

MANY EYES. ONE VOICE.

# The ARGUS

★★★★★  
5-STAR FINAL



Volume 112  
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2023  
EDITION

INSIDE



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## Foxy 106.9: Best Mix *in the STL*



Owner Micheal Roberts, Sr. & The Real JR,  
on-air morning personality on 106.9 FM

“Foxy 106.9” on the St. Louis-licensed FM translator officially launched on Friday, Dec. 1st after a soft launch in November. The company based in St. Louis, Missouri, is a subsidiary of the parent company, the Roberts Brothers Companies, one of the largest African American-owned conglomerates. April 2023, came the officially approved license to operate St. Louis only African American Owned radio station.

FOXY 106.9 FM, with an over-the-air reach of more than 1 million listeners within the urban market of the Greater St. Louis region and global listenership through online streaming on FOXY1069.com, the station is set to engage a range of listeners. Officially hitting the airwaves “The Real Breakfast Crew” weekday daily morning show, featuring Tammie Holland and The Real J.R.” Thimes, will curate a selected blend of music genres, including R&B, jazz, blues, gospel, funk, and classic hip-hop. In addition to its music programming, the station

will feature “back-down-memory lane” shows like “The Quiet Storm, Rollcall and more”.

The station has developed relationships with small mom & pop stores, beauty & barber shops, the corner convenience store & more as it forms a connection to its community and a hands-on engagement among its listeners.

Lou Father Thimes Jr. “The Real JR” serves as VP/GM of the new station with Micheal Roberts Sr. as President/Owner and Don Williams “DJ Wreck 1” as Program Director. Thimes is a market veteran who previously held on-air roles at KXOK, KMJM, and KMOX.

Don Williams previously played 7 years as PD and afternoon host at Hubbard urban AC “X 102.3” Stuart-Vero Beach, FL. “To celebrate its launch, Foxy 106.9 FM has planned a one-of-a-kind lineup of events, promotions, meet-n-greet its exclusive line-up FOXY Models, giveaways and special guest appearances.”. Join the St. Louis ARGUS and make the switch!

## Economics of Free Market Politics

*A Closer Look at Competing for African American Political Interests*

by T.D. El-Amin  
ARGUS Publisher

In economics, competition underlies free market principles that are rooted in a capitalistic society. For some this competition has created income disparities and resulted in a concentration of wealth and resources for a few. In a sports sense competition brings about the talent that may sit dormant if otherwise not challenged by an external and competitive force.

Consistent with the spirit of a palatable free market philosophy and necessity to embrace it, is the idea of free



market politics.

African-Americans, the most loyal voting bloc and base of the Democratic party and a numerical cog in the wheels of labor have histori-

cally seen this support underappreciated, undervalued and not reciprocated.

Why? The social, political and economic establishments that have benefited from Af-

rican-Americans have not been forced to compete for the support that we have so freely given without parties and organization without question.

Hence, the intelligent engagement and Free Market politics. This is where political interests are forced to compete for our votes and our specific interests are brought to the fore in a meaningful and concrete platform. Who’s at fault for the benign neglect of African-American community’s political interests? As in relationships, we teach people how to treat us by what we allow.

see **FREE MARKET**, Page A5

## CONNECTING US ALL IN ST. LOUIS

Did you know there are 135 miles of greenway trails in the region for you to explore and enjoy?

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8 new trails  
this year!



# NEWSWATCH

REMEMBERING A LIFE GREATLY LIVED

## Remembering DJ: A True Hall of Famer

*STL Football Icon Demetrius Johnson was a Generous Soul with a Heart of Gold*

by Pinki Pennington  
ARGUS Feature Editor

Sometimes in life there's something or someone who knocks you off your feet, or makes you daydream, rethink on the inside, or simply makes you grief stricken like non-other before.

For "DJ", as he was affectionately known as to so many, we've all felt that void above in many ways. In most cases which was all the time, you didn't have to think about where he was coming from, well, because he told you, good bad ugly or indifferent.

Demetrius had his way with words if you were up early enough to listen to his broadcast you were for sure to be in for a treat. You knew who made the wrong plays or but just got it right like Luther Burden III., "his big fellow".

If he allowed you into his space he really was a gentle giant.

If he gave you a hand shake, you knew he had shook your hand.

If you got a bear hug you felt his warm gift of compassion.

Just perhaps his vocalism strived from being the youngest of 8, with mostly older sisters, of course he had to get his point in, non the less he stood on what was right, what was fair and called a spade a spade, again he had his way with words. Growing up in a St. Louis housing project made him tough inside and out.

He once quoted "you grow up playing football, basketball, baseball or airball in the concrete jungle only the strong survived". In part the Dast-Webbe projects



started his training, his mother gave him and his siblings a foundation of strength, determination and promise.

He took his friends and foes from the concrete jungle and showed them what success can look like. Graduating from McKinley High School with a full ride to the

University of Missouri (Mizzou) College. Thinking back to his early start in football, I'm sure his mother's words often came to mind "If you goin' stand up, you betta stand out!" and on that field his head, heart and goals began to take shape.

Some remember those early

days, others remember his days with his janitorial business during his off season, as well a very successful run with Sherwood Medical, now Covidien. But the community at-large reflects a deep testament to his spirit, reaching out to always, always help others.

After the NFL with Detroit Lions and with Miami Dolphins, he anchored down and formed the Demetrius Johnson Charitable Foundation those efforts drew volunteers from all-over including his celebrity friendships, elected officials, coaches, athletes and those who shared his compassion for his African American communities such as his mother Eddie Mae Bion, an activist raising awareness and fighting housing discrimination for the underserved.

Demetrius and his mother were able to reach thousands of people, who will forever remember him for a knock on their door, finding him standing there with a free turkey basket -- acts of charity which he performed for over 25 years.

As you remember him today, remember him calling out you, saying "HEYYY BIG FELLOW I NEED YOUR HELP!" *His organization Demetrius Johnson Foundation still does, 'Big time players make big time plays in big time games, I still need you Big Fellow'...*



### LAW AND GOVERNMENT

## Marijuana Mercy: Please Pass the Pardons

*Biden Said His Actions Would Help Make the 'Promise of Equal Justice a Reality'*

by Zeke Miller  
of the Associated Press

WASHINGTON -- President Joe Biden pardoned thousands of people who were convicted of use and simple possession of marijuana on federal lands and in the District of Columbia, the White House said Friday, in his latest round of executive clemencies meant to rectify racial disparities in the justice system.

