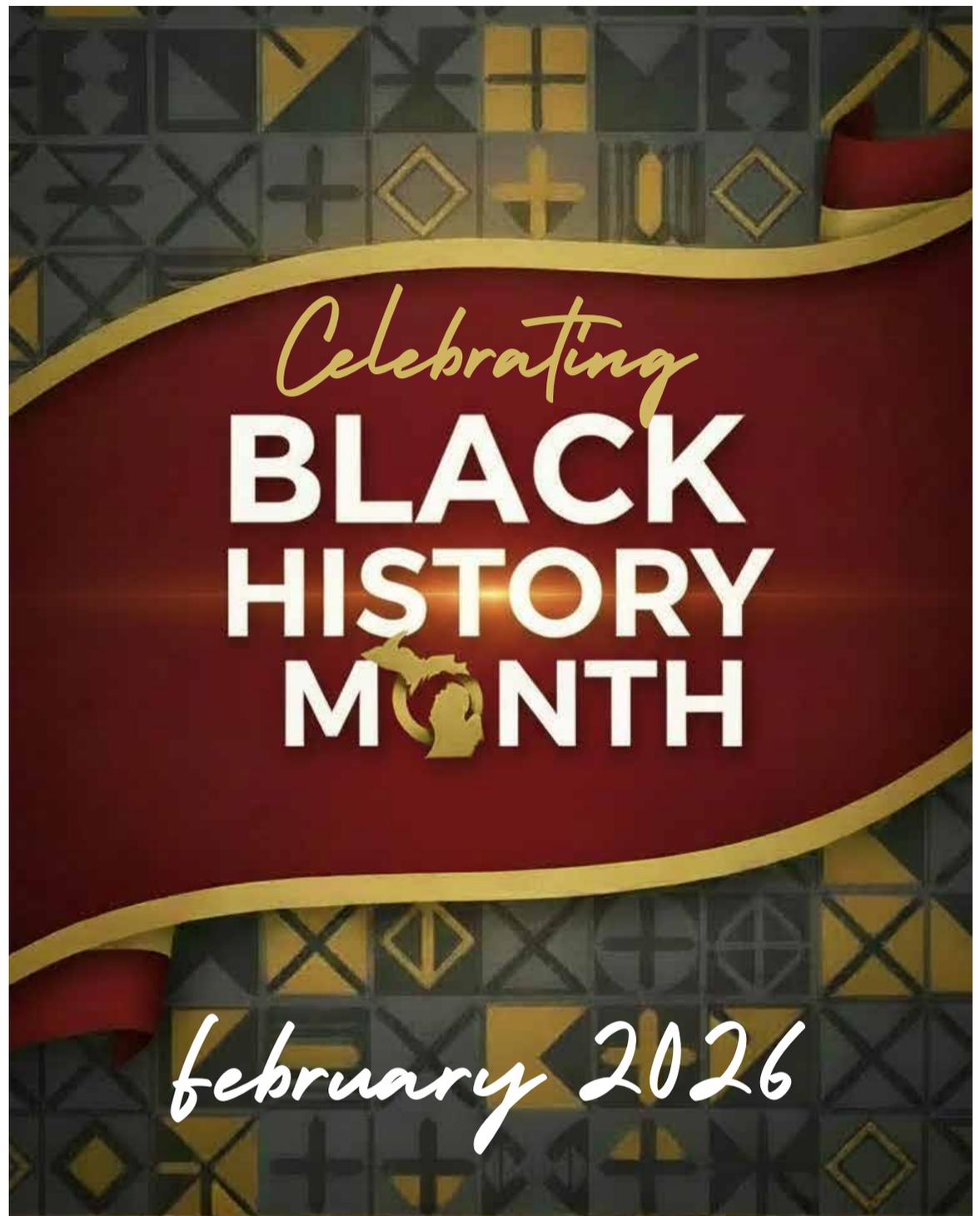
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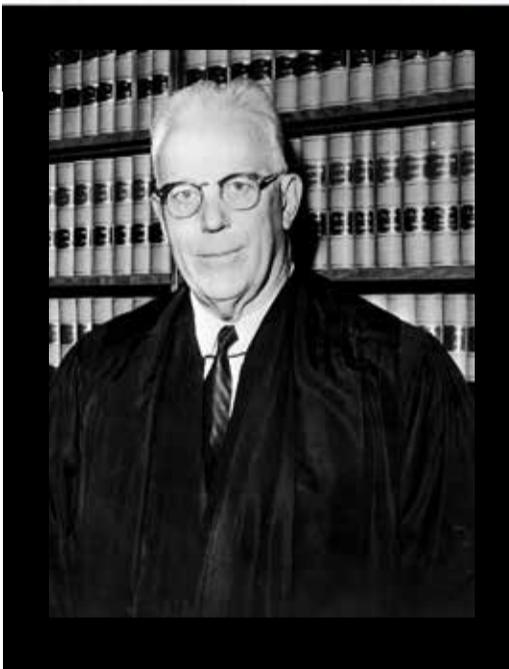
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Did you know:
Local Black History Month
Edition!



CHIEF JUSTICE EARL WARREN

Brown v. Board of Education—a landmark Supreme Court case that stands as one of the most pivotal moments in the fight for racial equality, declaring segregation in public schools unconstitutional.

At the helm of this historic decision—Chief Justice Earl Warren, whose leadership and moral clarity helped secure the unanimous ruling that overturned Plessy v. Ferguson.

While Warren is often associated with California, his roots trace back to Saginaw, Michigan. His grandfather, William Warren, settled in Saginaw in the late 19th century, and his father was born there before the family moved west. Though Earl Warren himself was born in Los Angeles, his family's early ties to Saginaw connect this small Michigan city to one of the most transformative legal decisions in American history.

THIS DAY IN
MICHIGAN HISTORY

FEBRUARY 1, 1802

Detroit's formal beginnings as a municipality trace to Feb. 1, 1802, when the legislature of the Northwest Territory meeting in Chillicothe, Ohio, incorporated the settlement as a town under a charter covering about 213 acres. The town government was administered by a five-member board of trustees, with no office of mayor. After Ohio achieved statehood, the eastern half of Michigan was attached to the Indiana Territory. Following a devastating fire that reshaped the settlement, Detroit was later re-incorporated as a city on Sept. 13, 1806.



Detroit's riverfront in an 1858 illustration, reflecting the city's rapid mid-19th-century growth with multi-story commercial buildings lining the west side of town. (Public Domain)

MICHIGAN YOUTH BANNER

VOLUME 8 • NUMBER 3



BHM

Teens can make Black History Month local — and personal — across Great Lakes Bay and Flint

BY MB STAFF

Black History Month doesn't have to live only in a textbook chapter or an assembly program that disappears by third hour.

For teens across the Great Lakes Bay Region and Flint, February can be something more active: a month of showing up, asking questions, creating, and carrying stories forward in ways that feel real — because they're rooted in the same streets you ride down, the same rivers you pass, the same neighborhoods your family has known for generations.

This year, there are plenty of ways to start — and none of them require you to be an expert. They just require you to be present.

One obvious first step is to go where the history is being discussed out loud. At Hoyt Library, a Feb. 5 program titled "Saginaw: Race & Riot in 1967" brings historian Jennifer Vannette to the auditorium for a look at the forces that shaped Saginaw in the 1960s, including housing, redlining and urban renewal. Teens can treat it like a living classroom: go with a friend, take notes, then ask a parent or grandparent what they remember hearing — or what they wish they'd been taught.

If you'd rather process history through art instead of a lecture, Flint has an option that runs long enough to fit a teen schedule. Flint Institute of Arts is hosting "Gateways: African American Art from the Key Collection" from Feb. 1 through April 26,



FILE PHOTO

featuring 77 works by 68 artists. Go once for the visuals — then go back and pick one piece to research and present in class, on social media, or in a youth group discussion. (A simple, powerful prompt: What story is this artist telling that your school never assigned?)

In Saginaw, February also includes a public celebration built for families and young people. Saginaw Art Museum & Gardens lists a Black History Month Celebration on Feb. 28, with free admission and a posted time block of 12:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. That's the kind of event where teens can do more than attend — they can volunteer, help a younger sibling engage with activities, or document the day with photos and reflections that become their own mini-archive.

For teens who want the "how" of Black history — how language, culture and justice collide in real life — Delta College has a month-long calendar of Black History Month programming and notes 2026 as a milestone year for Black history commemorations. The school's schedule includes a February appearance by April Baker-Bell focused on linguistic justice. Even if a teen doesn't attend every program, showing up to one talk can spark a bigger project: tracking how Black language is treated in classrooms, on social media, or in discipline policies — and what respect actually sounds like.

Not every way to honor Black history requires leaving home, either. In Bay County, the Bay County Historical Society maintains a virtual exhibit on Bay

County's Black history and actively invites community members to contribute information and materials. For teens, that's an open door: ask an elder for a photo, a name, a church program, a graduation portrait, a funeral card — and help submit it. That's how history stops being something "they" keep and becomes something we protect.

And if Midland is part of your world — family, school, sports, work — there's a blueprint for teen-led history work already out there. Voices of Black Midland is a digital exhibit of oral histories exploring Midland's racial history and the lived experiences of Black residents across generations. Teens don't need a grant to copy that model at home: record a respectful 10-minute audio interview with a relative, a neighbor, a coach, a pastor, a teacher. Ask three questions: What was it like growing up here? What do you want young people to know? What are you proud of? Put the recording somewhere safe. Label it. That's preservation.

The bigger point is this: celebrating Black history as a teen isn't about getting everything perfect. It's about choosing to participate — and choosing to keep the stories local.

Because in the Great Lakes Bay Region and Flint, Black history isn't far away. It's in the auditorium seats, the museum galleries, the family albums, the neighborhood timelines — and in the hands of teens willing to do what every generation has done: learn it, honor it, and pass it on.



Saginaw Promise Scholarship: Application Deadline February 13, 2026

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW, Mich. — Saginaw Promise is investing in the future of Saginaw, its economy, and its students with postsecondary education scholarships. The scholarships are both an incentive and benefit for high school graduates who live in and graduate from a high school within the Saginaw Promise Zone, which includes the cities of Saginaw, Zilwaukee, Kocville and that area of Buena Vista designated to the Saginaw Public School District).

How to apply: Students are required to complete the online Saginaw Community Foundation scholarship application at [Saginawfoundation.org/site/scholarships/](https://saginawfoundation.org/site/scholarships/) and FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) at <https://fasa.ed.gov/>.

Since 2012, Saginaw Promise has awarded \$1,405,747 in scholarships to 774 scholars, and those scholars have earned 323 program certificates and degrees to-date! The following 2024 National Student Clearinghouse Report provides persistence and attainment numbers for Saginaw Promise scholars and represents a return on investment.

National Student Clearinghouse Report (2024)

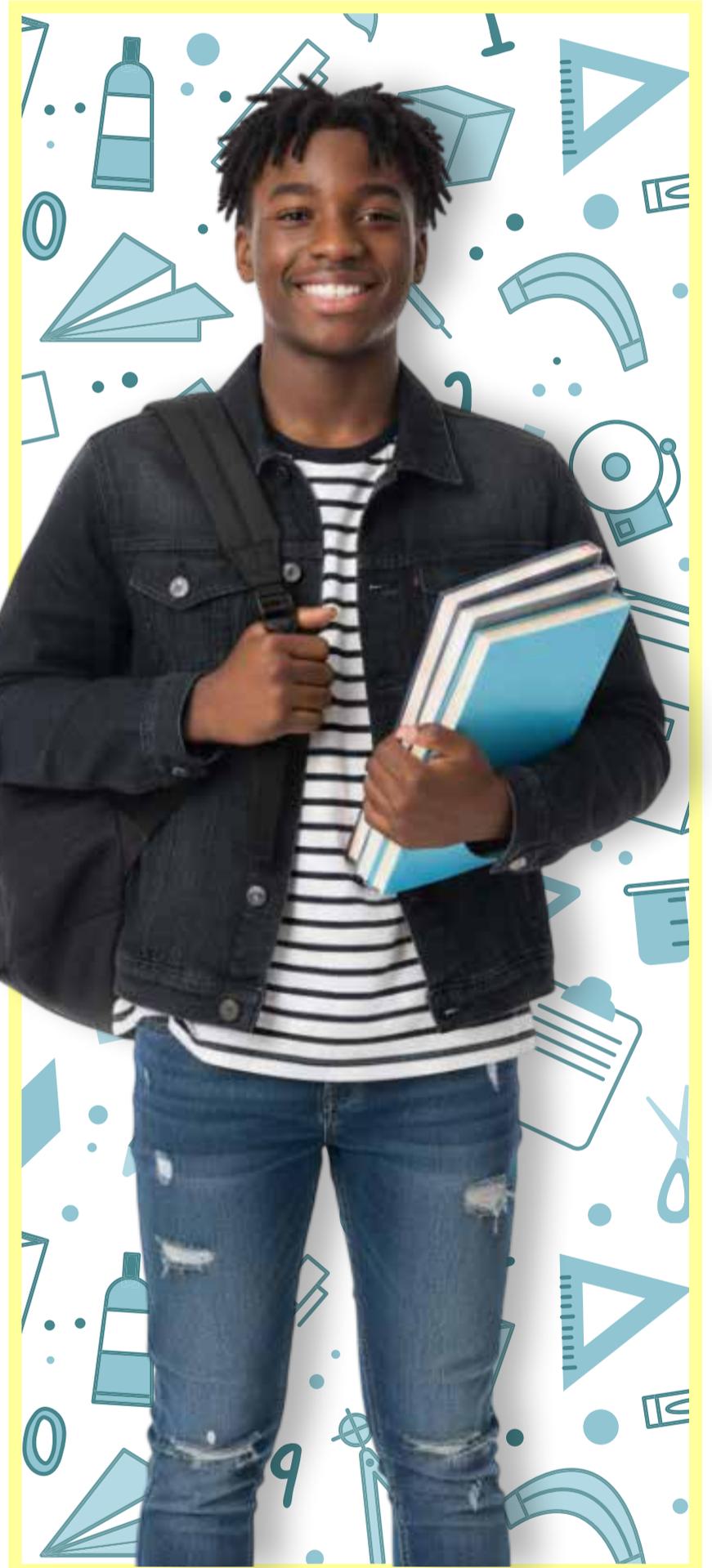
Saginaw Promise Scholars attainment -- 2012-2024.

*Persistence of Saginaw Promise Scholars to second year of postsecondary education: **49%**

Program Certificates:	13
Associate degrees:	56
Bachelor's degrees:	152
Master's degrees:	33
Doctoral Candidates:	3
Juris Doctor:	1
*Additional Degrees earned but report did not specify degree level:	65

Total Number of program certificates and degrees earned: 323

The Saginaw Promise believes in the power of postsecondary education to be a “change agent” to affect positive change in Saginaw, its economy, quality of life and the lives of its students through a “residence based” scholarship for the children of families who live in the Saginaw Promise Zone to earn a program certificate or degree from technical/trade school, community college or university. For questions or information about the Saginaw Promise, programming or scholarship, visit www.saginawpromise.org or telephone (989) 607-3428.



FILE PHOTO

SPONSORED CONTENT

MSU Extension expands February youth programming in Saginaw County with teen money contest and more

CASH COMPOSITION CONTEST

Answer the following prompt in 300 words or less for a chance to win a \$100 gift card!

How can borrowing money (or using credit such as taking a loan or having a credit card) end up being a good decision and when might it not? How and when will you decide if it is a good choice for you to borrow money? What are some tips you would give someone who needs to borrow money?

Open to ages 9-19

Essays due Feb 28, 2025



Extra Credit  UNION
A GREATER INTEREST IN SCHOOLS

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension

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CASH COMPETITION CONTEST FLYER

1, inviting Michigan youth ages 9 to 19 to answer a financial essay question in 300 words or less for a chance to win a \$100 gift card, according to the event listing.

For older students preparing for college or independent living, the county's event list also promotes *Adulting 101*, a monthly Zoom series scheduled from Jan. 21 through Nov. 12. The sessions are designed to help young people build "real life skills" as they transition toward independence—an increasingly common focus as schools and community groups try to bridge the gap between classroom success and day-to-day readiness.

The extension calendar also highlights *Avoiding Money Mishaps*, a youth-focused Zoom webinar on Wednesday, Feb. 11 (6 p.m. to 7 p.m.), centered on protecting against fraud, scams, identity theft and predatory lending—topics that have become more urgent as teens and young adults manage online payments, banking apps and early credit decisions.

On the outdoor education side, the listing includes *Fishing, Woods and Water 4-H Workshops* running Feb. 4 through Feb. 10, advertised as a family-friendly series that includes building an ice fishing rod, fly-tying and learning about wildlife.

For younger participants, the calendar also points to *2026 4-H Winterfest*, a hands-on learning camp for youth ages 8 to 12 scheduled for Feb. 7–8 at Eagle Village, where youth select workshops and participate in team-building activities.

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW, Mich. — A February lineup from Michigan State University Extension in Saginaw

County is putting an emphasis on practical teen skills—financial literacy, fraud awareness and outdoor education—through a mix of competitions, webinars

and hands-on workshops tied to its 4-H programming.

The calendar includes the 2026 Cash Composition Contest, running Jan. 19 through March

TeenQuest expands job-readiness coaching for Genesee teens



FILE PHOTO

BY MB STAFF

FLINT, Mich. — A youth workforce push underway across Genesee County is steering teens toward a simple message: “Do not wait until graduation to learn how work works.”

TeenQuest, a free pre-employment and leadership training program, is running a winter session scheduled Jan. 26 through Feb. 19 with classes held Monday through Thursday from 4:15 p.m. to 6:15 p.m., according to the program’s current session listing.

The program is designed to give high school students a practical “starter kit” for employment — resume basics, interview practice and the kinds of workplace expectations that can trip up

first-time job seekers. A separate school-host page for TeenQuest describes it as training that helps students “stand out” in the job market and teaches the skills needed to get and keep a job in a “fun and engaging way.”

Local youth-serving organizations have increasingly framed career readiness as a protective factor — not just a pathway to income, but a tool that can reduce instability and expand options for teens navigating family stress, transportation barriers or limited job networks.

At the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Flint, teen workforce development is described as a suite of programs that employ teenagers and build the skills needed for the current job market. In its overview, the organization ties TeenQuest to the Summer Youth

Initiative and calls TeenQuest a pre-employment training program that helps teens “gain an edge professionally and personally and stand out.”

That alignment matters in Genesee County, where teens often cite the same hurdles when they look for work: no experience, no resume, no idea how to interview, and anxiety about being dismissed before they even get a chance. TeenQuest’s pitch is to address those gaps early — while students are still in school — and to treat readiness as a skill that can be coached like athletics or music.

Program organizers also emphasize that “workforce development” does not start at a job fair. It starts with learning how to show up on time, communicate professionally, handle feedback,

and navigate conflicts — the soft skills employers routinely list but rarely have time to teach.

For families, the structure is straightforward: a set of scheduled after-school sessions that put teens in a cohort, reinforce accountability, and connect them to local partners who can help them translate training into actual opportunities.

While the program’s public session listing focuses on dates and times, community partners have increasingly leaned on TeenQuest-style training to strengthen teen pipelines into summer employment and early career exploration — steps educators say can affect post-graduation outcomes as much as grades do.

Flint Public Library rolls out February teen lineup



FILE PHOTO

BY MB STAFF

FLINT, Mich. — The Gloria Coles Flint Public Library is leaning into February with a slate of teen-friendly programs that mix STEM, arts and youth voice—an approach librarians say helps keep teens connected to positive spaces after school and on weekends.

Among the early-month offerings is Lego Club, scheduled for 4:30 p.m. to 6 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 4, with a twist aimed at

older students: combining LEGO building with introductory coding. The library says no experience is necessary and notes the building blocks were donated by Friends of the library.

The next day, the library hosts Teen Lounge — Teen Advisory Board/Music Bingo from 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 5, inviting teens to help shape programming and services while also participating in a music-based game night. The Teen Advisory Board is positioned as a direct feedback channel—an ef-

fort to get teens involved in what happens in teen spaces rather than having programming designed strictly for them.

For teens interested in writing, the library lists several February options, including Next Gen Pen: 1st Ward Project on Saturday, Feb. 7 (2 p.m. to 4 p.m.), described as a creative writing workshop focused on developing critical thinking and creativity.

The schedule also includes a Teen Writers Workshop on Tuesday, Feb. 10 (4:30 p.m. to 6 p.m.), which the library says will

cover literature, writing, publishing and peer critique. The workshop is facilitated by Connor Coyne, identified by the library as an author and director of Flint's Gothic Funk Press, and is open to writers ages 11 to 18.

The teen page additionally lists Rough Draft Café Community Writing Center hours on Thursday, Feb. 5 (2 p.m. to 5 p.m.), providing writing support through University of Michigan-Flint's community writing center.



Latino Banner

LIDER EN LA
DIVERSIDAD

VAMOS ADELANTE

Whitmer, Gilchrist proclaim Feb. 2 as Mexican American Heritage Day; state also marks start of Chicano History Week

BY MB STAFF

LANSING, Mich. — Gov. Gretchen Whitmer and Lt. Gov. Garlin Gilchrist II issued a proclamation designating Feb. 2, 2026, as Mexican American Heritage Day in Michigan, urging residents to learn more about the role people of Mexican descent have played in the state and the nation.

The proclamation also notes that Chicano History Week begins Feb. 2, tying the observance to the 178th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo — a landmark agreement signed Feb. 2, 1848, that ended the U.S.-Mexico war and redrew the map of North America.

In the proclamation, the Whitmer-Gilchrist administration states that Michigan “made history during the 1960s as the first state in the U.S. to officially recognize Chicano History Week,” a recognition the state has continued to renew through later proclamations.

The Feb. 2, 1848 treaty is widely cited as one of the most consequential documents in U.S. expansion. Under its terms, Mexico ceded territory that includes present-day California, Nevada, Utah, most of Arizona and New Mexico, and parts of Colorado, Oklahoma, Kansas and Wyoming, while also relinquishing claims to Texas and recognizing



A COUPLE OF MEXICAN HERITAGE (FILE PHOTO)

the Rio Grande as the boundary. Mexico received \$15 million.

The Michigan proclamation emphasizes the treaty’s impact on people living in the ceded areas, noting that many were offered U.S. citizenship and that the treaty included protections for property and civil rights, while later decades brought discrimination and widespread loss of land and rights for many Mexican-descended residents.

The proclamation also points to later chapters of Mexican

American history that shaped communities far beyond the Southwest, including the Bracero Program, a U.S.-Mexico labor agreement that operated from the 1940s into the 1960s and brought millions of Mexican workers into American agriculture and railroads during labor shortages. Federal historical resources note that while the agreements included protections on paper, discriminatory treatment and poor conditions were common.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the

proclamation says, organized efforts to combat discrimination against Chicanos and other people of Mexican descent grew into what became known as the Chicano Movement, which advocated for social justice while pushing for broader public understanding of Mexican-origin culture and for Mexican American experiences to be included in the teaching of U.S. history and culture.

The full proclamation can be found at www.michigan.gov.

THE LATINO BANNER IS PROUDLY SPONSORED BY GREAT LAKES BAY HEALTH CENTERS

Latino Caucus

Saginaw Democratic Party
General Meeting February 3rd 2026
6:00pm-7:30pm

Your vote decides Our future.

- **GUEST SPEAKER:** John Paul Torres for US Congress MI 11th District
- We will also be hosting a Rapid Response Training! Be there!

Important Announcement:
Special Election Day for Michigan's 35th District State Senate is FEBRUARY 3RD, 2026! (Saginaw, Bay, and Midland counties)

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CELEBRATION

SATURDAY
MARCH 28
12 PM – 3 PM

Latino Leaders for Equity Advocacy & Development

Monthly Meeting

Thursday, February 12th at 6:00PM
Delta College Downtown Saginaw Center
319 E Genesee Ave, Saginaw,
MI 48607

Speaker: Vanessa Guerra
Saginaw County Clerk
Former LLEAD Board Member

All Are Welcome!

Black velvet paintings take center stage at state museum exhibit highlighting Latino history in Michigan

BY MB STAFF

LANSING, Mich. — Black velvet paintings—an art form long associated with roadside shops and living-room walls—are getting a formal museum spotlight in Michigan through a new exhibit at the Michigan History Museum that frames the genre as a cultural touchstone in Latino and Chicano communities.

The exhibit, “Black Velvet: A Rasquache Aesthetic,” is open now through late November and features more than 100 black velvet paintings on loan from three Michigan collectors—Diana Rivera, Elena Herrada and Minerva Martinez—who also served as guest curators. “The exhibit showcases more than 100 black velvet paintings on loan from Michigan collectors,” said Jillian Reese, the museum’s curator of exhibits.

Rather than treating the paintings as kitsch, the museum’s approach centers their roots



BLACK VELVET: A RASQUACHE AESTHETIC EXHIBIT

and evolution—how velvet became a vivid canvas, how themes traveled, and why the paintings resonated in Mexican American households and across the Midwest. A companion display includes a staged workshop that demonstrates the process: velvet stretched on a frame, color applied one layer at a time, with the deep black background designed to make hues “pop.”

The exhibit’s subtitle points to its argument. “Rasquache” is used in Mexican American cultural discussions to describe creativity shaped by limited resources—art made from every-

day materials and an “underdog perspective,” as scholarship on the show has described it. The museum release defines the term more simply: “rasquache” refers to making art and beauty from what’s available.

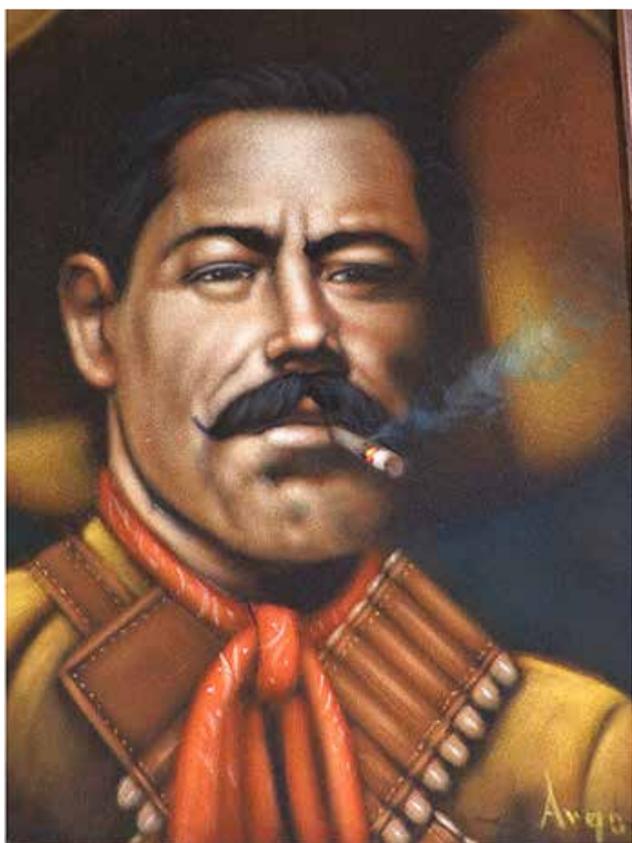
Guest curator Martinez called the exhibit’s placement in a state institution meaningful. “This exhibit is vital to the Latino community, and its presence at a state institution is significant,” she said. Herrada, in the museum’s release, tied the paintings to everyday identity and class. “The importance of black velvet must be understood as an instinct,” she said, calling it “the right to appreciate beauty in all its forms.”

Many of the works in the show were produced in workshops across Mexico and the U.S. Southwest and surged in popularity as tourist souvenirs in the 1960s and ’70s, the museum said—often featuring themes that sold to travelers, from Southwest landscapes and American celeb-

rities to animals and religious figures. The exhibit also includes a section on Michigan artists influenced by the guest curators’ collections, highlighting how the genre’s visual language has been reinterpreted locally.

The museum said it built the exhibit’s look and interpretation in collaboration with the guest curators, and for the first time provided bilingual labels for all content, printed in English and Spanish. Rivera, in the state release, pointed to a broader goal: “Latino communities have been underrepresented in state and national cultural institutions for generations.”

The museum held a free opening day on Jan. 17 and offered hands-on craftmaking inspired by the paintings, part of what curators described as a yearlong effort to connect history, art and identity under one roof.



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Latinx Technology & Community Center opens applications for 2026 academic scholarship



TWO PAST SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS STANDING AT THE PODIUM DURING THE ANNUAL CHAVEZ & HUERTA LUNCHEON. (COURTESY/LATINX TECHNOLOGY & COMMUNITY CENTER)

BY MB STAFF

FLINT, Mich. — The Latinx Technology & Community Center has opened applications for its 2026 academic scholarship, a \$500 award for eligible Genesee County students.

The scholarship is open to Genesee County residents who are high school seniors or undergraduate students planning to attend, or currently attending, an accredited two- or four-year institution. Applicants must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.5 and demonstrate involvement in community ser-

vice or activities aligned with the center's mission, according to the organization's announcement published Jan. 22.

The award is open to Latino and non-Latino applicants, the center said, and is intended to recognize students who support opportunities for the Latinx community in Flint and Genesee County.

Applications are due by Feb. 15, 2026, at 11:59 p.m. and can be found at latinxflint.org.

Scholarships will be presented during the annual Chavez & Huerta Luncheon on Saturday, March 28, 2026.

Senate committee hears testimony on bills limiting some ICE actions in Michigan; debate turns on safety, authority



ICE POLICE (FILE PHOTO)

BY MB STAFF

LANSING, Mich. — A state Senate committee heard testimony this week on Democratic-sponsored bills that would limit certain immigration enforcement activities in Michigan, a proposal supporters describe as a safety measure for families seeking school, medical and religious services—and critics characterize as a legally questionable step into federal territory.

Reporting on the hearing said the bills would restrict immigration enforcement actions in certain “sensitive locations” such as schools, houses of worship and hospitals, and would also limit the sharing of personal information with immigration authorities without a warrant.

Coverage also described provisions involving mask-wearing by law enforcement in certain situations—an element supporters frame as transparency and accountability, while opponents raise concerns about safety and operational impact.

The proposal arrives amid heightened public attention to immigration enforcement tactics, with Bridge Michigan reporting on a tense debate in Lansing and quoting federal officials who said they are not targeting schools for enforcement actions—disputing local reports tied to arrests that sparked community concern.