The categorical pardon builds on a similar round issued just before the 2022 midterm elections that pardoned thousands convicted of simple possession on federal lands eligible. Friday's action broadens the criminal offenses covered by the pardon. Biden is also granting clemency to 11 people serving what the White House called "disproportionately long" sentences for nonviolent drug offenses.

Biden, in a statement, said his actions would help make the "promise of equal justice a reality."

"Criminal records for marijuana use and possession have imposed needless barriers to employment, housing, and educational opportunities," Biden said. "Too many lives have been upended because of our failed approach to marijuana. It's time that we right these wrongs."

No one was freed from prison under last year's action, but the pardons were meant to help thousands overcome obstacles to renting a home



or finding a job. Similarly, no federal prisoners are eligible for release as a result of Friday's pardon.

But the order expands the grounds on which pardons are issued. In the last round, people were pardoned for simple possession under only one criminal statute. Friday's pardons also apply to several other criminal statutes, including attempted simple possession.

Biden's order applies only to marijuana, which has been decriminalized or legalized in

many states for some or all uses, but remains a controlled substance under federal law. U.S. regulators are studying reclassifying the drug from the category of drugs deemed to have "no currently accepted medical use and a high potential for abuse," known as "Schedule I," to the less tightly regulated "Schedule III."

The pardon also does not apply to those in the U.S. unlawfully at the time of their offense.

Biden's proclamation effectively pardons the covered people, but they

will need to submit applications to the Justice Department's pardon attorney office to receive certificates of pardon that can be used for housing and employment purposes.

Biden on Friday reiterated his call on governors and local leaders to take similar steps to erase marijuana convictions.

"Just as no one should be in a federal prison solely due to the use or possession of marijuana, no one should be in a local jail or state prison for that reason, either," Biden said.

# NEWSWATCH

## 170 Forced from Northview, No Warning

### Residents Exited the Troubled STL Nursing Facility After its Sudden Closure

ST. LOUIS, Missouri – What had been the largest skilled nursing facility in St. Louis has closed suddenly, forcing some 170 residents to be bussed to other skilled care centers; many left with nothing more than the clothes on their backs.

The abrupt closure of Northview Village Nursing Home last week came in the aftermath of workers learning their pay would not be forthcoming.

They walked out, leaving both residents and their relatives in a state of confusion.

Concerned family members gathered outside the facility throughout the day last Saturday; many did not know where their loved ones had been taken.

On such concerned person was Alvin Cooper, Sr. of East St. Louis, Illinois. He had been preparing on Monday to fill out a missing person's report on his 35-year-old son, Alvin Cooper Jr.

The young man had been at Northview Village for several months, recovering from a gunshot wound to the head and drug addiction. "They don't know where he is," Cooper Sr. said. "I've burnt two tanks of gas going back and forth to that nursing home trying to find out what's going on." He's yet to learn of his son's whereabouts. "I don't know if he's somewhere safe, or what's going to happen to him."

The trouble started Friday when, according to the workers' union,

more than 130 employees went unpaid. It soon became clear that no paychecks would be forthcoming.

59-year-old Marvetta Harrison, a certified medical technician, said workers received emails from the company this past weekend promising they'll be paid, but it was unclear when. "This is real wrong," Harrison stated. "I have worked in that building for 37 years. Not only did they mistreat us, they mistreated the residents we take care of."

Northview Village was fined no fewer than twelve times for federal violations since March of 2021, according to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. Fines totaling over \$140,000 and ranging from \$2,200 to more than \$45,000 had been assessed against the facility.

The federal agency gave Northview a one-star rating out of a possible five, without disclosing reasons for the fines. Nearly two dozen Northview investigations have been implemented since 2016, according to the state health department's website.

The most recent complaint, made in February, revealed that a resident was able to exit the building through an unsecured door; a complaint filed in 2021 alleged the facility had failed to investigate allegations of residents leaving the nursing home and returning with illegal drugs.

Lisa Cox, a Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services spokeswoman, said the agency was notified around 4:15 p.m. Friday

that the nursing home was closing. The facility's operator implemented an evacuation plan, with emergency medical service workers helping to relocate residents to other nursing homes, Cox stated Monday.

Cox continued, "The final resident left the facility before 6 a.m. Saturday. Our team continued working through the weekend following up with the receiving facilities to check in on the residents who had been transferred."

Shamell King, assistant manager at competing St. Louis-area nursing home Superior Manor, disclosed that some Northview Village residents arrived without paperwork documenting their medical needs or histories.

Dozens of phone calls to Northview Village went unanswered Monday. Calls were also unanswered at suburban St. Louis-based Healthcare Accounting Services, the firm that owns Northview and five other facilities.

On Friday, employees began to question why their paychecks were late. They soon discovered that the payments weren't coming at all according to Marjorie Moore, executive director of VOYCE, a St. Louis agency that serves as an advocate for long-term care residents and their families.

Shuttle buses took residents to at least 15 different facilities across the St. Louis area, Moore said. Many patients departed with nothing but what they were wearing. "Closing it down

this way is the absolute worst-case scenario for a lot of us," Moore said. "It all happened so fast."

Northview Village was the largest skilled nursing facility in St. Louis, licensed for up to 320 beds. Many residents are on Medicaid and aren't eligible to get into other long-term care facilities, Moore said. In addition to elderly people, the center housed many with behavioral problems. "It's a troubled facility, but it's also been a safety net to keep people from falling through the cracks," Moore said.

Cherie Ford, a certified nursing assistant at Northview Village, said she figured something was wrong on Friday when her direct-deposit paycheck wasn't in her account. "This was the only job I had, and am facing eviction and no Christmas for my family," Ford said. "We were all looking forward to this check. This was our Christmas check to do our shopping, paying rent and other things."

No one from Northview Village's administrative staff, nor its parent company was available for comment.

The original version of this report was posted by the Associated Press.



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The Argus

# A CLOSER LOOK

## Celebrating Christmas, St. Louis Style

*People Gather at Salamas Gas and Market to Celebrate the Season of Giving*

by Pinki Pennington  
ARGUS Feature Editor

**01. Christmas, STL Style**-Shelia from Afro World passing out Christmas toys and gifts to area youth & parents


**02. Community Cheer**-St. Louis area gas station owner Muhammad Solama continues to follow in the footsteps of his cousin Mike Solaoma with a series of community-based events. On Saturday December 23rd the parking lot of his gas station at Kingshighway and St. Louis Ave turned into a "kid friendly, family safe toy store" any child accompanied by an adult received two FREE Toys of their choice. Bikes and computers were made available for free during an on site raffle. The toys, gifts and prizes sponsored and purchased by Solama Markets, with a Co sponsorship by Afri-World and organized with St. Louis 7th district Police and Them Yo' People.

**03. Black Santa**- hands out presents to good children as Black Santa.

**04. Community Toy Give Away**-Families, children and neighbors gather in large numbers to receive an assortment of Free Toys and Gifts of their choice sponsored by Salamas Market and Afro World at Kingshighway and St. Louis Ave.



**MISSING PERSON**



**MARQUISHA WILLIAMS**  
29 YEARS OLD

Last seen 12/20/23 in Saint Louis, Missouri

For any information that can help us to find him, Please call his family at: **314-306-2543**

**MISSING PERSON**

**KINGIAN NONVIOLENCE**

"Now let me suggest first that if we are to have peace on earth, our loyalties must become ecumenical rather than sectional. Our loyalties must transcend our race, our tribe, our class, and our nation; and this means we must develop a world perspective. No individual can live alone; no nation can live alone, and as long as we try, the more we are going to have war in this world. Now the judgment of God is upon us, and we must either learn to live together as brothers or we are all going to perish together as fools."- Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Christmas Sermon for Peace, December 24, 1967.



PUBLISHER'S PERSPECTIVE

# Economics of Free Market Politics

## A Closer Look at Competing for African American Political Interests

by T.D. El-Amin  
ARGUS Publisher

FREE MARKET, from A1

The reality is We, The People bear the blame. Specifically, the organizational leadership that represents African-Americans, clergy and elected officials who usher people and interests before the masses without having to not only justify the reasons we should support instead of drawing upon an agenda to extract community concessions. To assume and define this as "selling out" would be rather harsh, but a spot on reality, where the community's interest are sold short to the individual interests of a few.

As issues and important political races are upon us, the people must rise and challenge, make those seeking our support and vote to articulate



why they are best suited, and hold accountable the organizations and Black elected officials, and clergy who bring those into our community seeking office. Our choices can no longer come down to "the lesser of

two evils", or dogmatic embrace of a partisanship. The people must decipher and unhinge the forked tongue political speak of those whose positions vary and change with the winds of polling or powerful lobbyist inter-

est. Nor can our political choices be dictated by color, as we have come to learn to commonly the adage..."All Skin Folk Aint Kin folk".

It's important that we force the Democratic party to speak specifically of issues of concern and place upon it a specific and unique platform indigenous to our specific interests, also the Black community can't be afraid to engage dialogue with Republicans. Of course that's the Issuecrat in me that embraces issues over dogmatic party loyalties, race or gender.

When people compete for our vote, we win. This upcoming year and subsequent elections let's challenge any and all, no free passes, and let's not plantation hop from one party to another. In the words of Congressman Bill Clay..."No permanent friends just permanent interests!"

# An Appeal from St. Louis City NAACP

## Announcing its 2024 Freedom Fund Dinner Honorees and Call for Support

by Shirley A. Brown  
ARGUS Society Editor

Adolphus M. Pruitt, II, St. Louis City NAACP President, has issued a Call for Support of the Annual St. Louis City NAACP Dinner to be held on Saturday, February 17, 2024. The event celebrates the 112th Anniversary of the St. Louis City NAACP and "Black History Month."

The event will be held at the downtown Marriott St. Louis Grand Hotel and begins with a Reception at 6:00 p.m. followed by Dinner/Program at 6:45 p.m. For tickets, visit the St. Louis City NAACP website, [www.stlouisnaacp.org](http://www.stlouisnaacp.org) or contact Shirley A. Brown, Fundraising/Event Manager at 314-367-8739.

"We invite you to join is on February 17<sup>th</sup>. Once a year, the St. Louis City NAACP hosts an Anniversary Celebration and Freedom Fund Dinner for general support," said Adolphus Pruitt. "Financial support from corporations, foundations, individuals, organizations and small businesses is greatly needed to continue and strengthen the St. Louis City NAACP's programs and initiatives aimed at civic engagement, youth empowerment, and eliminating disparities in economic development, healthcare, public safety, education, technology, criminal justice and hu-

man rights issues in the St. Louis Region."

The Dinner Theme is "Celebrating St. Louis Trailblazers and History Makers." The event will recognize and honor individuals, business leaders and community organizations for exemplary leadership, distinguished achievements, and commitment to improve the cultural, social, and economy growth and development of the St. Louis community.

• **HON. RONNIE WHITE and HON. GEORGE DRAPER** will receive the *Margaret Bush Wilson Lifetime Achievement Award*. They are the first two African-Americans appointed to serve on the Missouri Supreme Court. White was appointed in 1995 by Governor Mel Carnahan and Draper was appointed in 2011 by Governor Jeremiah Nixon.

• **MAXINE CLARK and BOB FOX** are *Chairman and President*, respectfully, of the Clark-Fox Family Foundation. They spearheaded the St. Louis City NAACP's fundraising campaign to recognize the lifetime achievements of civil rights attorney Frankie Muse Freeman by erecting and installing a life-size sculpture of



ADOLPHUS M. PRUITT, II  
President  
St. Louis City NAACP

Attorney Freeman to be permanently installed in Kiener Plaza. The statue was unveiled in Kiener Plaza on November 21, 2017 and donated to the City of St. Louis. They will receive the *NAACP Legacy Award*.

• **CLIFFORD FRANKLIN** is *President and CEO*, Final Phase Marketing and Fuse Advertising, the 4<sup>th</sup> largest independently owned African-American advertising agency in the United States. He will receive the *NAACP Legacy Award*.

• **UNITED WAY OF GREATER ST. LOUIS.**

The United Way of Greater St. Louis remains one of the top United Ways in the nation. The programs and initiatives of the United Way of Greater St. Louis are helping to make a more equitable and inclusive St. Louis. Nearly \$80 million is contributed in support across the 16-county region to help over one million people annually. The United Way will receive the *NAACP Legacy Award*.

• **EMILY PITTS** is the first African-American woman to become General Partner at Edward Jones.