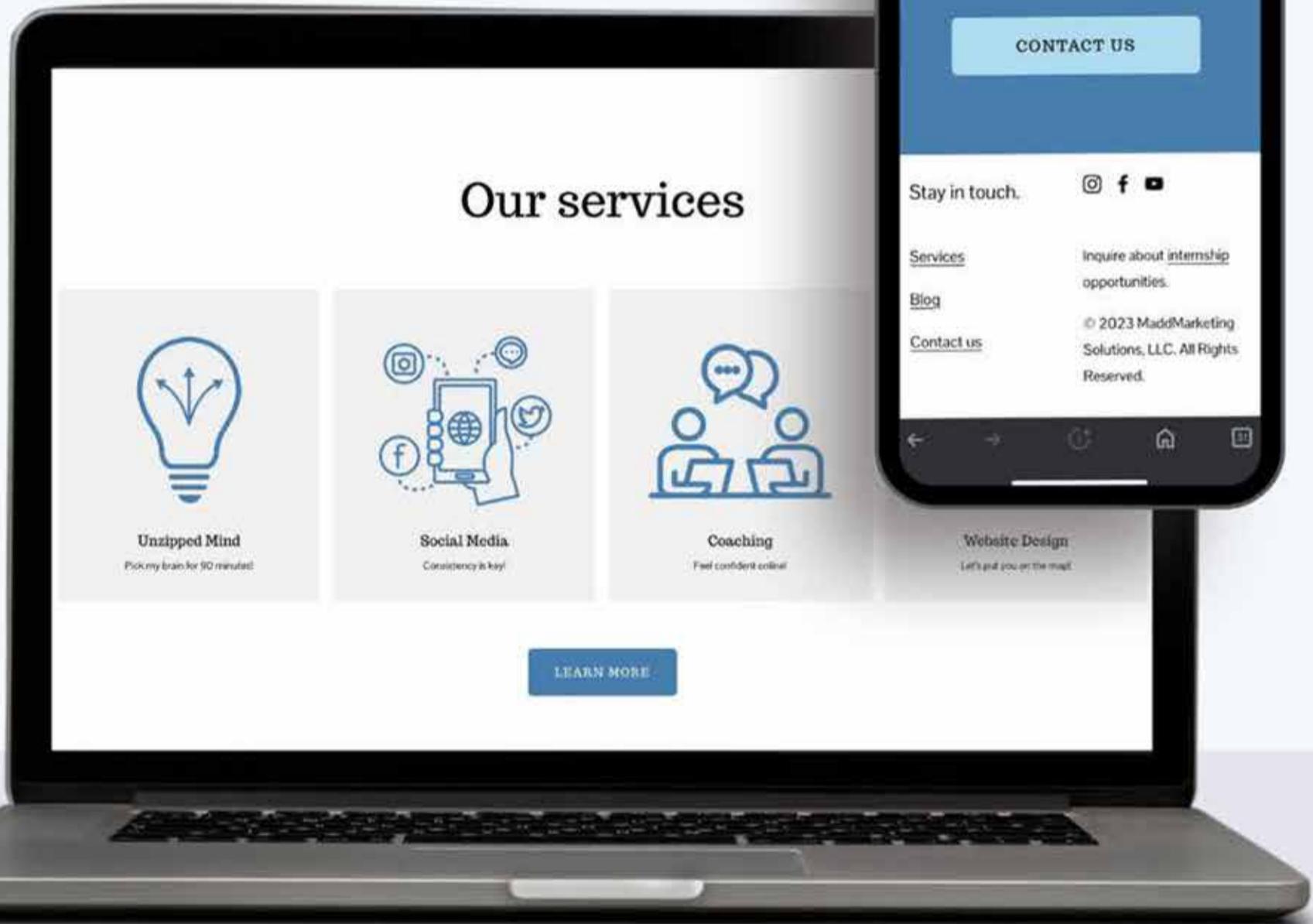
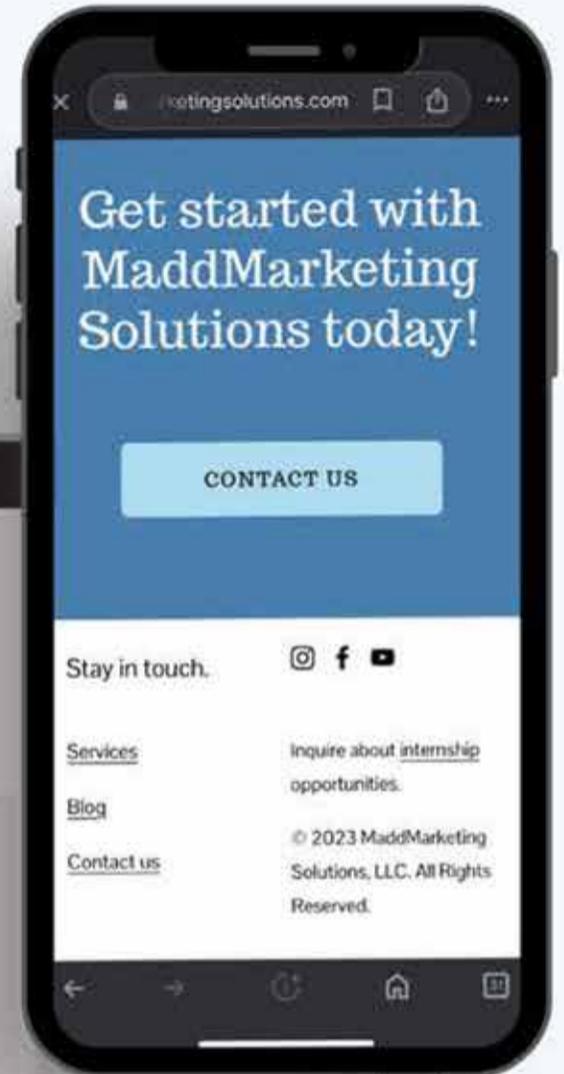
Advocates testifying in support have argued that fear of enforcement near schools or service sites can discourage families from pursuing routine care or participating in education and civic life. Opponents, according to coverage, questioned whether state law can meaningfully constrain federal operations and warned the bills could conflict with federal authority.

The measures would still need committee action and full legislative approval to move forward, and committee leaders indicated additional testimony and future votes are likely before any final decision.



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COMMUNITY

BHM

Hoyt Library to host two Black History Month events on Saginaw's past



SAGINAW: Race & Riot
A Presentation by Dr. Jennifer Vannette,
Castle Museum of Saginaw County History

Register online at www.saginawlibrary.org
or by phone at 989-799-9160

Hoyt Library Auditorium
Thursday, Feb 5, 6:30-7:30pm
Register at: www.saginawlibrary.org/events

PUBLIC LIBRARIES OF SAGINAW
Hoyt Library
505 Janes Ave
Saginaw, MI 48607
(989) 755-0904

Find us online!
www.saginawlibrary.org

"SAGINAW: RACE & RIOT IN 1967," PRESENTED BY DR. JENNIFER VANNETTE

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW, Mich. — The Public Libraries of Saginaw will mark Black History Month with two events at the Hoyt Library Auditorium that spotlight Saginaw's local history — from the forces that fueled the city's 1967 uprising to the stories carried north during the Great Migration.

The first program, "Saginaw: Race & Riot in 1967," will be presented by Dr. Jennifer Vannette at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 5. The talk will examine the historical conditions that produced the uprising and why understanding that period still matters today.

Organizers said the presentation will revisit a warning issued in 1966 by the Michigan Civil Rights Commission that described Saginaw as a "powder



DR. JENNIFER VANNETTE

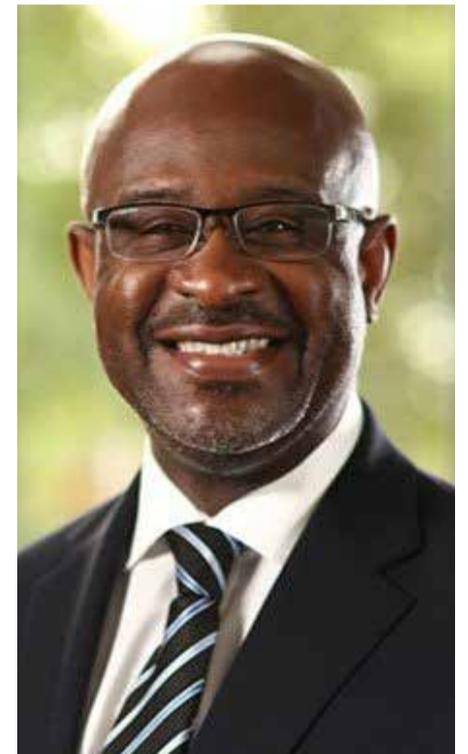
keg about to explode," pointing to housing conditions, redlining and urban renewal as major factors.

Redlining, a practice that shaped neighborhoods across the country and in Michigan cities,

is defined as the systemic denial of services — including loans, insurance and investment — to Black and other minority neighborhoods. The practice often relied on government-backed maps that drew red lines around areas labeled "hazardous," cutting off capital and accelerating disinvestment. Over time, that disinvestment contributed to blight, displacement and the destruction of established communities for projects such as freeways, leaving lasting impacts that include segregation, wealth gaps and environmental injustice, according to event information.

Vannette earned her doctorate in history from Central Michigan University, with a focus on 20th-century U.S. history, and serves as outreach coordinator at the Castle Museum of Saginaw County History.

Two days later, the library will host an author talk featuring Dr. Willie McKether from 1 to

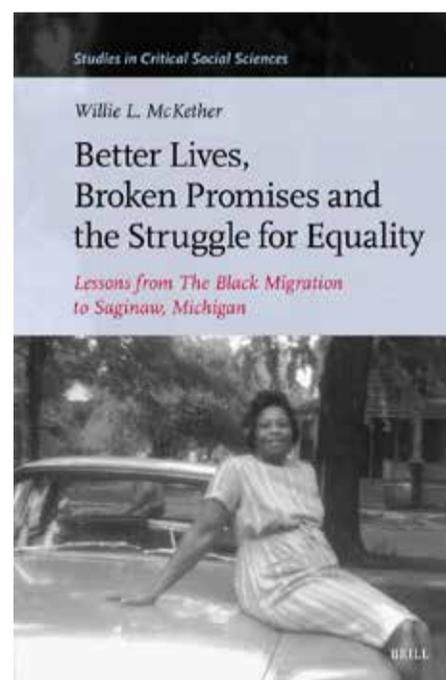


PROFESSOR WILLIE MCKETHER, PH.D.

3:30 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 7.

McKether, a Saginaw native and anthropologist, is the author of *Better Lives, Broken Promises and the Struggle for Equality*, a study that follows three generations of African American migrants to Saginaw and examines how their movement and settlement shaped the city's social structure. Event materials describe the program as an afternoon of history, insight and community conversation centered on migration, resilience, and the long-term impact on families and the city's social fabric.

Registration is required for both events. Residents can register online at the library's website or through the events page. For more information, visit saginawlibrary.org or saginawlibrary.org/events. Registration is also available by phone at 989-799-9160, according to event materials.

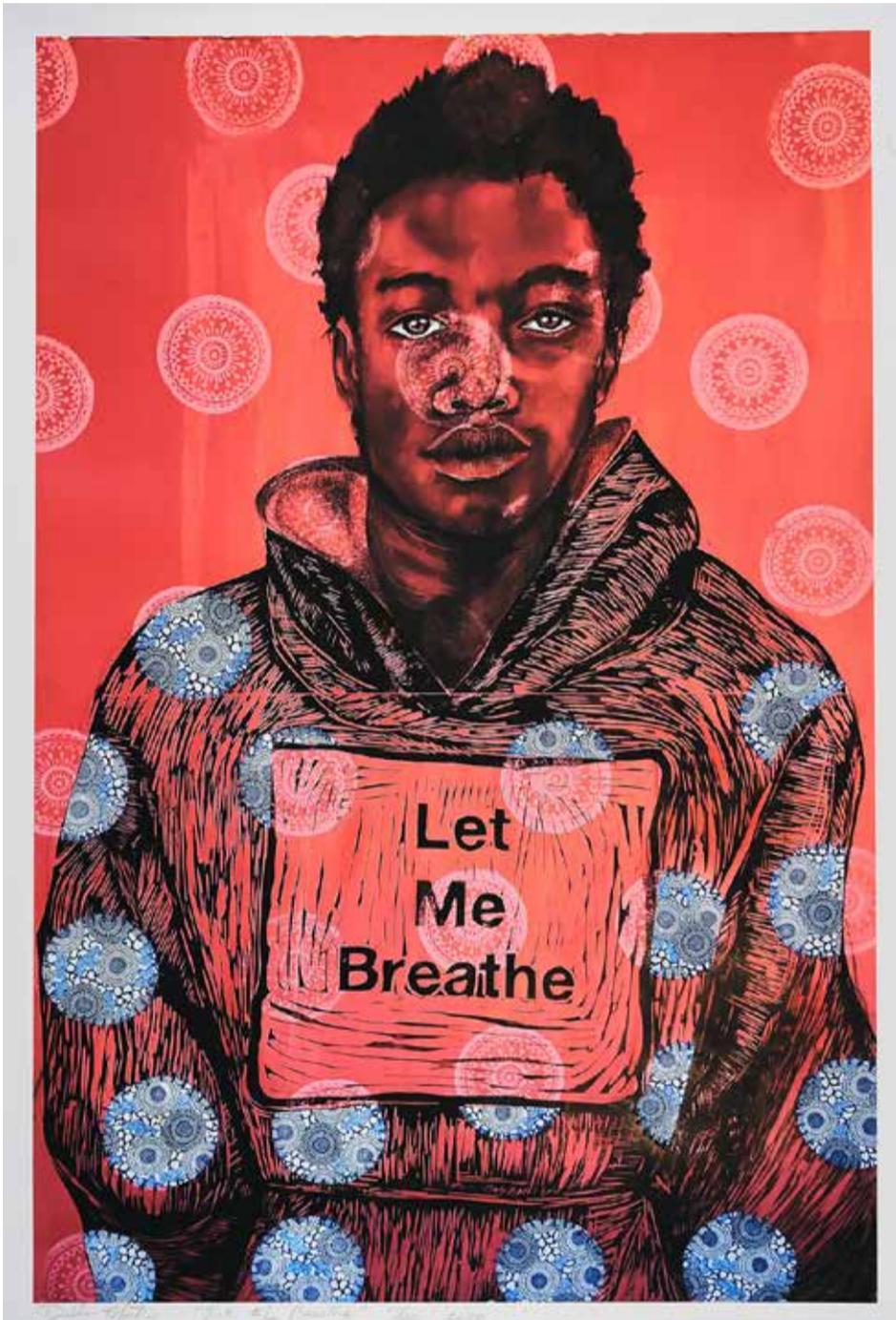


BETTER LIVES, BROKEN PROMISES, AND THE STRUGGLE FOR EQUALITY BY DR. WILLIE MCKETHER

COMMUNITY

BHM

Flint Institute of Arts opens 'Gateways' exhibit for Black History Month



DELITA MARTIN, LET ME BREATHE, 2020, RELIEF PRINT, 36" X 24". (COURTESY OF THE ERIC KEY COLLECTION, © DELITA MARTIN)

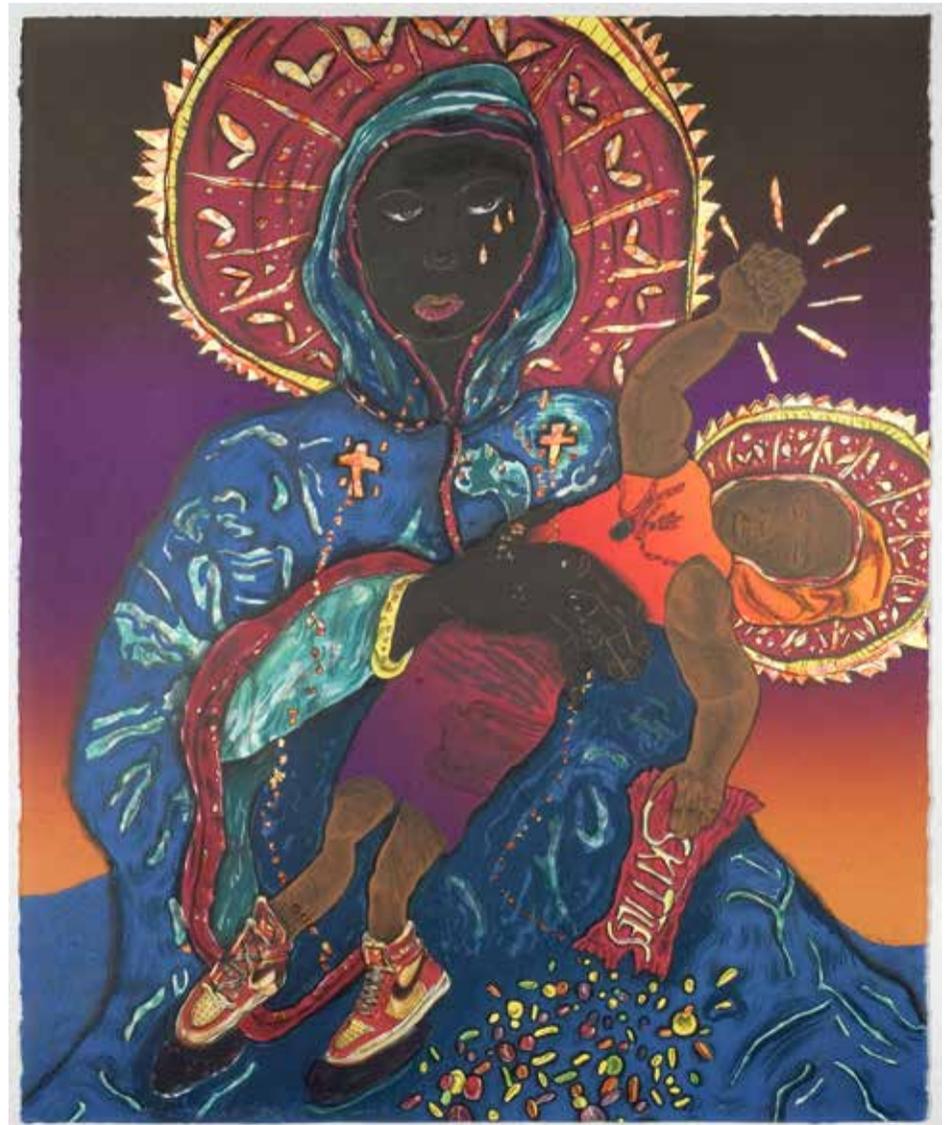
The Flint Institute of Arts describes the exhibition as spanning a range of media and framed through the perspective of Key's collecting journey. The Courier News report said Key began collecting after early questions about identity and later turned to art history and Black history to help shape answers.