• **ORVIN KIMBROUGH** is *Chairman and CEO* of Midwest BankCentre. Prior to joining Midwest BankCentre, he spent 20 years in leadership roles with prominent non-profit agencies. He is the formal *President and CEO* of the United Way of Greater St. Louis. During his tenure as *CEO*, the United Way of Greater St. Louis grew to become the largest United Way affiliate, raising nearly \$80 million annually.

• **MAVIS THOMPSON** is the first African-American woman to hold two city-wide elected positions: Circuit Clerk and presently the St. Louis City License Collector. She is former National President of the National Bar Association and former local President of the Mound City Bar Association. They will receive the *Frankie Muse Freeman/Norman E. Seay Commitment to St. Louis Award*.

• **THOMAS SULLIVAN** is *President and CEO*, Mathews-Dickey Boys and Girls Club. He will receive the *Medgar Wiley Evers Medal of Freedom Award*.

• **MICHAEL McMILLAN** is *President and CEO* of the Urban League of Metropolitan St. Louis, the number one Urban League affiliate in the nation.

see STL CITY NAACP, Page A11



Do You Have an Opinion to Share?

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# InSIGHT



NAVIGATING THE DIGITAL AGE

## New Focus: Innovate & Elevate

*A Look at the Intersection of Technology, Art and Social Innovation*

by Maurice Foxworth, JD  
ARGUS Technology Contributor

Join us on a journey into the intersection of technology, art, and social innovation—explicitly crafted for a vibrant and diverse African-American community. In this column, I will explore the infinite opportunities at the intersection of innovation and identity by highlighting.

Welcome to “Innovate & Elevate,” a journey into the intersection of technology, art, and social innovation—explicitly crafted for a vibrant and diverse African-American community. In this column, I will explore the infinite opportunities at the intersection of innovation and identity by highlighting the technological innovations reshaping our lives and our world.

In a time when the digital age offers unprecedented potential, we recognize that it's not just a seat at the table that matters; it's the ability to lead the way, define our own narratives, and pioneer solutions that resonate with our unique needs and aspirations. “Innovate & Elevate” is your compass on this voyage, guiding you through the ever-evolving landscape of technology, the kaleidoscope of modern artistry, and the realm of

social innovation. This trio of technology, art, and social innovation—holds the keys to a more just and equitable future. It empowers us to confront the barriers that have long hindered our community's progress, offering fertile ground for innovation, expression, and advocacy. Here, I will celebrate the innovative spirit at the heart of African-American culture, now armed with the tools of the digital age.

In each column, I will discuss technology innovations from artificial intelligence to blockchain and beyond, offering a fertile ground for leveling the playing field. These leading-edge technologies are not just tools for economic advancement; they are gateways to societal change, offering new platforms for voices that have long been marginalized. By harnessing these technologies, African Americans can pioneer solutions tailored to our unique experiences and needs, moving forward in our community and the broader society.

In this column, we affirm that the future is not just about participation; it's about leadership. It's about seizing the transformative power of innovation and steering it towards a more inclusive, equitable, and vibrant tomorrow. So, come aboard

as we embark on this journey. Let's innovate, elevate, and be inspired to create a brighter future together.

**About the Author: Maurice Foxworth, J.D.** has made a name for himself as a pioneer in identifying and harnessing the untapped resources and potential of historically marginalized communities.

Through his groundbreaking work with Historically Black Colleges, Maurice has been instrumental in elevating their research capabilities and the capacity to translate their discoveries into innovative products and services.

Maurice Foxworth, J.D. has established himself as a pioneer in identifying and harnessing the untapped resources and potential of historically marginalized communities. Through his groundbreaking work with Historically Black Colleges, Maurice has been instrumental in elevating their research capabilities and the capacity to translate their discoveries into innovative products and services that can serve both underserved communities and global markets.

In addition to his work with HBCUs, Maurice has also been a driving force in the startup ecosystem, playing a pivotal role in

the commercialization of early-stage startups. Notably, he made history as one of the first African Americans in the United States to lead a technology commercialization office at a Tier 1 research institution an office that he initially helped create as the lead consultant.

Before this milestone, Maurice launched his career at NASA headquarters in Washington, D.C., where he played a role in the agency's Program and Project Management Initiative, which aimed to enhance NASA's capabilities in managing cutting-edge technology projects. Throughout his career, Maurice has exemplified visionary leadership, an unwavering commitment to innovation, and a steadfast dedication to empowering communities of color and promoting their well-being.



ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN DAILY LIFE

## \*\*AI and the Black Community

*Surprising Answers to a Query Asked of an Artificial Intelligence*

by Kim William Gordon, Ph.D.  
ARGUS Technology Editor

**QUESTION:** How can the African American community leverage AI to its fullest advantage?

**\*\*AI ANSWER:** Leveraging AI to its fullest advantage in the African

American community involves a multi-faceted approach that addresses both the development and application of AI technologies. Here are several strategies:

**1. \*\*Education and Training\*\*:** **\*\*Promoting STEM Education\*\*:** Encouraging interest and proficiency in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) among young

African American students. This could involve after-school programs, scholarships, mentorships, and partnerships with schools.

**\*\*AI and Digital Literacy\*\*:** Offering community workshops and courses on AI and digital literacy to help individuals understand and engage with these technologies.

**2. \*\*Participation in AI Development\*\*:** **\*\*Inclusive Workforce\*\*:** Encouraging and supporting African American professionals to pursue careers in AI and tech industries. This can be facilitated through internships, mentorship programs, and recruitment efforts aimed at increasing diversity.

**\*\*Research and Development\*\*:** Supporting Black-led AI research initiatives and startups, which can focus on addressing community-specific needs and challenges.

**3. \*\*Community-Centric AI Applications\*\*:** **\*\*Healthcare\*\*:** Utilizing AI to improve healthcare access and outcomes in African American communities, such as AI-driven diagnostics tools that are sensitive to the specific health needs and disparities of these communities.

**\*\*Economic Empowerment\*\*:** AI tools can be used to support Black-owned businesses through market analysis, customer insights, and process optimization.

**\*\*Education\*\*:** Implementing AI in educational tools and platforms to enhance personalized learning experiences and address educational disparities.

**4. \*\*Policy Advocacy and Regulation\*\*:** **\*\*Advocating for Fair AI\*\*:** Engaging in policy discussions to advocate for regulations that ensure AI is developed and used ethically, without bias.