Organizers said the exhibition is designed to do more than display artwork; it also aims to invite reflection on the broader Black American experience—past and present—through visual storytelling and varied artistic approaches.

The museum and partners

also promoted related public programming, including a "Meet the Collector" event scheduled on opening day, according to local listings and event announcements.

For Flint-area residents, the opening lands at the start of a month when museums and cultural institutions across the region use exhibits, lectures and performances to connect history to daily life. The Flint show's multi-month run is expected to draw both school groups and visitors looking for a deeper Black History Month experience beyond a single-day program.



MARGO HUMPHREY, THE BLACK MADONNA (26/30), 2013, COLOR LITHOGRAPH WITH GOLD LEAF, 27" X 22". (COURTESY OF THE ERIC KEY COLLECTION, © DELITA MARTIN)

BY MB STAFF

FLINT, Mich. — The Flint Institute of Arts is opening a major Black History Month exhibition Sunday featuring dozens of works drawn from the personal collection of Eric Key, with curators describing the show as a wide-ranging survey of African

American art anchored by themes including identity, resilience, spirituality and representation.

The exhibit, titled "Gateways: African American Art from the Key Collection," runs Feb. 1 through April 26 and presents 77 artworks by 68 artists, according to the museum's exhibition listing and a local report previewing the opening.

COMMUNITY

CMU's Klymyshyn Symposium to spotlight storytelling, advocacy and pathways to collective thriving



FROM LEFT, DR. MICHAEL GAVIN, DR. JABBAR R. BENNETT

BY MB STAFF

MOUNT PLEASANT, Mich. — A three-day campus gathering at Central Michigan University will bring students, faculty, community leaders and national speakers together in February to explore how storytelling and community-building can fuel advocacy and systemic change.

The Klymyshyn Symposium, an annual event described by organizers as a blend of academic insight and community engagement, will carry the 2026 theme “Storytelling, Community, and Liberation: Creating a Future Where Everyone Thrives.”

Organizers say the symposium is designed to foster critical thinking and tangible action — with sessions framed around capacity building, advocacy and creating spaces where people can thrive personally and professionally.

A tentative schedule on the symposium website shows programming running Wednesday

through Friday, Feb. 18-20, with morning welcomes, sessions throughout the day, and midday luncheons that anchor the event.

Highlights include:

- **Wednesday:** Registration opens at 8 a.m., followed by welcome remarks and a fireside chat with Neil MacKinnon, sessions beginning at 9 a.m., and an opening keynote luncheon at noon, according to the schedule.
- **Thursday:** A “Breakfast with the Provost” welcome, sessions beginning at 9 a.m., and a vice president’s signature luncheon at noon, followed by an afternoon slate and an evening wind-down hosted by CMU MI-ACE Women’s Network, CMU Faculty and Staff of Color Alliance and CMU QTA.

- **Friday:** A Women in Leadership day featuring a fireside chat with Shawna Patterson-Stephens and a Women Who Lead Boldly panel hosted by the Sarah R. Opperman Leadership Institute.

The symposium’s sessions are organized into categories that include Storytelling and Human Capital, Skillbuilding, Higher Education, Supportive Learning, and Women in Leadership, offering attendees multiple ways to navigate topics and programming.

Two featured luncheon speakers are also listed.

Michael Gavin, identified as president of Delta College, is scheduled as the opening keynote luncheon speaker from noon to 1:30 p.m. Wednesday. Event information notes that in fall 2025 he announced his resignation to focus on building a coalition aimed at defending and promoting the value of higher

education.

Jabbar R. Bennett is scheduled as the vice president’s signature luncheon speaker from noon to 1:30 p.m. Thursday. The symposium description identifies him as vice president and chief inclusion officer at Michigan State University and notes he is also a professor of medicine in the MSU College of Human Medicine.

Registration is free and open to the CMU community, and organizers are also promoting ways to financially support the symposium in future years. Sponsors listed include Members First Credit Union and Covenant HealthCare College of Medicine at CMU.

The symposium is associated with the Bovee University Center, according to a CMU events listing. For more information, organizers list (989) 774-3700 and direct participants to the symposium webpage for registration details.

COMMUNITY

BHM

Delta College marks Black History Month with speaker, readings and community storytelling



DR. APRIL BAKER-BELL

BY MB STAFF

UNIVERSITY CENTER, Mich. — Delta College will celebrate Black History Month from Feb. 1-28 with a slate of themed events highlighting the cultural influence and historical impact of the Black community, past and present.

The college's monthlong lineup includes a signature speaker, professional development programs, a community storytelling event and a film screening — all free and open to the public.

Organizers noted that 2026 marks two milestones tied to national recognition of Black history: 100 years of commemorations and 50 years since Black

History Month was first recognized by President Gerald Ford during the U.S. Bicentennial.

Signature speaker event

The featured program will bring Dr. April Baker-Bell, an associate professor of Language, Culture, and Justice in Education at the University of Michigan's Marsal Family School of Education, to Delta's Downtown Saginaw Center.

Baker-Bell is scheduled to speak from 5 to 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 5, focusing on her research and scholarship in linguistic and racial justice.

Her book, *Linguistic Justice: Black Language, Literacy, Identity, and Pedagogy*, intro-

duces the concept of Anti-Black Linguistic Racism and offers a framework for dismantling linguistic inequities, according to event information.

Additional events through February

The college will also host a BEDI Lunch & Learn: National African American Read-in from noon to 1:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 11, in room N007 on Delta's main campus. Organizers said the event will focus on African American poets and authors and is part of a national program established in 1990 by the Black Caucus of the National Council of Teachers of English to make literacy a significant part of Black

History Month. Readings may include excerpts from books, speeches or poems by African American authors. Lunch will be provided.

A second professional development session, "From Journalism to Justice: Lessons from Ida B. Wells," is scheduled for 1 to 2:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 19, also in N007. The session will examine one woman's crusade for justice, the risk of a single story and how it shapes perceptions past and present, according to event information. Light refreshments will be provided.

On Wednesday, Feb. 25, the college will host "Black Oral Tradition" from 2 to 4 p.m. in Founders Hall on the main campus. Organizers described oral storytelling as a cherished tradition in Black culture used to pass down history, knowledge and wisdom — and as a way to preserve identity and resilience during slavery, when literacy was restricted. The program will offer an opportunity to hear stories from Black community members. Light refreshments will be provided.

The month concludes with a screening of *Follow the Drinking Gourd* at 7 p.m. Friday, Feb. 27, at the Delta College Planetarium. The first 10 families in attendance will receive a free copy of the children's book *Follow the Drinking Gourd* by Jeanette Winter. Event information describes the short animated film as the story of enslaved Black people escaping to freedom, guided by the night sky and a song pointing them north to the Underground Railroad.

For reasonable accommodations, Delta College asks attendees to contact BEDI Services at 989-686-9017 or email diversity@delta.edu.

COMMUNITY

State grant backs redevelopment of Midland's historic Odd Fellows Building into housing, retail



OLD IMAGE OF THE ODD FELLOWS BUILDING AT RODD AND MAIN STREETS IN DOWNTOWN MIDLAND. (MIDLAND COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY)

BY MB STAFF

MIDLAND, Mich. — A redevelopment plan to revive the Odd Fellows Building—a 150-year-old downtown landmark—has received a \$1.4 million state funding boost aimed at adding new housing and restoring street-level commercial space in the city's core.

The Midland Daily News reported that Michigan's Revitalization and Placemaking program is contributing \$1,424,213 toward the project at Rodd and Main streets. The plan would create five apartments on the building's top floors and renovate one of its first-floor commercial spaces.

Developer Dan Dimitroff told the newspaper renovations are now expected to be completed

in October 2026—earlier than an earlier estimate of winter 2026–27. The building was purchased in 2023 and construction work began in summer 2025, according to the report.

The report described a broad-

er financing package tied to redevelopment of older properties: the total project cost was reported at \$4.2 million, with additional support including brownfield financing and local tax incentives approved through city mecha-

nisms, along with other state support.

Projects like the Odd Fellows redevelopment are part of an ongoing statewide effort to help close financing gaps that can stall redevelopment of older, underused buildings. The Michigan Economic Development Corporation describes the program as providing gap financing for real estate rehabilitation and development and public space improvements, with an emphasis on vacant, underutilized, blighted and historic structures.

Supporters of the Midland project have emphasized both preservation and practicality: saving a historic structure while creating additional housing downtown and upgrading commercial spaces that can support foot traffic.



THE ODD FELLOWS BUILDING AT RODD AND MAIN STREETS IN DOWNTOWN MIDLAND IS BEING REDEVELOPED WITH THE HELP OF A \$1.4 MILLION STATE GRANT. (FILE PHOTO)

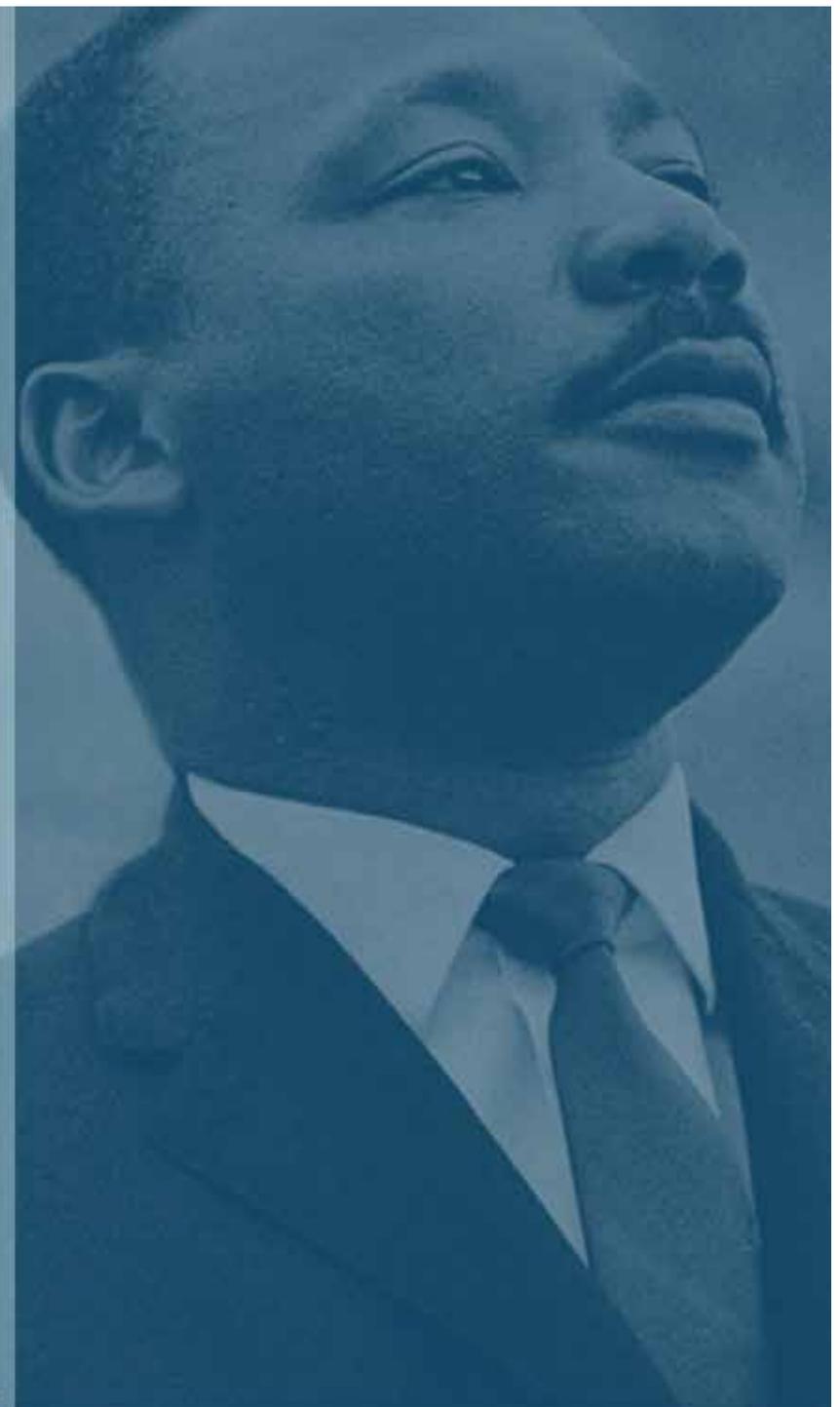


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HORIZONS EVENT CENTER



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COMMUNITY

BHM

Leola Wilson's long civil rights fight in Saginaw shows up in schools, voting rights work and a generation of local "firsts"



LEOLA WILSON

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW, Mich. — In a region that often measures progress by new buildings and new leadership, some of the most durable change has come from people who never treated the work as seasonal — not even in February.

For decades, Leola Wilson has been one of those people: a steady force in civil rights advocacy and public education whose résumé stretches from voter education and youth leadership to a school board tenure that began before many of today's parents were even born.

As Black History Month programming ramps up across the Great Lakes Bay Region, Wilson's legacy offers a local reminder that history isn't only a list of national names. Sometimes it's a woman

in a meeting room, doing the unglamorous work of keeping institutions accountable — and bringing more people into them.

Wilson served as president of the NAACP Saginaw Branch for 20 years, taking the leadership post in 1998 after serving as assistant secretary and secretary, according to a 2019 appreciation program celebrating her service. The same program notes she has been part of the organization for 50 years and is a Diamond Life Member.

During her tenure, the branch pursued partnerships with local churches, the National Pan-Hellenic Council, the League of Women Voters, the UAW and others, while also focusing on voter education and civil rights enforcement, according to the NAACP program. The program also credits her with organizing

and leading a local youth delegation to compete in the NAACP's national ACT-SO competition — a pipeline-building effort that treats academic and creative excellence as part of civil rights work.

Wilson's community footprint has been just as deep in education. The 2019 NAACP program describes her as the first African American and the second woman to serve on the Saginaw Intermediate School District board, where she also served as a past president. In 2020, she announced her retirement from the district board after 45 years of service, effective Aug. 5, according to Mid-Michigan Now.

"We are forever grateful for the countless hours of time Leola spent working to provide the best possible education for our students," Superintendent Jeffrey Collier said in a district statement shared by the outlet.

Wilson's influence extended into higher education governance as well. In 2005, then-Gov. Jennifer Granholm appointed Wilson to the Saginaw Valley State University Board of Control for a term expiring in 2013, identifying her as president of the Saginaw NAACP branch at the time. In 2016, SVSU awarded her its Distinguished Service Award, calling her "counted among Saginaw's most committed public servants" and noting she was perhaps best known locally for leading the NAACP branch since 1998.

The biographical details in the NAACP program read like a map of

Saginaw's civic institutions: Wilson is active at Zion Missionary Baptist Church, earned an associate degree in social work from Delta College and a bachelor's degree in community development from Central Michigan University, and retired as a social worker for the State of Michigan.

Even after stepping down from NAACP leadership in early 2019, Wilson continued to be publicly recognized for her role in shaping local civic life. That February, every seat in Saginaw City Council chambers was filled as she received a formal honor from the city, and the same report noted she urged residents to get more positively involved in their communities.

In February, communities often focus on the sweep of Black history — the marches, the court decisions, the turning points. Wilson's story is the other side of that tradition: the long-running local work that makes it possible for the next "first" to happen, and for it to stick.



LEOLA WILSON

DISCOVER MICHIGAN

CELEBRATING AMERICA250MI (25)

Wednesday, February 11, 2026

Saginaw Valley State University, Curtiss Hall, 2nd Floor

9 am - 4:30 pm. Scan QR Code for event details.

\$10 for day of expert-led lectures. Keynote lunch, \$30. (register by January 23)

Register for special event Discover MI (25) online, www.svsu.edu/olli or call OLLI office, 989-964-4475 •

Join the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute for a day exploring Michigan's rich history. Together with history enthusiasts, educators, families, and travelers, discover how our state's heritage shaped our past, influences our present, and inspires our future.

Event Highlights & Key Note Speakers

9:00-10:00 **Robert Doran Brockway, Director, America250MI**
Michigan's Journey to the Semiquincentennial

12:10 - 1:30* **Jamie Mankiewicz, Adam Miedema, Stefanie Mills, and Chris Ogozaly**
Discover Michigan with WCMU Public Media's locally produced television series, Destination Michigan. Telling Michigan's stories, one destination at a time.
* Please note that there is a \$30 fee for this lunch & lecture.

3:30 - 4:30 **Craig Wilson, Chief Curator - Mackinac State Historic Parks since 1895**

Breakout Session Presenters & Topics

Ric Mixer *History of Great Lakes Coast Guard Cutters*
Offshore Outposts: Living in a Remote Lighthouse

Lori Taylor-Blitz *Discover Beaver Island: Keeping Island History Alive*

Craig McDonald *Midland, Michigan: A Mid-Century Modern Mecca*

MFSM Staff *America's Public Sculptor: Marshall M. Fredericks*

Deborah Meadows *AACHM - Journey to Freedom Underground Railroad*

Adam Oster *Michigan Carnegie Libraries.*

Michigan Cemetery Research

Dale Carlson *Detroit's Michigan Central Station*

Art & Architecture of Detroit's Belle Isle

Michelle Briggs *History of the Soo Locks*

Brian W. Page *Designing Democracy: The Architectural Design & Preservation of the Michigan State Capital*

Mike Skinner *History of the Ford Piquette Plant, Detroit*

Cambray Baylis *Save the Flags: History of Michigan's Civil War Flags*

Christina & Jason Szilagyi *The Annotated Declaration of Independence*



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COMMUNITY

Planned Consumers Energy outage set for central Midland overnight Feb. 5–6

BY MB STAFF

MIDLAND, Mich. — Consumers Energy plans to temporarily cut electric service overnight Feb. 5–6 for about 1,160 homes and businesses in central Midland as crews complete system upgrades the company says are designed to improve reliability.

The planned outage is scheduled to begin at 11 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 5, and end by 3 a.m. Friday, Feb. 6, according to the company and reporting by the Midland Daily News.

The impacted area gener-

ally includes locations south of Wyllys Street, north of Eastlawn Drive, east of Dartmouth Drive and west of Swede Avenue, including areas near Midland High School and Washington Woods Apartments, the report said.

The work includes upgrading poles and both overhead and underground wires, the company said, and requires a brief interruption of power to complete the upgrades safely.

“Consumers Energy is committed to keeping the lights on for our customers, and sometimes that requires temporary power interruptions as we im-

prove our system,” said Chris Shellberg, the company’s senior executive director for low voltage operations, in a statement carried in the report.

Consumers said it mailed postcards to affected customers and encouraged residents to sign

up for alerts so they can receive real-time updates and any schedule changes.

If weather or other conditions force a change, Consumers listed a backup window: 11 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 10, to 3 a.m. Wednesday, Feb. 11.



Flint ReCAST mini-grants open for 2026, offering \$5,000–\$25,000 for youth programs focused on resilience and trauma recovery

BY MB STAFF

FLINT, Mich. — The City of Flint has opened applications for its 2026 Flint ReCAST mini-grant program, directing \$5,000 to \$25,000 at a time to local organizations that work with young people and families facing stress, trauma and violence.

The city said applications opened Friday, Jan. 30, and are due by 3 p.m. Friday, Feb. 27. Funded programming is expected to run from April 1 through Sept. 30.

Flint ReCAST — short for “Resiliency in Communities After Stress and Trauma” — is a youth- and family-focused effort built around two core funding tracks: Youth Engagement & Positive Development and Trauma-In-

formed & Behavioral Health Services. In practical terms, the city is asking applicants to propose programming that fits needs local youth-serving organizations have been describing for years: prevention work, peer support, mental health literacy, self-care, resiliency skills and better pathways to services.

The city’s announcement lists eligible applicants as 501(c)(3) nonprofits, government agencies and academic institutions, and community-based organizations with a fiscal sponsor. It also spells out what is not funded, including religious activities, lobbying, capital projects and food/refreshments.

An online information session is scheduled for 11 a.m. Monday, Feb. 9, with registration linked in the city posting.

ReCAST is designed as more than a single grant cycle. On its public overview page, the program says it supports evidence-based youth engagement and violence prevention, expands trauma-informed capacity in behavioral health, and includes training and community approaches aimed at improving relationships and reducing inequities. The larger federal ReCAST model, administered through SAMHSA, was built to assist high-risk youth and families and link community youth engagement to trauma-informed behavioral health services, with the goal of reducing trauma and improving behavioral health outcomes.

In Flint, the Greater Flint Health Coalition serves as the implementation partner, accord-

ing to the coalition’s program description.

For youth organizations already stretched thin, the mini-grant structure can be the difference between a pilot program and a sustained one — funding transportation and staffing, renting space, bringing in credentialed facilitators, or expanding existing services into neighborhoods where teens have fewer safe, structured options after school.

The city encouraged organizations with youth-serving ideas — especially those rooted in trauma-informed practice — to apply and to use the February information session to understand expectations and timelines before the deadline.

POLITICS

BHM

Black political power in the Great Lakes Bay: From Henry G. Marsh to a new generation of leaders



HENRY MARSH BEING SWORN IN AS SAGINAW MAYOR

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW, Mich. — Drivers entering downtown pass it in a blink: a stretch of riverfront concrete turned into a story wall, a public reminder that political firsts here didn't happen by accident. At Henry Marsh Plaza, a mural and gathering space honors Henry G. Marsh, whose rise through local government came at a time when Black residents were still fighting to be seen as full participants in civic life.

For Black History Month, the region's political story is often told through national names — presidents, movement leaders, headline-makers. But in the Great Lakes Bay Region, the backbone of that history is municipal: council chambers, school board meetings, county commissions, neighborhood groups pressing elected officials for fair

treatment and basic services.

The arc runs straight through Saginaw, where Marsh became the city's first African American mayor in 1967 — a milestone that placed him among the first Black mayors in the United States at the time. His path — from law practice to public commission



THE HENRY G. MARSH MURAL AND PLAZA PROJECT LOCATED ON WASHINGTON AVENUE UNDER THE I-675 OVERPASS

work to elected office — offered a model that still echoes in local politics: credibility built in community, then converted into representation.

A “first” that opened more than a door

Marsh arrived in Saginaw in the 1950s, opened a law office, and moved quickly into civic work, including leadership tied to human relations, according to Saginaw Valley State University. The timeline matters: he was elected to the Saginaw City Council in 1961 and became mayor in 1967.

Local historical notes from NAACP Saginaw Branch credit Marsh with being the first African American elected to Saginaw's City Council and later the city's first African American mayor, and also highlight his influence in securing a fair housing ordinance and his decades of civic work beyond elected office.

The city's description of the plaza project frames the memo-

rial as more than a tribute — it's a piece of public storytelling at a gateway into downtown, turning a former vacant space into a civic marker.

Marsh's legacy isn't only about a title. It's about what a door opening can do in a region where public power has historically been concentrated — and how quickly progress can be tested when the spotlight shifts.

That's why, in 2024, a township meeting in Saginaw carried more weight than the agenda on the dais. It was the first meeting for Amaya Bradley, a newly elected trustee whose victory and swearing-in became a public flashpoint — and, in the process, a civic lesson on who gets welcomed into power and how.



AMAYA BRADLEY

Bradley is the first African American woman elected trustee in township history and the youngest to serve — a pair of “firsts” that landed in the middle of a broader, modern-day conversation about representation and respect in local government.

See **BLACK POLITICS**, Page 26

POLITICS

BLACK POLITICS, from page 25



WILMER JONES HAM-MCZEE

Wilmer Jones-Ham: the mayor who changed what leadership looked like

Four decades after Marsh's breakthrough, Wilmer Jones-Ham (also referred to as Wilmer Jones Ham-McZee) made a different kind of history — the kind that recalibrates what a community imagines is possible.

Jones-Ham was sworn in on Nov. 12, 2001, becoming Saginaw's first female mayor after having served on the City Council since February 1994. She served as mayor from 2001–2005. Her legacy, especially as remembered after her death in 2025, is framed as decades of local service that outlasted any single term or title.

If Marsh represented a breakthrough in access, Jones-Ham represented a breakthrough in visibility — a Black woman at the center seat, not as a symbol, but as the one holding the gavel.

The work moves outward

Across the river and across county lines, the region's Black political history has often been a series of "firsts" that arrived later than residents wanted, and earlier than some institutions expected.

In Bay City, Cordal Morris made history in 2017 when he became the city's first African American commissioner after running uncontested for the 9th Ward. Even in a short headline, the significance is clear: representation isn't symbolic when it determines whose concerns get heard first — or at all — at budget season.

In Midland, where Black residents make up a smaller share of the population than in Saginaw, civic influence has often emerged through coalition-building and institution work — the kind of political labor that doesn't always

show up on Election Day tallies but shapes what communities learn and what local government considers possible. Recent regional reporting has highlighted the local push to preserve Black history through the Voices of Black Midland archive, an effort that has fed public programs and school conversations.

From city hall to Lansing — and back again

The current generation of Black political leadership in the region reflects a different landscape than Marsh faced — but the pipeline still runs through local service.

Amos O'Neal, who represents a Saginaw-area district in the state House, has held roles across levels of local government, including years on the Saginaw City Council and a seat on the Saginaw County Board of Commissioners, according to a biographical directory. His chair of the Michigan Legislative Black Caucus, placing a Great Lakes Bay lawmaker in a leadership role inside the Capitol while still rooted in regional concerns.



AMOS O'NEAL

The region's influence in statewide education politics has also included Dr. Pamela Pugh, a Saginaw native who made history as Michigan's first Black female president of the Michigan State Board of Education.

That dual identity — local-first, Lansing-capable — has become a recurring theme in modern Michigan politics, where leaders are often judged not just by votes cast in the Capitol, but by how effectively they translate state decisions into tangible changes back home: road fund-

ing, school aid, public safety grants, health resources, neighborhood development.

The 35th Senate District special election unfolding this winter adds another layer of attention to the region's political landscape. The contest is formally about filling a vacancy, but locally it has the feel of a referendum on who gets to speak for a politically mixed stretch of mid-Michigan — and what kinds of leaders the region wants advancing to the next rung of influence. Gretchen Whitmer's office set a special primary for Feb. 3, 2026, and a general election for May 5, 2026, for the district that includes parts of Bay, Midland and Saginaw counties.

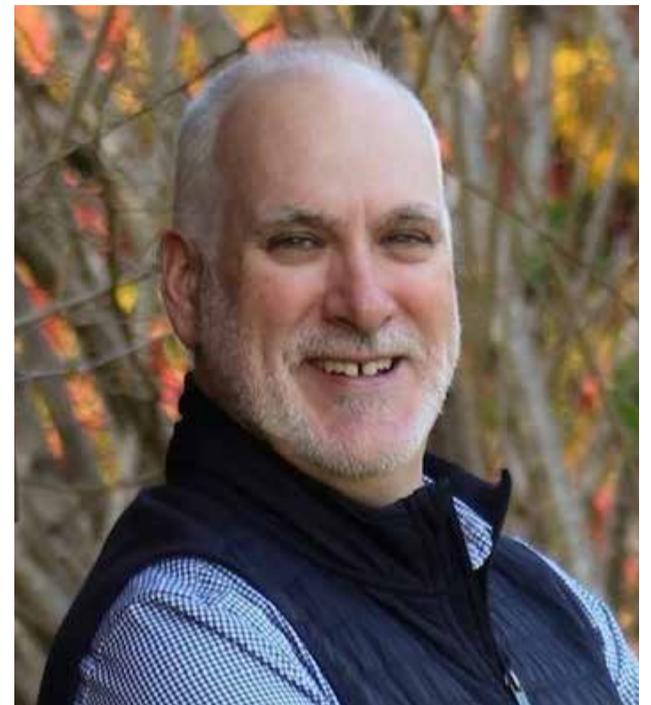
A Black History Month lens on power

Black History Month can sometimes flatten political history into a list of dates. The Great Lakes Bay story reads differently up close: it's the slow build of credibility, the long meetings, the coalition work, the pressure campaigns, the "firsts" that arrive after years of doors being held shut.

The plaza honoring Marsh underscores the point in public space: political power here has always been personal, local and fought for — and once won, used to reshape what a city considers normal.

And the throughline from Marsh to today isn't just about who holds office. It's about the idea that Black civic life in the region has never been a side note — it has been a force that pushes institutions to respond, to share power, and to leave behind a record that future leaders can build on.

Primary for Michigan's 35th Senate District set for Feb. 3



FROM LEFT, DEMOCRAT CANDIDATES CHEDRICK GREENE AND PAMELA PUGH, AND REPUBLICAN CANDIDATE, CHRISTIAN VELASQUEZ

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW, Mich. — Voters in Michigan's 35th state Senate district will head to the polls Tuesday for a special primary election that will winnow a crowded field and set up a May general election in one of the state's most closely watched swing districts.

The seat has been vacant since Jan. 3, 2025, when then-state Sen. Kristen McDonald Rivet resigned to take office in Congress. Gov. Gretchen Whitmer formally called the special election in late August, with a Feb. 3, 2026, primary and a May 5, 2026, general election to fill the remainder of the term through the end of 2026.

Beyond deciding who represents Bay, Midland and Saginaw county communities for the next several months, the election carries broader stakes for Lansing. Democrats hold a 19-18 majority in the state Senate, and the outcome could shape how much of the governor's agenda can advance in a year of divided government with Republicans controlling the state House.

"This is a lot. And it's only the beginning," Michigan Pub-

lic's "It's Just Politics" newsletter noted, pointing out that the special election fills only the remainder of the current term — and the seat is expected to be back on the ballot later in 2026 for a full four-year term beginning in 2027.

The candidates

Six Democrats and four Republicans are competing in Tuesday's primary.

Democratic candidates: Chedrick Greene; Pamela Pugh; Brandell Adams; William Morrone; Serenity Hope Salak; Martin Blank.

Republican candidates: Christian Velasquez; Jason Tunney; Andrew Carlos Wendt; Chadwick Twillman.

Money and endorsements shape the final stretch

With multiple candidates running on both sides, the closing days have brought sharper contrasts in fundraising and endorsements.

On the Republican side, Velasquez has led in fundraising and has collected a large slate of endorsements from current and

former elected officials and local leaders, according to recent reporting by the Midland Daily News. Tunney has also raised significant funds, including a large personal loan reported in campaign finance disclosures, and has cited support from Americans for Prosperity-Michigan in public materials summarized by the newspaper.

On the Democratic side, the Midland Daily News reported that Greene led fundraising among Democratic candidates in the most recent reporting window, with Pugh also raising substantial funds.

A swing district with mixed political terrain

The district's competitiveness is partly geographic. It covers parts of Saginaw County, Midland County and Bay County — areas that can vote very differently depending on the office and year. Michigan Public described Saginaw County as a frequent bellwether for statewide outcomes in modern presidential elections, while noting Midland's long GOP strength and Bay County's more recent Democratic trend lines.

That mix has pushed candidates in both parties to emphasize cost-of-living issues, while also drawing sharper contrasts on taxes, schools and the direction of state government. Michigan Public reported that affordability dominates many campaign proposals such as property tax reform and income tax reductions, and Democrats focusing on affordability while also leaning into education and literacy — a major priority for Whitmer.

Voting and what comes next

Tuesday's vote determines party nominees for the May 5 general election. The winner in May will serve through the end of 2026, restoring the Senate to its full 38-member roster after more than a year with the 35th District seat vacant.

When she called the election, Whitmer said the district's next senator would be part of negotiations on jobs, schools, literacy and infrastructure. "We have a lot of good work to get done before the end of next year," she said in the governor's press release announcing the election dates.

POLITICS

Michigan Senate sends robocall crackdown package to House

BY MB STAFF

LANSING, Mich. — The Michigan Senate unanimously approved a five-bill package designed to curb deceptive robocalls, tighten rules on telephone solicitation and expand enforcement options for both the state attorney general and private citizens.

The bills, Senate Bills 351 through 355, collectively would enact a new “Telephone Solicitation Act,” according to a recent legislative analysis and reporting on the Senate vote. The Midland Daily News reported the package passed 37-0 on Jan. 29 and is now headed to the House.

As summarized in the bill analysis, the proposed act is aimed at “abusive, annoying, or deceitful behavior” tied to telephone solicitation and would establish clearer ground rules for callers, including restrictions related to spoofed numbers and deceptive identity practices.

The Midland Daily News report said the bills were intro-



THE MICHIGAN CAPITOL IN LANSING, WHERE LAWMAKERS ADVANCED A BIPARTISAN ROBOCALL CRACKDOWN PACKAGE. (FILE PHOTO)

duced by a bipartisan group of senators, including Sen. Mary Cavanagh, Roger Victory, Jeremy Moss, Sarah Anthony, and Ed-

ward McBroom.