**\*\*Data Rights and Privacy\*\*:** Promoting awareness and advocacy around data rights and privacy, especially as they pertain to AI technologies.

**5. \*\*Community Engagement and Collaboration\*\*:** **\*\*Building Collaborative Networks\*\*:** Establishing partnerships between community groups, tech companies, educational institutions, and policymakers to ensure that AI development is aligned with the needs of the African American community.

**\*\*Public Forums and Discussions\*\*:** Hosting events to discuss the implications of AI, gathering community input, and raising awareness of both the benefits and challenges of AI technologies.

**6. \*\*Addressing the Digital Divide\*\*:** **\*\*Access to Technology\*\*:** Initiatives to increase access to high-speed internet and modern computer technology in underserved areas.

**\*\*Support for Entrepreneurs and Innovators\*\*:** Providing resources and support for African American entrepreneurs and innovators in the AI space.

**7. \*\*Cultural and Ethical Considerations\*\*:** **\*\*Ethical AI Development\*\*:** Emphasizing the importance of cultural competency in AI development to ensure that AI systems are respectful and representative of diverse cultural backgrounds.

**CONCLUSION:** By focusing on these areas, the African American community can not only mitigate potential risks associated with AI but also harness its power for social, economic, and technological advancement. The key is to ensure inclusive participation in the AI revolution, shaping these technologies to serve diverse needs and challenges.



Argus

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# InSIGHT



NAVIGATING THE DIGITAL AGE

## New Focus: New Year, New-Tritition

### Ways You Can Avoid Self-Sabotaging Your New Years Resolution

by Sheila Cunningham  
ARGUS Health Contributor

#whomatters: The ARGUS Welcomes Sheila Cunningham as our Health and Wellness Contributor for 2024. Sheila Cunningham is a highly experienced registered nurse who has dedicated over 30 years to the field of healthcare. With her guidance, you can gain the knowledge and motivation needed to achieve optimal health and unlock your full potential.

With so many new year resolutions being made year after year, and the majority of them broken before the end of January, the best one is the one that is maintained throughout our lifetime!

New Year resolutions go far back in history some 4,000 years ago, starting with the ancient Babylonians. It may have looked a little different but the concept was the same and so was the act of breaking them.

The most popular New Year's resolution is weight loss, but as we all know, what we lose is most likely to be found. The truth is that most of us, self-sabotage our New Year's resolution by failing to set realistic goals.

Let's count down the ten most common ways to self-sabotage your New Year's resolutions.

10- Not knowing your Why. Studies show that if you have a Why that creates emotions for you, you are more likely to follow through, like wanting to be there for your grandkids or the goal of being mobile in your later years.

9- Not having a plan. "If you fail to plan, You are planning to fail"- Benjamin Franklin. Create a to-do list or set realistic goals to help you be accountable.

8-Not surrounding yourself with like-minded people. "Show me your friends, I'll show you your food"- Sheila Cunningham. Studies show that the most successful people have a social network that supports their goals and new lifestyles.



7-Not having a healthy sleep routine. The time that you go to sleep (the best time is 10 pm), the quality of sleep, and the quantity is all important when it comes to maintaining a healthy weight.

6-Not keeping track of your progress. The simple act of writing down what you eat and how you feel helps you see how your food selections and emotions work together.

5-Not having a positive mindset. Affirmations, and positive self-talk, put you in a great space for achieving things that are new to you.

4-Not finding a balance in your life. Balancing the mind, body, and spirit is key to your New health goals.

3-Not drinking enough water. Dehydration can lead to cravings and other health issues.

2-Not managing stress. Stress causes the release of the hormone cortisol, chronic production can lead to weight gain and disease.

1-Not eating a healthy diet. Vegan,

Vegetarian, or Plan-Forward, The thing that they all have in common is fruit and vegetables (organic is best) Eat from the rainbow, you can't go wrong!

Happy New Year!

**About the Author: Sheila Cunningham** is a highly experienced registered nurse who has dedicated over 30 years to the field of healthcare. With her guidance, you can gain the knowledge and motivation needed to achieve optimal health and unlock your full potential.

Meet Sheila Cunningham

Sheila Cunningham is a highly experienced Registered Nurse who has dedicated over 30 years to the field of healthcare. Throughout her career, she has developed a deep passion for promoting health and wellness. This passion has motivated Sheila to obtain numerous certifications, including cannabis consultant, Boxing and Barbells, and Certified Transformational Nutrition coach.

Recently, Sheila published her highly acclaimed 21-day guided journal titled "Get Perfectly Balanced Wellness Journal." Designed to inspire individuals to adopt a holistic approach to health, this journal serves as a comprehensive tool for achieving overall well-being.

Sheila's life mission revolves around empowering and inspiring others to live their best lives in mind, body, and spirit. Through her extensive expertise and unwavering dedication, she strives to create positive transformations in the lives of others. With Sheila's guidance, you can gain the knowledge and motivation needed to achieve optimal health and unlock your full potential.



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# THE VIBE

ISSUES ACROSS MISSOURI

## Dispensary Workers Push to Unionize

*Employees of Cannabis Producers Say Their Situation Exists in a 'Gray Area'*

ARGUS Staff Report

The first day was a breeze.

Sean Shannon and Danny Foster walked into several marijuana dispensaries around Missouri with their matching "Union For Cannabis Workers" shirts and talked to employees about the possibility of unionizing.

"The first day, there were 57 stops amongst the teams," said Shannon, lead organizer with UFCW Local 655, which actually stands for United Food and Commercial Workers International Union. "Reception was out-of-this-world positive. Workers were so excited."

Shannon had gathered together a dozen organizers to help Local 655 visit every one of the approximate 100 dispensaries on the eastern half of Missouri — twice.

Stirring up the excitement was the union's big win of the recent settlement, where 10 Shangri-La South dispensary workers in Columbia received a collective \$145,000 after being fired following a March union organizing drive.

"They were excited to hear that Shangri La [employees] actually won," he said. "They couldn't believe people were getting their jobs back. They couldn't believe the amount of money."

But by the third day, the reception got much colder, he said. Managers had warned their counterparts at other locations that union reps might be visiting.

"Employees were basically told, 'If you talk to the union, if you take a card, if you take a sticker, you're out,'" he said.

Still, since the tour, union activity has "blown up," Shannon said.