A key feature of the package is enforcement. The legislation would allow the Michigan Attor-

ney General's Office to seek civil penalties and court orders against violators, and it would also provide a pathway for individuals to bring civil actions in certain circumstances, according to reporting and legislative summaries.

The measures also intersect with the Federal Trade Commission's consumer protections. The federal National Do Not Call Registry is designed to curb sales calls to registered numbers, though the FTC notes that some categories—such as political calls and certain nonprofit calls—are not covered in the same way.

The Senate package, supporters argue, is meant to sharpen state-level deterrence and give consumers more leverage when deception is suspected—especially as scam tactics evolve and callers increasingly mask identities or use misleading messaging.

The bills next go to the Michigan House, where they would need approval before heading to the governor.

Senate advances tougher penalties for human trafficking

BY MB STAFF

LANSING, Mich. — A bipartisan package to increase penalties and strengthen sentencing tools for human trafficking crimes cleared the Michigan Senate unanimously this week, with supporters arguing tougher consequences and clearer guidelines are needed as trafficking remains widely underreported and increasingly facilitated online.

Dana Nessel praised the Senate's passage of the package—Senate Bills 520, 521 and 705—

saying meaningful legislation is one important tool in combating trafficking.

Nessel's office said the legislation would increase fines and sentencing guidelines for violations involving commercial sex and human trafficking and would increase penalties for trafficking offenses.

Reporting on the package described proposals that would double some penalties—from a 10-year and/or \$10,000 maximum to 20 years and/or \$20,000 in certain cases—and would increase penalties for trafficking involving mi-

nors, potentially up to life imprisonment and/or a \$50,000 penalty under the Senate's proposals.

Supporters have framed the bills as a mix of deterrence and modernization, arguing that sentencing guidelines and updated tools can help prosecutors and courts treat trafficking consistently and account for the severity of cases, including those involving children.

The attorney general's office also emphasized that enforcement is only one part of the response, noting its Human Trafficking Unit work with task forces, trainings

for law enforcement and prosecutors, and public awareness efforts aimed at identifying trafficking and connecting victims to help.

Separately, the National Human Trafficking Hotline maintains state-level information and statistics pages to help service providers, law enforcement and advocates coordinate responses and connect victims and survivors to resources.

With Senate passage, the bills move to the House, where lawmakers will decide whether to take up the package and send it to the governor.

HEALTH

BHM

Saginaw's first Black physician helped build the region's early public health backbone



NO PHOTOGRAPH OF DR. ELLIS HAS BEEN LOCATED, BUT AN IMAGE OF THE EXTERIOR OF HIS SOUTH JEFFERSON AVENUE HOME WAS INCLUDED IN THE GOODRIDGE BROTHERS' ART SOUVENIR OF SAGINAW, MICHIGAN, USA. (COURTESY/CASTLE MUSEUM OF SAGINAW COUNTY HISTORY)

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW, Mich. — Long before modern conversations about health equity and access became common in public policy, Dr. Charles W. Ellis was treating patients across Saginaw and taking on public health roles that linked medicine to the well-being of an entire community.

As Black History Month programming ramps up across the Great Lakes Bay Region, local historians have continued to surface Ellis' story: the Saginaw Valley's

first African American physician, a doctor whose career unfolded at a time when Black professionals routinely faced barriers to education, training and membership in civic institutions.

Born in Adrian in 1862, Ellis moved with his family to Saginaw as a child. He graduated from Saginaw City High School and Olivet College before earning a medical degree with honors from the Detroit College of Medicine in 1889, according to the Saginaw County Hall of Fame and the Castle Museum of Saginaw County History.

Records credit Dr. Benjamin Ross — a prominent East Saginaw physician — with mentoring Ellis and helping him gain admission to medical school, with Ellis later working as an associate in Ross' office after graduation. The accounts describe a professional relationship that became both mentorship and partnership, culminating in Ellis inheriting Ross' practice and home after Ross' death in 1896.

Ellis also pursued additional study in Europe — including time in London and Paris, with the

Hall of Fame noting Berlin as well — reflecting a level of advanced training that was uncommon for many physicians of the era, particularly those who faced racial barriers in the United States.

Back home, Ellis' résumé reads like an early blueprint for community medicine. He served as a health officer on Saginaw's east side in the 1890s, held roles connected to the city's streetcar company, lectured on emerging technologies such as X-rays, and provided care through institutions including St. Mary's Hospital and St. Vincent's Orphans' Home, according to local historical summaries.

He died of pneumonia in 1908 at age 48, and the Hall of Fame notes that the local medical society passed a resolution honoring him — an acknowledgment that, even in a segregated era, his work was recognized by peers and patients across the city.

Ellis' legacy also connects Saginaw to a broader statewide tradition of Black medical "firsts" — milestones that Michigan institutions have documented in recent years, including the first Black graduates of the University of Michigan Medical School and early Black women physicians who helped expand access to training, nursing education and community health work.

In Saginaw, historians say Ellis' life remains a reminder that "Black history" in medicine isn't only a story of national icons. It is also the local doctor who treated families, held public positions and helped set the foundations of health infrastructure — one patient and one neighborhood at a time.

HEALTH

Doctors warn of hypothermia and frostbite as arctic air grips mid-Michigan



WOMAN SITTING ON BENCH IN THE WINTER (FILE PHOTO)

BY MB STAFF

BAY CITY, Mich. — As mid-Michigan pushes through a stretch of bitter cold and dangerous wind chills, local physicians are urging residents to treat the weather as a serious health risk — particularly for children, seniors and people with underlying medical conditions.

Dr. Elizabeth Pionk, medical director of hospitalist services at McLaren Bay Region, said the hospital has already seen patients with cold-related injuries and



DR. ELIZABETH PIONK

illnesses, and she expects more during extended periods of extreme temperatures.

The risks rise when wind accelerates heat loss and when people underestimate how quickly exposure can turn dangerous, health officials say. Two of the most serious concerns are hypothermia, when the body's core temperature drops to unsafe levels, and frostbite, when skin and tissue freeze.

Pionk said hypothermia can begin with shivering but may progress to confusion and worse in severe cases. Frostbite can present as numbness, tingling, pain and hardening of the skin — warning signs that should prompt

people to get out of the cold and seek medical guidance if symptoms are significant.

For early symptoms, Pionk recommended moving to warmth and beginning careful rewarming — including using body heat to warm hands and fingers — and drinking hot fluids.

Cold snaps can also aggravate chronic conditions. Pionk said shifts in atmospheric pressure can worsen headaches, sinus issues and breathing, and that dry winter air can exacerbate asthma and COPD.

She added that dry air can increase vulnerability to viral illnesses because moisture in nasal and oral passages helps protect against infection — a seasonal reminder that cold weather safety is not only about avoiding frostbite but also about protecting respiratory health.

When residents have to be outside, Pionk recommended a three-layer clothing system: an inner moisture-wicking layer (avoiding cotton when possible), an insulating middle layer such as wool or fleece, and an outer windproof and waterproof layer.

She identified higher-risk groups as babies and children, older adults, and people with circulatory problems such as heart disease and diabetes. She also warned that smoking and alcohol use can make people more susceptible to cold-related illness.

Local emergency managers routinely encourage residents to check on neighbors during extreme cold, especially those living alone, and to ensure homes have safe heat sources and working carbon monoxide detectors — steps physicians often echo during winter weather warnings.

HEALTH

Flu activity climbs statewide as MDHHS report shows low vaccination rates

BY MB STAFF

MICHIGAN — Michigan’s influenza activity is rising, according to the state’s weekly surveillance report, as public health officials continue urging residents to get vaccinated and stay home when sick to curb spread in schools, workplaces and long-term care settings.

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services report for the week ending Dec. 27 shows Michigan’s influenza-like illness activity at 11.3%, up from 7.5% the previous week, with 13,568 patient visits for influenza-like illness recorded out of 120,055 outpatient visits.

At the same time, the report



SICK MAN IN BED (FILE PHOTO)

lists statewide vaccine coverage that remains modest mid-season: 23.9% of Michiganders had received an influenza vaccine and 8.3% had received a COVID-19 vaccine for the 2025-26 respiratory season, according to the MDHHS summary page.

The state’s surveillance update also notes that nationally, seasonal influenza activity is elevated and increasing, citing Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates of at least 11 million illnesses, 120,000 hospitalizations and 5,000 deaths from

flu so far this season.

Physicians have warned that a heavy season can quickly strain emergency departments, especially when flu overlaps with other respiratory viruses. The Michigan State Medical Society has also pointed to recent seasons in which pediatric flu deaths reached record highs and vaccination rates lagged behind what many clinicians recommend for community protection.

Health officials typically recommend annual flu shots for most people 6 months and older, and emphasize basic prevention steps that reduce transmission: frequent handwashing, covering coughs and sneezes, improving indoor ventilation when possible, and staying home when feverish.



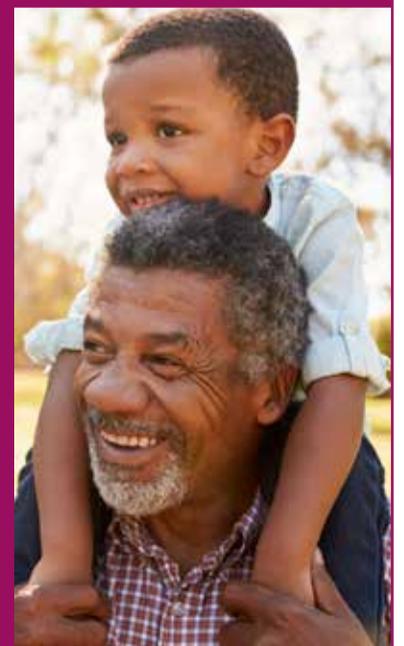
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HEALTH

Midland's Go Gold 2026 kicks off Feb. 2 with community walk, monthlong push for movement and connection

BY MB STAFF

MIDLAND, Mich. — A month-long wellness challenge aimed at nudging residents through winter's toughest stretch is set to kick off Monday with a community walk at the Tridge, as organizers promote movement and connection as practical tools for improving health.

Go Gold 2026, organized by the Midland Area Wellbeing Coalition in partnership with Health Enhancement Systems, begins with a noon kickoff walk Feb. 2 at the Tridge, then continues through February with participants encouraged to log activity and build daily habits that match their fitness level and schedule.

Organizers describe the program as open to residents of all ages and abilities, with "every step" counting — whether participants walk local trails, attend fitness or mobility classes, join group programs or simply increase intentional movement during the month.

Registration opened Jan. 9 and continues through Feb. 9, with the coalition directing residents to its events page for sign-up and program details.

Go Gold builds on the area's momentum from last year's Walktober effort and is tied to local survey findings that identified physical health as a top priority for residents, while parks and outdoor spaces ranked as community strengths, organizers said.

The coalition also highlighted a network of community partners that previously supported activity challenges, including fitness centers, therapy and mobility programs, and outdoor spaces — a strategy designed to make participation easier by connecting residents with existing resources instead of creating an entirely new

Go GOLD

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8000
10,000 Steps

Move more. Feel better. Go Gold.

Mark your calendar:

- February 2: First day to log activity
- February 9: Individual Registration and
- February 9: Team formation deadline

Learn more at mawc.gogold2026.com
Mobile Code: O8OJAD

MIDLAND AREA WELLBEING COALITION

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MIDLAND'S GO GOLD 2026 FLYER (COURTESY OF MIDLAND AREA WELLBEING COALITION)

infrastructure.

Two "warm-up" events were promoted as part of the build into February: a free virtual "Power Half Hour" on Jan. 21 focused on "jolts of joy," and a Jan. 26 one-

day Midland Wellbeing Certificate program at Chippewa Nature Center described as a reflection-and-restoration training.

The framing is intentionally community-forward, organizers

said, arguing that sustained behavior change is more likely when residents feel supported and see friends, coworkers and neighbors participating.

HEALTH

CMU Health takes on regional mental health partnership as leaders push to widen access, cut stigma

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW, Mich. — A regional effort built to make it easier for residents to seek help for mental health challenges is moving under a new umbrella, with CMU Health announcing it will become the organizational home of the Great Lakes Bay Region Mental Health Partnership as the program enters what leaders called its next phase of growth.

The shift comes as Black History Month begins — a season when communities often spotlight the institutions and relationships that shape opportunity and wellness, not only the headlines that shaped the past. In mental health, that legacy includes a simple, unfinished goal: making care easier to reach and safer to talk about, regardless of a person's background, neighborhood or income.

"This transition allows us to grow thoughtfully and responsibly," said Dallas Rau, who now serves as director of the partnership at CMU Health. "Partnering with CMU health opens the door to enhanced collaboration, innovation and sustainability, while maintaining the community-centered approach that has always guided our work."

CMU Health said the alignment is intended to expand and strengthen programming, deepen integration with clinical education and patient care, and provide greater support for mental health providers and patients throughout the region.

"This collaboration strengthens mental health initiatives in the region by connecting education, clinical care and public health," said Dr. Abishek Bala, a child and adolescent psychiatrist at CMU Health. "It creates a pathway for medical students, residents, and fellows to engage



DEPRESSED BLACK MALE (FILE PHOTO)

directly with community needs. By working together, we are investing in a healthier, more resilient community."

A partnership born from loss — and built for the whole region

The mental health partnership began in 2018 amid growing recognition of what organizers called a regional mental health crisis, with early support driven in part by the family and friends of Chad William Dunn, who died by suicide in 2013, according to CMU Health's partnership overview and Central Michigan University background materials.

Those materials list key supporters that include Central Michigan University College of Medicine, University of Michigan Depression Center and Dow Chemical Company Foundation.

The partnership's public mission is broad by design: collaborating with stakeholders to improve mental health for all residents "regardless of demographics, environments, or experiences," with a vision that everyone knows where to turn for help, seeks help without fear of stigma, and gets prompt access to excel-

lent care.

Until now, the partnership has been intentionally housed within the Great Lakes Bay Regional Alliance, a regional economic collaboration that helped provide a foundation for early programming and partnerships as the mental health effort built momentum.

The move to CMU Health is being framed as a next step in the partnership's maturity — linking community-facing awareness and training work more tightly with clinical education, medical training pipelines and patient care networks.

What changes — and what doesn't

CMU Health and the partnership emphasized continuity: programs, trainings and initiatives are expected to continue uninterrupted throughout the transition.

One notable change is the partnership's annual fundraiser schedule. The "Lifting Our Voices: Be the Light" fundraiser, originally slated for Jan. 30 at Horizons Conference Center, has been postponed while organizers use the transition period for continued collaboration and planning,

according to CMU Health's announcement and the partnership's own public update. A new date is expected to be announced later.

Why the timing matters in February

Mental health work doesn't fit neatly into a single month, but February is often when communities take stock — of what has improved, and what still keeps people from getting help. For Black History Month in particular, that includes acknowledging the ways stigma can silence families and isolate people who are struggling, and recognizing how trusted local networks — churches, schools, clinics, youth programs and community organizations — can become bridges to care.

In that sense, the partnership's new home inside a medical education and care system is as much a practical strategy as a symbolic one: if the goal is to normalize help-seeking, the institutions that train future providers and see patients daily become part of the message.

CMU Health has said the move creates a more direct lane for medical students, residents and fellows to engage with community needs — a connection leaders believe can strengthen both workforce development and community trust over time.

For residents, the immediate takeaway is simpler: the partnership's public-facing work — awareness campaigns, training opportunities and coordinated efforts with regional stakeholders — continues, now with CMU Health listed as its organizational base.

As planning continues, organizers said updated information about the postponed fundraiser will be shared once a new date is finalized.

EDUCATION

BHM

Black History: Education's Crucial Role



BY CRAIG DOUGLAS

According to the Michigan Department of Education, during February, in honor of Black History month educators are to engage students in lessons that highlight African Americans. The purpose is simple: Black History lessons broaden students' understanding and appreciation of African Americans who accomplished much in the face of adversity.

Lessons vary by grade level and subject. A young learner may do an art project where they use their hands and tools like scissors and crayons. More mature students will work on challenges like research papers, speeches, or team projects. Regardless of age or ability, lessons have common ground upon which to build. (*I dare say as much applies to us adults, as well.*)

There are three attributes I would offer as themes across Black History lessons:

- 1) ENLIGHTENMENT
- 2) PERSEVERANCE
- 3) COURAGE.