An active campaign means the employees have signed agreements, or authorization cards, with the union authorizing Local 655 to represent them. It also means union leaders believe workers have a good shot at succeeding.

Shannon said Local 655 now has authorization to represent more than 20 locations in eastern Missouri.

The next step is filing a representation petition with the National Labor Relations Board, seeking to have the board conduct an election among employees on whether or not to unionize.

Last week, employees at Hi-Pointe Cannabis in St. Louis filed a petition — following the lead of workers at High Profile Dispensary in Columbia and Bloom Medicinal Dispensary in St. Louis in early November.

In October, Homestate Dispensary employees in Kansas City voted 6-1 to have Teamsters Local 955 represent them, becoming the second unionized dispensary in Missouri. The first was Root 66 Dispensary in St. Louis, where employees voted to join UFCW Local 655 in April 2022.



**SMOKE-OBSCURED:** Sean Shannon, lead organizer with the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union Local 655 (left), and former budtender-turned-organizer Danny Foster visited several marijuana dispensaries in eastern Missouri in November to talk to employees about unionizing (Rebecca Rivas/Missouri Independent).

A big reason why employees are moving towards unions, Shannon said, is because Missouri is at the point where the "canna-bliss" of working with marijuana professionally is starting to wear off.

Now the reality that workers aren't getting paid enough, are sometimes working in poor conditions and have no job stability is starting to set in, said Danny Foster, a former cannabis worker who was helping with the union's tour.

"We really weren't given the industry that we were promised," Foster said. "We all came in super excited. We love cannabis. We wanted to be able to make it a career. But as it is right now, cannabis isn't a career."

The motivation to unionize for Andrew Nussbaum, the most veteran worker at Shangri-La South dispensary in Columbia, was to ensure job security. Because he loves his job as a patient consultant supervisor.

"A lot of us just want to help people and help them find something that works for them," he said. "I've talked to people for 45 minutes to an hour to kind of get them squared away."

When he and other dispensary workers filed a representation petition in April, they encountered strong resistance.

After he and nine other employees were fired, the board swiftly and firmly sided with the workers and approved a settlement that awards backpay to all the "unlawfully terminated employees." It also cleared a path for them to unionize.

Announcing the agreement, the board made a pointed statement about the case reflecting the "general counsel's vision of fully restorative relief."

Nussbaum is among five of the 10 terminated employees who will be returning to work in the near future. And despite it being a tumultuous year, he said he's committed to his role. He has a degree in plant biology, and he enjoys learning about how cannabis can help people.

"That's what this is all about," he said. "That's why it's so important to all of us, because this was not an easy ordeal for any of us."

An attorney representing the company in the case did not return The Independent's request for comment.

One of the things that draws people to the industry is the camaraderie among employees who are passionate about cannabis, Shannon said. And that's also what makes it the perfect breeding ground for organizing.

"Cannabis workers are the right community," he said. "This is a tight knit community that takes care of each other. They're already learning that... having a union backing you up, it's the only way to truly make a difference. I've been telling people, 'Wait till you feel that contract high.'"

Will Braddum, a post-harvest technician, is facing a different kind of battle at BeLeaf Medical's Sinse Cannabis site in St. Louis. Not long after he and 17 other employees filed their petition in September, the company argued before the board that the employees aren't manufacturer workers — they're agricultural workers.

Agricultural laborers aren't protected under the 1935 National Labor Relations Act, which ensures employees have the "fundamental right to seek better working conditions and designation of representation without fear of retaliation."

It's a frustrating "gray area" for manufacturing cannabis employees looking to unionize, Shannon said.

On Oct. 27, company representatives described the employees' job descriptions to the board, which included "a whole bunch of the cultivation side's job description," Braddum said. It was eye-opening for the employees who testified and had to refute that description, he said.

"I've never watered anything and never touched any soil," he said. "I've never touched a living plant at work. So I guess if they're gonna tell the National Labor Relations Board that we're doing agricultural work, maybe they're not necessarily on our side at all."

An attorney for BeLeaf Medical said the company was not able to comment.

It's unclear how long it will take to get a decision from the board, but the decision will likely be reviewed closely nationwide.

Braddum has been at BeLeaf for the last year and a half, but he's been part of the legacy market since 2009.

"I just kind of segued," he said. "I went from an illegal career to a legal career without a hiccup basically."

For him, this is his career. He's seen how "cutthroat" the corporate side can be and how a human relations officer has the power to make someone lose their agent ID, or state-issued license to work in cannabis. He doesn't want that to happen to him or any of his team.

"The only way to pad myself from Human Resources is to cultivate a union movement," he said, "and talk to my co-workers about job security."

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# SOCIETY

DISTINGUISHED DOERS PROFILE

## Save the Date: March 24th, 2024

*The Deltas Tout the Return of the IGW Gospel, Jazz and Blues Brunch*



by Shirley A. Brown  
ARGUS Society Editor

The St. Louis Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. and the St. Louis Delta Foundation are proud to announce the return of the Ida Goodwin Woolfolk Memorial Gospel, Jazz and Blues Brunch to be held on Sunday, March 24, 2024 from 1-4 p.m.

The featured artists to perform during the Gospel, Jazz and Blues Brunch include Cheryl Brown, Adrienne Felton-King, Rhoda G, Sam Huddleston, Anita Jackson, Cherise Louis-Mason and the Jeremiah Allen House Band. The event will also include a Silent Auction.

The event will take place at the Marriott St. Louis Grand Hotel and is open to the public. Tickets are \$100 each or \$1,000 per table of 10. The last day to purchase tickets is March 9.

Tickets can be purchased on-line through Eventbrite: [idagoodwinwoolfolkjazzbrunch2024.eventbrite.com](https://idagoodwinwoolfolkjazzbrunch2024.eventbrite.com)

For additional information, contact Shirley Brown, Brunch Chair, at 314.367.8739 or email [sbrown601.com](mailto:sbrown601.com).

“We are thrilled with the caliber of talented musicians that are confirmed to entertain us during the Gospel, Jazz, and Blues Brunch,” said Dawn Gipson, chair of the St. Louis Delta Foundation.

“Due to the pandemic, the IGW Gospel Jazz and Blues Brunch has been on hiatus since 2020,” said Bernadette White, St. Louis Alumnae Chapter President. “We are happy



to bring this event back to the community once again because proceeds benefit the Ida Goodwin Woolfolk Scholarship Fund for students attending Harris-Stowe State University as well as community programs and initiatives for children and families.”

Ida Goodwin Woolfolk was a dedicated member of the St. Louis Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. for 54 years. She served as chair of the Gospel, Jazz and Blues Brunch from its inception in 2013 until her death in 2016. Following her death, the Brunch was named in her honor. Ida worked in the Saint Louis Public Schools for nearly 40 years as a teacher, counselor and administrator. She is a Harris-Stowe State University alumna.

In recognition of “Women’s History Month,” nationally celebrated in the month of March, four local women will be recognized and honored at the event for their distinguished career achievements and outstanding leadership. Honorees are business leader Maxine Clark, St. Louis Mayor Tishaura Jones, philanthropist Nancy Kranzberg and Hon. Gloria C.

Reno (ret.)

Maxine Clark is the founder of Build-A-Bear Workshop. There are over 350 Build-A-Bear Workshop stores worldwide and over 200 million stuffed animals have been sold worldwide. She is also the Inspirator of the Delmar DivINE. Clark and her husband Bob Fox spearheaded the St. Louis City NAACP statue fundraising campaign to design and install a bronze sculpture of civil rights attorney Frankie Muse Freeman in Kiener Plaza. The statue was unveiled in 2017.

Hon. Tishaura Jones became the first African-American woman to serve as Mayor of the City of St. Louis in 2021. She started her career as a public servant in 2002 when she was appointed as Democratic Committeewoman of the 8th Ward in the City of St. Louis. She served two terms in the Missouri House of Representatives and became the first African-American woman in state history to hold the position of Assistant Minority Floor Leader. She is a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

Nancy Kranzberg is co-founder of the Kranzberg Arts Foundation, along with her husband Kenneth. Over 500 civic, social, arts organizations and institutions have benefited from the Foundation’s mission to donate time, energy and resources towards an arts-based approach to community development.

Hon. Gloria Reno, Circuit Judge (Ret.), is the first African-American female to be appointed as a Circuit Judge in St. Louis County, Missouri. She also became the first African-American to serve as Presiding Judge of the 21st Judicial Circuit Court, St. Louis County. Reno recently served as co-chair of the National Social Action Commission of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

**Nominate a Doer:** To keep readers informed on who’s who in the community, Shirley A. Brown’s column highlights a community “Doer.” A “Doer” is an individual or organization committed to making St. Louis a better place to live and work. Readers are invited to send “Doer” recommendations to Ms. Brown at [367-8739](mailto:367-8739) or [sbrown601@aol.com](mailto:sbrown601@aol.com).

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# The VIBE

## Liberated Roots Co. Opens its 1st Store

*Roots Oasis to Feature Vintage Fashion, Consignment and Black-Owned Brands*

### ARGUS Staff Report

December 20, 2023 – Black woman-owned Liberated Roots Co recently opened its first brick-and-mortar location, **Roots Oasis**, at 2216 S. Jefferson Ave. Roots Oasis provides a soulful, year-round opportunity for shoppers to enjoy the Liberated Roots Co array of modern vintage fashion and Black-owned brand merchandise while allowing founder Kimberly Franks to support more local brands and host special events.

Roots Oasis is a beacon for eclectic, socially conscious shoppers to connect in real life and shop meaningfully. Patrons experience a beautiful, soulful atmosphere, a well-curated assortment of modern vintage fashion in a full range of sizes, small-batch statement apparel, accessories, non-toxic skincare, home goods, stationery, and gifts.

Gifts seeking to add zest to their gift-giving or to their wardrobe can tap proprietor, Kimberly Franks for custom-tailored gift bundles and personal styling services. Transcending the traditional retail experience, Roots is a community space that hosts a variety of special events, including clothing swaps, style events, pop-ups, community conversations, and fundraisers.

“Black creativity is essential to sustaining healthy communities,” said Franks. “I am excited about contributing to that energy and providing a platform for amplifying local, national, and global Black creatives while providing a thoughtful shopping experience for the community.” Winter store hours are Saturday 11am-5pm, Sunday 12pm-4pm. Personal shopping and shopping parties are available by appointment. Shop online 24/7 at [www.liberatedroots.com](http://www.liberatedroots.com); follow on Instagram and Facebook@liberatedrootsco for special events and in-store schedule updates.

*Liberated Roots Co is a Black-woman-owned and operated lifestyle brand that provides a retail connection to Black-owned brands and culture. Through a lens for quality, sustainability, community uplift, and well-being, we curate local and global Black brands, making it easy to discover the best in everything from hand-picked vintage fashion, and small-batch apparel, to accessories, non-toxic skincare, home goods, stationery, and self-care gifts. Our mission is to empower by curating a collection of vintage and lifestyle items that resonate with our community's values and creativity. With over 30 brands represented, we strive to inspire individuality and unique style of expression while fostering economic empowerment through the circulation of dollars within the Black entrepreneurial community.*



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# SPORTS

PREP SPORTS ANALYSIS

## The ARGUS 2023 Prep Sports Review

### A Closer Look at Two St. Louis Area Prep School Athletic Powerhouses

by **Lyonel Cole**  
ARGUS Sports Writer

Cardinal Ritter College Prep and Vashon High Schools had no shortage of medals and championships in 2023. In fact, it seemed like not a season would pass without the schools hoisting some plaque, trophy or medal. Indeed, the North Side area schools were pretty busy collecting the hardware. Meanwhile, Metro student-athlete Amari Foluke was a champion in his own right ‘on the hardwood’ floor, as he captured the region scoring title in boys basketball. As 2023 draws to a close, here’s *A Closer Look* at the best and brightest highlights from this past year:

When the Cardinal Ritter Lions football team took home the Missouri Class 5 title last week with a 38-25 triumph over Republic in the championship, it marked the latest crown captured by the school this season. Previously this year, Ritter had claimed the Class 5 girls track and field title and the Class 5 boys basketball title to match the football program’s achievement.

Likewise, Vashon won both the boys and girls Class 4 state basketball titles the same weekend in March, claiming the first title in the girl’s department and 14th for the boys. The Wolverines football team’s pursuit of a state title ended with a 23-22 loss to Clayton in the second round of the playoffs, but they can still take a measure of pride because they won the Public High League title for the third year in a row. Quarterback D.J. Cody, running back Dorian Phillips, two-way player Daniel Boyce and Michael Taylor were among the catalysts.