First, enlightenment refers to sharing accurate information about African American heroes who were contributors to history. Each blazed a unique trail, leaving behind a legacy which serves



TEACHER HELPING STUDENT WITH A BLACK HISTORY MONTH PROJECT

as a pathway for others to follow. Many examples come to mind, and my favorite one is Jackie Robinson (1919-1972). Jackie broke the so-called "color barrier" in professional baseball by becoming the first African American to play in the Major Leagues. Robinson's story is an opportunity to inform students about the harassment he was willing to endure. Surrounding his journey are examples of white ballplayers who stood up for him at the time, such as Cincinnati outfielder Danny Litwhiler (1916-2011, coached at Michigan State University after his playing career).

Black History enlightens all of us regarding previous eras and their challenges. It provides a chance to reflect (e.g. what would it have been like back then?) and question (e.g., would I have been as strong as Robinson or as brave as Litwhiler?).

Second, "perseverance" is revealed every time an African American was told, "no" and didn't stop there. How did they

respond the first time that happened? Beyond the first time, how many other times were they told, "no," or worse yet, turned away entirely? Besides Robinson, another sports figure would be Arther Ashe (1943-93). Ashe was the first Black tennis player to win a singles title at Wimbledon. I appreciate an often-cited quotation attributed to him, "Start where you are; Use what you have, Do what you can!"

Do what you can!
(*What better takeaway from any lesson is there?*)

Third, "courage" is shown repeatedly when looking at Black History. Take Guion "Guy" Bluford Jr. (1942-), the first African American astronaut who flew four Space Shuttle missions. In 1983 Bluford was a crew member of the Challenger just one year before it exploded after liftoff.

Schools are busy during Black History Month helping connect students of all ages with stories of those who have gone before us. Within these lessons are oppor-

tunities to enlighten and inform students about those who have gone before us. We can reflect upon the persistence and courage these individuals displayed. We can wonder, "what would I have done," and reflect upon the strength needed to attain what they attained.

February is Black History Month, full of lessons applicable to all twelve months of the calendar year for each of us.

Resources:

<https://www.michigan.gov/mde/-/media/Project/Websites/mde/Literacy/Black-History-Month/BlackHistMonthWeek3-2024.pdf?rev=1568aa384fa54d36adb62ebbd5c bdb7>

<https://msuspartans.com/news/2020/6/19/baseball-danny-litwhilers-connection-to-jackie-robinson>

https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/arthur_ashe_371527

EDUCATION

Saginaw school board appoints Dr. Janae T. Bady to fill vacancy

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW, Mich. — The Saginaw Public Schools Board of Education has appointed Dr. Janae T. Bady to fill a vacant seat created by the unexpected death of board member Kevin M. Rooker, who passed unexpectedly Thursday evening, Jan. 1.

Bady was appointed during

a special meeting held Monday, Jan. 26, and will serve until the November election, when she would have to run to complete the remainder of Rooker's term through 2028.

Rooker was elected to a six-year term in November 2022 and sworn in as a board member in January 2023.

District officials said Bady

works at Central Michigan University's School of Health Sciences in the Division of Public Health. The board interviewed five candidates through a public selection process before voting to appoint her.

Bady will participate in upcoming board meetings, committees and other district governance responsibilities.



DR. JANE T. BADY

Michigan to host two virtual education job fairs as state targets teacher shortages

BY MB STAFF

LANSING, Mich. — Michigan will hold two statewide virtual job fairs this spring to connect school employers with teachers and other education workers, part of a broader effort to boost staffing in shortage areas and strengthen the state's educator pipeline.

The Michigan Department of Education said the 2026 Education Workforce Virtual Job Fairs will run 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Wednesday, March 11, 2026, and Wednesday, May 13, 2026, and will be hosted in cooperation with the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity.

The fairs are open to school employers and job seekers across the education field, and will use the Radancy platform — a virtual hiring system designed to let employers and candidates interact through chat and interview scheduling in a single online space.

"The 2026 Education Workforce Virtual Job Fairs are important opportunities for prospective educators to play a critical role in increasing student



TEACHER IN CLASSROOM (FILE PHOTO)

achievement and performance," said State Superintendent Dr. Glenn Maleyko. "To put Students First, we need to ensure that there are well-qualified, certified teachers in our classrooms."

LEO Director Susan Corbin said the goal is to be proactive and connect job seekers to in-demand career paths while meeting long-term workforce needs. "Job fairs give students a chance to

connect directly with employers, explore career paths and start building the networks that can shape their future and put them on a pathway to success," Corbin said.

The job fairs are tied to Goal 7 of Michigan's Top 10 Strategic Education Plan, which focuses on increasing the number of certified teachers in shortage areas. The department has emphasized

that the work is not limited to a single recruitment event. In recent years, MDE has expanded multiple strategies to grow and diversify the educator pipeline — including "Grow Your Own" programs for middle and high school students and school support staff, on-demand preparation options to reduce geographic and financial barriers, a rural credentialing hub, and streamlined pathways for experienced out-of-state educators to earn Michigan certification.

The state's job-fair webpage lists education openings beyond classroom teaching, including roles such as substitute teachers, paraprofessionals, bus drivers, custodians, secretaries and administrators, reflecting staffing pressures that districts say affect day-to-day operations as much as teacher vacancies do.

Registration and additional details are available on MDE's Education Workforce Job Fairs webpage, and information about certification routes is posted through the department's Office of Educator Excellence. MDE also directs certification questions to MDE-EducatorHelp@Michigan.gov.



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EDUCATION

MDE chief deputy Sue Carnell to retire July 31 after historic run as interim state superintendent

BY MB STAFF

Lansing, Mich. — Dr. Sue C. Carnell, the chief deputy superintendent at the Michigan Department of Education and a career educator with more than 45 years in education and government, will retire effective July 31, the department announced.

Carnell's exit closes a chapter that, for a brief but consequential stretch last fall, placed her at the top of Michigan's K-12 leadership structure. She served as interim state superintendent beginning in October after the retirement of Dr. Michael F. Rice and became the first Black woman to be state school chief in Michigan, according to the department.

The retirement news was shared by State Superintendent Dr. Glenn Maleyko at a meeting of the Michigan State Board of Education — the same meeting that also marked the final board meeting for deputy superintendent Dr. Michele A. Harmala, whose last day is Jan. 31.

"I have had the pleasure of working alongside Dr. Carnell when we were both local school superintendents in Wayne County and at the Michigan Department of Education," Maleyko said. "She always puts Students First. Her legacy is one of helping improve outcomes for children both at the local level and statewide. I wish she would stay with the department longer, but her retirement is well-deserved."

Carnell said she had considered retiring sooner but stayed to help with the leadership transition as Maleyko stepped into the top role in December.

"It has been my great pleasure and privilege to serve the people of the state of Michigan—especially our children," Carnell said. "I know that Dr. Maleyko and the outstanding staff at the Michigan Department of Education will continue to improve outcomes for

children. My message to the MDE team is one of my favorite phrases: 'You've got this.'"

A statewide résumé rooted in special education and district leadership

Carnell has served as MDE's chief deputy superintendent since 2021, according to the department. Her career spans classroom teaching, district administration and high-level government roles that intersected with some of Michigan's most visible education systems.

Before joining MDE leadership, she served as superintendent of Westwood Community School District, deputy superintendent of Detroit Public Schools and assistant director of special education and a principal in Southgate Community School District, the department said.

Early in her career, she spent nine years as a special education teacher in Inkster Public Schools.

At MDE, Carnell previously served as chief of staff for Rice and directed the former Office of School Excellence and former Office of Community Services. She also served as an education policy adviser to former Gov. Jennifer M. Granholm and worked as a group executive for former Dave Bing, the department said.

Carnell earned a bachelor's degree in education from the University of Michigan, a master's degree in leading disabilities from Eastern Michigan University, and a doctorate in education leadership from Eastern, according to the department.

She and her husband, Craig, have two children and three grandchildren.

Maleyko's "Students First" agenda takes shape as leadership shifts

Maleyko took over in December after the State Board selected

him earlier in the year, returning Michigan's education department to a permanent superintendent following the interim stretch. In his first State Board meeting after becoming superintendent, Maleyko called for unified state leadership around a "Students First" mission and said improving literacy would be his top priority, alongside renewing the state's strategic education plan.

"We are at an important moment for public education—a moment that calls for collaboration, listening and shared purpose," Maleyko said at that meeting. "I accepted this role because I believe every child in Michigan deserves a world-class education—no matter their background, ZIP code or circumstance. The mission that guides me is simple: Students First."

Carnell's retirement announcement lands as that agenda moves from messaging to implementation — including a statewide listening tour Maleyko has said will help shape next steps.

Harmala's departure closes another chapter at MDE

The leadership changes extend beyond Carnell. Harmala's last day is Jan. 31, and the board approved a resolution recognizing her service, the department said.

Harmala has served since 2023 as deputy superintendent overseeing educator excellence, career and technical education, special education and administrative law, according to the department and the board's resolution.

The resolution credits Harmala with a 40-year career that included roles as a teacher, special



SUE CARNELL

education director, local superintendent and professor, and it notes she most recently served as an associate professor and graduate director at Madonna University before joining MDE.

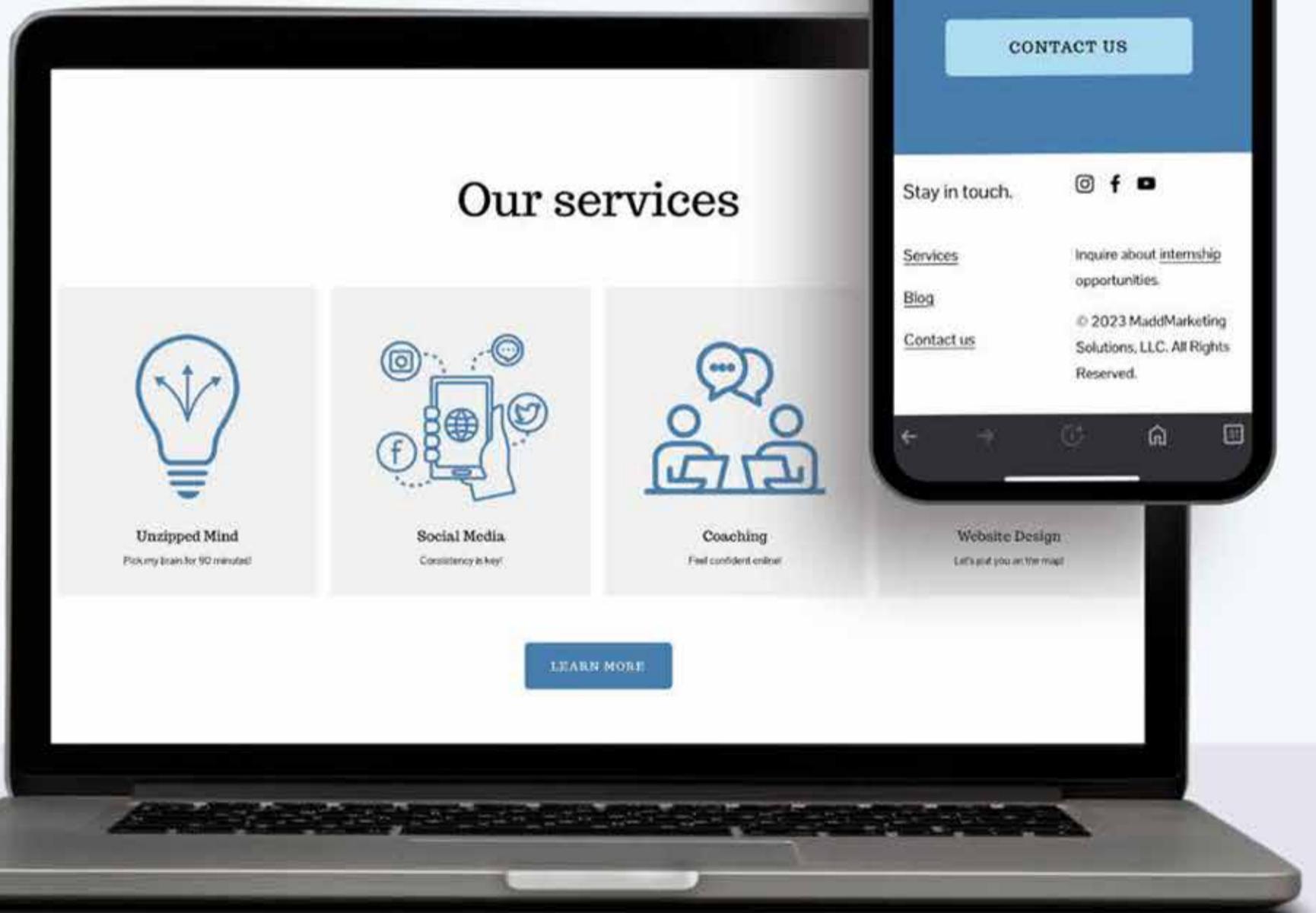
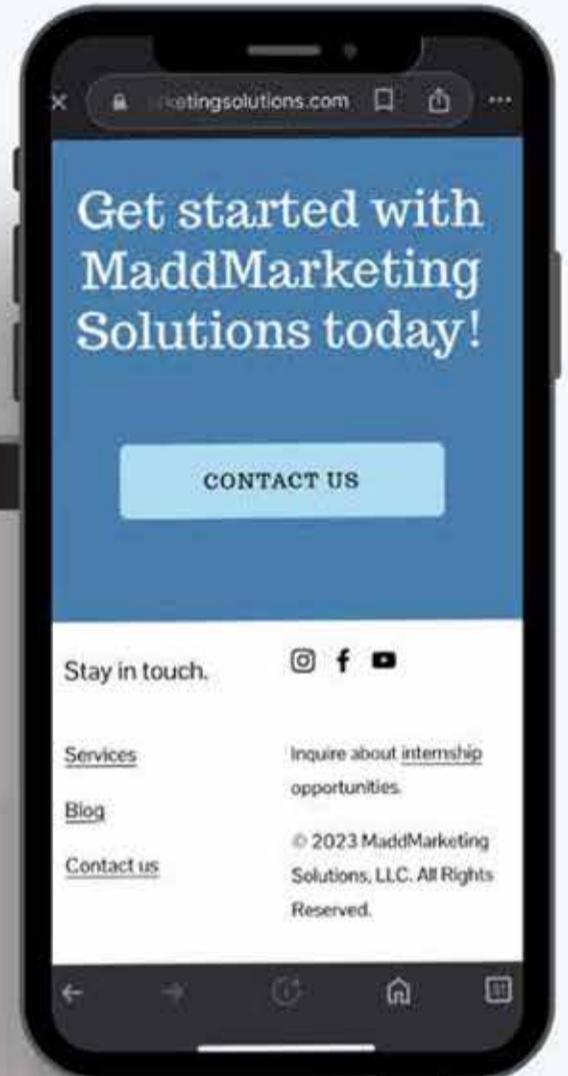
Earlier roles included superintendent of Wayne-Westland Community School District, assistant superintendent and executive director of student support services for Farmington Public Schools, and a regional consultant for Oakland Schools, the department said. The resolution also highlights initiatives tied to educator preparation, student outcomes and supports for students with disabilities.

With Carnell's July retirement date set and Harmala's departure at month's end, MDE is entering 2026 with a leadership reshuffle at the same time it is pushing major statewide priorities — from literacy and workforce development to student wellness — under a new superintendent who has promised to keep the department's work focused on children and classrooms.



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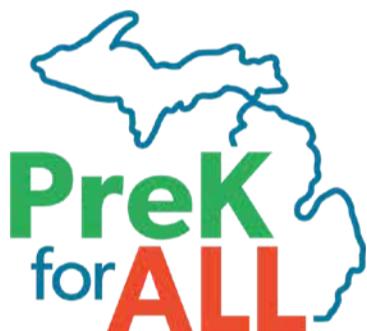
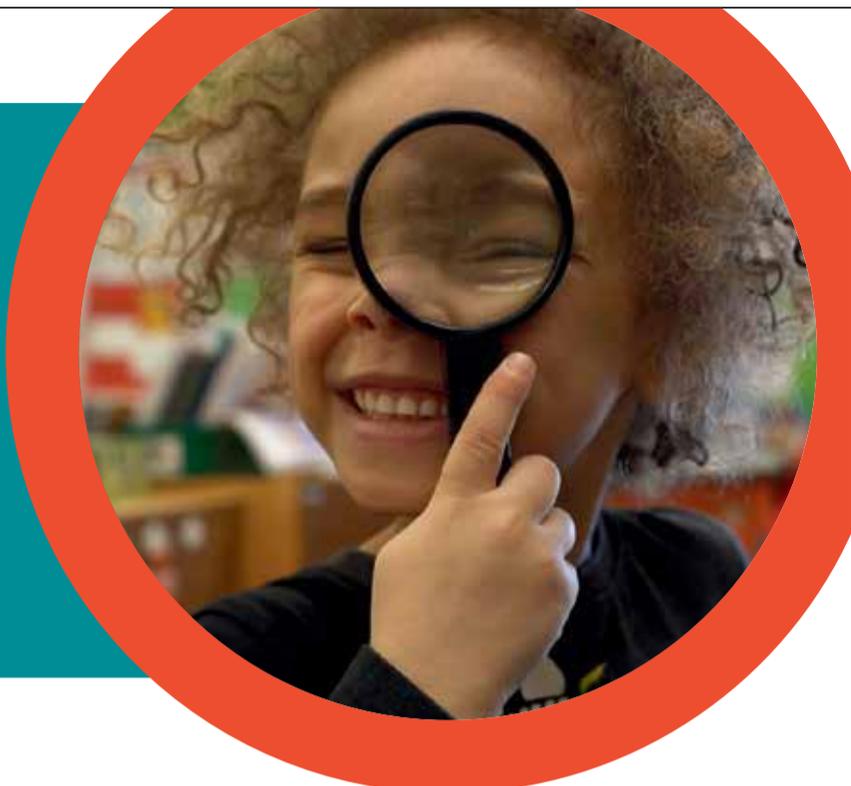
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BUSINESS + FINANCE

Dow Inc. to cut about 4,500 jobs in restructuring push tied to AI, automation



DOW CHEMICAL

BY MB STAFF

MIDLAND, Mich. — Dow says it will eliminate about 4,500 jobs worldwide — roughly 13% of its workforce — as the chemicals and materials company launches a sweeping restructuring it expects will simplify operations, expand the use of automation and artificial intelligence, and lift profitability over the next several years.

The Midland-based company, which employs about 34,600

people globally, said the workforce reduction is part of a broader initiative it calls “Transform to Outperform,” a plan aimed at delivering at least \$2 billion in near-term operating EBITDA improvement while “radically” simplifying how work gets done.

Dow expects the job cuts to carry \$600 million to \$800 million in severance costs, with overall one-time costs of \$1.1 billion to \$1.5 billion tied to the initiative. The company also said the changes will reduce some third-party roles and stream-

line processes as it modernizes operations.

The announcement arrives as Dow and other chemical makers face sluggish demand and pressure in key end markets. Dow forecast first-quarter revenue of about \$9.4 billion, below analyst expectations cited in market reporting, and said the operating environment has seen only limited seasonal improvement.

Dow’s restructuring is the latest in a series of recent moves. The company previously announced 1,500 job cuts in Janu-

ary 2025 and said last year it would close three European plants, affecting about 800 jobs, according to reporting on the company’s actions.

Dow has not publicly detailed how the cuts will be distributed by site, business unit or country. The company said programs and operations will continue as the initiative rolls out, with the largest costs expected during 2026 and additional restructuring-related costs expected through 2027.

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BUSINESS + FINANCE

Bay City Boat Lines sold to entertainment developer Jordan Dice; cruises expected to continue

BY MB STAFF

BAY CITY, Mich. — Bay City Boat Lines—a staple of Saginaw River tourism for nearly three decades—has been acquired by Jordan Dice, who says he plans to preserve the operation’s sightseeing tours, entertainment cruises and private charters.

The Midland Daily News reported Dice has acquired the company, which was founded in 1998 by the Fournier family and operates the Princess Wenonah and the Islander.

Dice, whose portfolio includes the Midland Mall and State Theatre, said he remem-



JORDAN DICE (FILE PHOTO)

bers riding the Princess Wenonah as a child and called the riverboats “iconic,” according to reporting and broadcast coverage of the sale.

“My goal is to operate the

boats for many years to come,” Dice said, according to WNEM, adding that he intends to integrate the attraction with other entertainment experiences he is building through his venues.

The riverboats have long been marketed as both entertainment and local history—offering narrated tours that highlight Bay City’s maritime and logging-era

past, along with themed cruises and private events.

As ownership shifts, Dice said the staff and the company’s reputation were a major part of the appeal. The Midland Daily News reported he praised the pride he saw in the operation and signaled the goal of carrying forward the tradition rather than replacing it.



THE PRINCESS WENONAH AT WENONAH PARK IN BAY CITY. (FILE PHOTO)

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SPORTS

MHSAA expands NIL-style “personal branding” options for high school athletes

BY MB STAFF

EAST LANSING, Mich. — Michigan high school athletes can now do more to profit from their own name, image and likeness — but only as individuals, and only outside the orbit of booster-driven “collectives” that have reshaped college sports.

The Representative Council of the Michigan High School Athletic Association approved an expansion of personal branding activities, or PBA — the association’s term for NIL-style opportunities — effective immediately.

Until now, Michigan’s rules permitted a narrow slice of branding activity, including student-athletes running camps, clinics and private lessons. The updated policy adds options such as social media endorsements and promotions; personal appearances; photo sessions or au-

tograph signings; modeling and advertising; merchandise, sports card or apparel sales; and use of a student’s name, image or likeness in marketing materials.

The guardrails are extensive — and deliberate. The policy is built to allow what the association calls “true” NIL while preventing pay-for-play structures that could tilt competitive balance among schools. “We have said from the start of this conversation that the MHSAA could be comfortable with a policy that provides individual branding opportunities for individual student-athletes,” Executive Director Mark Uyl said. “This is the essence of what NIL was supposed to allow in the first place.”

What’s allowed — and what’s off-limits

Under the new policy, students still cannot cash in based

on athletic performance, awards, recognition, team participation or game outcomes, the association said. They also cannot use school names, logos, mascots, trademarks, uniforms or other school identifiers in their personal branding. Branding activities cannot take place during the school day or at any MHSAA event — including practice — and cannot occur on school property or be promoted through school media channels.

Schools are also barred from brokering deals. Coaches and other employees may not solicit, arrange, negotiate or promote PBA activities on behalf of student-athletes, and violations could jeopardize a school’s membership and a student’s eligibility.

“The MHSAA will guard the competitive equity we have promoted for more than 100 years,” Uyl said, adding the association will take seriously any attempts

to “break or blur” the rule.

The policy also restricts endorsements tied to categories the association deems inappropriate or unsafe — including gambling, alcoholic beverages and banned substances — and requires that all branding opportunities be disclosed to the association within seven days for review and approval. Districts may choose to impose stricter rules than the baseline MHSAA policy.

Why now

The association said it has spent the past three years discussing NIL and personal branding with member schools during update meetings and other administrator conferences, and began weighing possible rule changes after lawmakers floated changes to state law in 2023 — while also monitoring how surrounding states handled similar policies.

The result, MHSAA leaders said, is a policy that expands opportunity without importing the college model — particularly collectives, boosters and school-affiliated intermediaries — into high school sports.

The Representative Council serves as the association’s legislative body, with most members elected by schools and additional seats set aside to ensure representation. The MHSAA is a private, not-for-profit organization of voluntary membership representing more than 1,500 schools statewide, and it notes that no government funds support its operations.



HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL PLAYER (FILE PHOTO)

SPORTS

SVSU men sweep Roosevelt series, ride hot shooting past 24 turnovers in 91-80 win



SAGINAW VALLEY STATE'S KEVONNE TAYLOR GOES UP FOR A LAYUP IN THE LANE DURING THE CARDINALS' WIN OVER ROOSEVELT. (SVSU)

BY MB STAFF

SAGINAW, Mich. — Saginaw Valley State University shot its way past a sloppy afternoon and completed a season sweep of Roosevelt University with a 91-80 win Saturday at James E. O'Neill Jr. Arena.

The Cardinals overcame 24 turnovers and 35 Roosevelt free-throw attempts by hitting 52.6% from the field and 44% from 3-point range, improving to 11-9 overall and 5-7 in the Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference. Roosevelt fell to 2-17 and

1-11 in conference play.

SVSU opened with a quick 5-0 burst and later used a late first-half surge to take control. After Roosevelt briefly grabbed its first lead late in the half, the Cardinals answered with a 12-2 closing run to carry a 43-31 advantage into the break.

Kevonne Taylor was the catalyst on both ends, finishing with 13 points, a career-high 13 rebounds and seven blocks — three shy of a triple-double.

Xavier Thomas led SVSU in scoring with 20 points off the bench, adding seven rebounds

and five assists. Triston Nichols posted a career-high 19 points and eight assists, while Trenton Taratuta knocked down four 3s and finished with 13 points.

Roosevelt kept pressure on the ball and chipped the lead to 53-47 with 13:11 remaining, but SVSU responded with an 11-0 run to stretch the margin to 80-60 with 5:32 to play. Roosevelt closed within 11 late but never threatened in the final minutes.

SVSU's bench production helped offset the turnover margin. The Cardinals got 42 bench points and held Roosevelt to 5-of-

24 shooting from beyond the arc, even as the Lakers went 31-of-35 at the line.

Afterward, the SVSU coach pointed to the offensive rhythm that had been missing earlier in the season: "We had some excellent shot-making today."

The win also completed a two-game sweep of Roosevelt. SVSU beat the Lakers 93-68 in the first meeting on Jan. 8 in Chicago.

SVSU heads to Northern Michigan University for a Thursday night game in Marquette.

FAITH IN FOCUS



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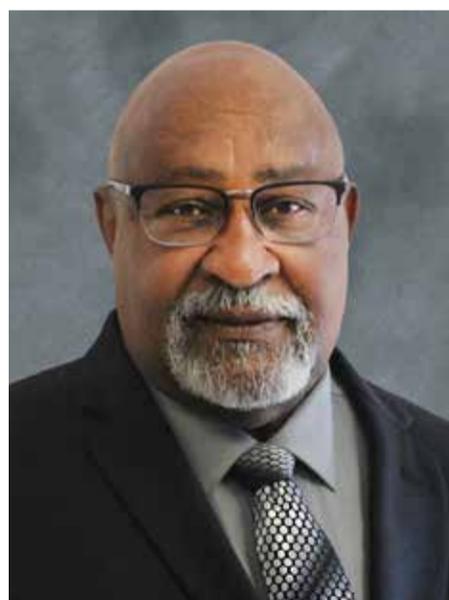
Ministry Without Walls expands vision with community-focused mission

BY PASTOR JOHN DUNN

Ministry Without Walls has recently returned to its location at 3783 Mannion Road with a renewed vision, shaped by recent global events and the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Seeking divine guidance, the organization has embraced a broader mission: to make the church an integral part of the community.

The new direction for Ministry Without Walls is centered around the theme of "Breaking Down Walls." This initiative aims to bridge gaps between spiritual life and community service, uniting church members, volunteers, and local professionals in a shared mission.

The organization's vision includes several key objectives:



PASTOR JOHN DUNN

- Creating a space where the spirit, soul, and body can achieve wholeness.
- Providing resources to those in need.
- Fostering collaboration

between the church, volunteers, and community professionals.

- Ensuring a welcoming environment where love prevails and judgment is absent.
- Maintaining privacy and prioritizing safety.
- Emphasizing the importance of the whole person.

Ministry Without Walls will continue to offer various teachings and seminars on topics such as outreach, spiritual growth, mental health, healthy living, finding purpose, financial management, entrepreneurship, and more. These programs are designed to address diverse needs and support personal development.

Recognizing that the mission field is close to home, not far

away, the organization is committed to a collaborative approach, knowing that achieving this vision will require the collective effort of many. Ministry Without Walls is dedicating its resources, talents, and connections to dismantle barriers and connect with the community more deeply.

Those interested in learning more or getting involved are encouraged to visit the church on Sundays at 11:00 AM. This offers an opportunity to meet Pastor John Dunn, ask questions, and experience the ministry's mission firsthand.

For more information, visit Ministry Without Walls at 3783 Mannion Road, Saginaw, MI 48603.

SPONSORED CONTENT

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SERMONETTE SERIES

Strength that rises from Christ

*"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me"**Philippians 4:13*BY MINISTER CAROLYN
CARTER TOWNSEL

This Scripture is often spoken as a declaration of victory, yet it was written in a place of surrender. The Apostle Paul did not pen these words from a mountaintop of success, but from a life seasoned by hardship, restraint, and unwavering trust in God. His statement was not rooted in personal ability, ambition, or determination - it was rooted in dependence on Christ.

When Paul says, "I can do all things," he is not claiming limitless human power. He is confessing a holy truth; there is no circumstance that can strip him of Christ's sustaining strength. Whether content or lacking, celebrated or confined, Paul understood that Christ remained constant when everything else shifted.

Christ's strength does not always remove the pressure-we often wish it would. Instead, it reinforces the soul. It steadies the heart when emotions fluctuate. It anchors the spirit when uncertainty threatens peace. This is the kind of strength that does not shout; it endures. It is quiet confidence. It is spiritual resilience.

There are seasons when strength looks like moving forward, and other seasons when strength looks like stand-

ing still and trusting God. Sometimes strength is bold obedience; other times it is silent faithfulness. Through Christ, we are strengthened to forgive what wounded us, to wait when answers delay, to speak truth with grace, and to rise again when life has pressed us low.

This Scripture invites us to stop striving and start abiding. Strength flows not from doing more, but from remaining connected to Christ. As Jesus said, "Apart from Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). But with Him, even what once felt impossible becomes bearable and purposeful.

If God has allowed it in your life, Christ will empower you to walk through it. The assignment never exceeds the anointing. The calling never outruns grace. You are not falling - you are being strengthened.

Beloved, when we truly understand this, we will understand - Through Christ, I am strengthened. Through Christ, I endure with grace.

Through Christ, I rise in purpose and peace.

Blessings to All,
Carolyn

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FUNDRAISING GOOD TIMES

What you need to know as a nonprofit board member in 2026



PART ONE OF A TWO-PART SERIES

BY MEL AND PEARL SHAW

Fundraising is at the heart of all nonprofits. Yes, mission, vision, values, and partnerships are all important, but financial resources are what keep the doors open. As a board member, you play a unique role in ensuring your nonprofit sustains and grows. You may think “we hired an executive director to take care of that,” but you are still responsible for the organization’s financial health. As a board, you collectively have to understand fundraising, how it works, and what it takes. This is different for each nonprofit, but it is your responsibility to be engaged with ensuring your organization is sustaining and growing, and not just getting by.

Whether it’s your annual fundraising or a special campaign, there is specific information each board member should know. This starts with knowing how much needs to be raised for what purposes, and what will be different if and when the goal is



BOARD MEETING (FILE PHOTO)

reached? You will need a case for support that communicates your fundraising goals and priorities and that shares the unique role your organization plays. This can be a brochure, content for a proposal, a video, or talking points that are shared and understood by all. And it needs to tie to your strategic plan.

Once you know what the organization is raising money for, you need to consider where the funds could come from. Knowing that you will apply for a specific grant, or that a certain foundation has consistently funded the organization in the past, doesn’t mean that either or both of these will be true this year. Ask your executive director to share who the top donors and prospective donors are, if you don’t already know. Because of increased uncertainty, we recommend building a pool of prospective donors who can collectively give three times the amount you need to raise. In practical terms, this means that if you are seeking \$500,000,

the organization should identify individuals, foundations, and granting agencies that can collectively give \$1,500,000. You cannot jeopardize your nonprofit by assuming that everyone you think will provide financial support will actually do so. Or that they will do so in the timeframe that the money is needed. Likewise, if you need to raise \$3 million, you want to work with a pool of prospective donors who could give \$9 million.

As a board, you also need to know whether your organization has the capacity and infrastructure required to meet its fund-

raising goals. It takes money to raise money, and it is not out of line for fundraising costs to equal 20% of the amount you need to raise. You need experienced staff, technology, and time for the executive director to focus on fund development and fundraising; they can’t just add fundraising onto an already long list of responsibilities. Related to this, as a board, you need to discuss how much you are willing to give and how much you are willing to raise. Everyone doesn’t need to give the same amount, but everyone needs to give and be engaged in fundraising.



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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.



PIC OF THE WEEK

Saginaw African American Pastors held a Prayer & Unity Rally at World Outreach Campus on Thursday, Jan. 29.



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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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