Meanwhile, also for the second year in a row, Metro’s Amari Foluke led the entire region of boys basketball players by averaging 31.0 points per game. Not bad for an undersized guard at an academic school not known for its basketball success. Now a freshman at Howard University, Foluke is just focusing on academics as an engineering student. He won’t be defending any individual scoring titles this winter, unlike the boys and girls teams at Vashon and the boys team at Cardinal Ritter.

In winning the Class 4 boys championship, Vashon was led by a few seniors and an underclassmen in Dierre Hill Jr, who has since transferred to Belleville Althoff High in Illinois, so there will be some rebuilding. Hill and senior Trey Williams combined for 26 points in the title game. On the other hand, Vashon’s girls team still return three key starters in Ja-



Photos left to right: Vashon running back Dorian “Miami” Phillips helped lead the Wolverines to a third straight Public High League title before they lost to Clayton 23-22 in the playoffs. But it was victory all the way for the Cardinal Ritter Lions girls track and field team, which captured its third straight Missouri Class 5 state crown under coach Tiffany Jackson-Spain. Meanwhile, Tiffany’s husband Brennan Spain (arms folded on the sidelines) was a picture of poise and perfection, as he guided the Lions to a perfect 14-0 record for the second year in a row, as the Lions took home the Class 5 football crown as well. The Vashon Wolverines boys basketball team (posing for pictures) accomplished the same feat in the Class 4 championship last march by routing Central Park Hills 64-37. Dierre Hill Jr. (number 0, shown in a regular season game against East St. Louis) was the offensive and defensive catalyst for the club all season.

Meanwhile Cardinal Ritter’s boys basketball team (right) won the Class 5 title the same weekend that Vashon’s boys and girls basketball teams took home titles. Speaking of titles, Metro’s sharp-shooting wonder Amari Foluke may have played on a team with a losing record, but he was pretty prolific as an individual. Not only was the Panthers pace-setter who kept his team in many games they would lose, but for the second consecutive season he led the entire region in scoring, as he averaged 31. points per game.

Nyla Bush, Chantrel Clayton and Brianna Hoffman-Collins. Bush scored 24 points in the championship, as did then-senior Rachel Jones. Clayton poured in 18 points and Collins added 10, as they outlasted St. Joseph’s Benton in double overtime 79-77. However, Vashon’s boys basketball team had an easier time, in routing Central Park Hills 64-37, though.

As far as Ritter’s state championship in boys basketball was concerned, the Lions held off Ladue 65-54.

Balance was the key to their attack, as Clayton Jackson (13.4), Nashawn Davis (11.6) and Derrick Rivers (also 11.6 scoring average) had modest numbers that produced championship, all three return this season with a cast of veteran role players as well. The girls track and field team at Ritter also had balance, but a balance of star perform-

ers. Alexis Taylor in the long jump, Aniyah Brown in the sprint races, Charyle Moody in the sprint relays and Kyndall Spain, daughter to head coach Tiffany Jackson-Spain, and so on.

But when it comes to volume of talent, the Cardinal Ritter football team was second, simply because of the roster numbers and high-popping statistics: For example, in a unique, but immensely successful two-quarterback system, Carson Boyd threw for 2,224 yards, 29 touchdowns and just one interception in completing 128 of 161 pass attempts. Fellow signal-caller Antwon McKay completed 81 of 115 passes for 1,792 yards with 22 touchdowns and just two picks. Receiver D.J. Miller caught 66 passes for 1,361 yards and 24 touchdowns, while Jamarion Parker rushed for 1,644 yards and 26 touchdowns. On defense, Dominique Dixon had 64 tackles, Cam Clayborn 11 quarter-

back sacks and Bryce Gray had nine sacks. But Ritter coach Brennan Spain had the stats and the success go beyond sheer talent, rather its takes execution and hard work.

“People sometimes take our success for granted,” he said. “They just think we have some great athletes who show up and play. It’s hard work. All of us work hard to get better each week than the week before. We don’t get enough credit as coaches, either. We put a lot of hard work into coaching them.”

Suffice to say, that hard work paid off in the form of another state title last week.



#### STL CITY NAACP, from A5

• **Dr. MATIFADZA (MATT) HLATSHWAYO-DAVIS** is Director of Health, City of St. Louis. They will receive the *Ina M. Boon Social Justice Award*

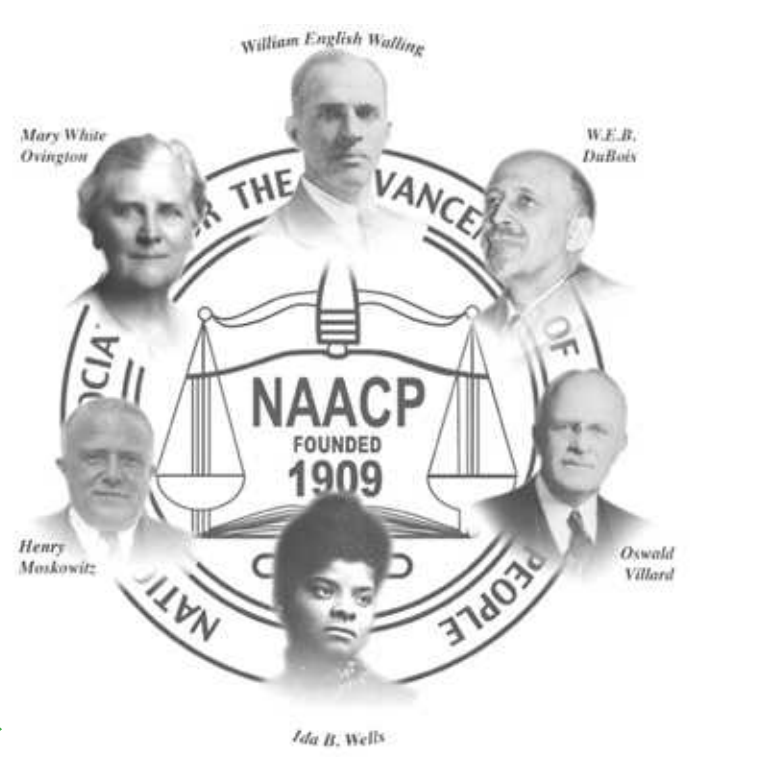
• **DEJUAN STRICKLAND** initiated and paid off the negative lunch debt of every student at his former elementary school, McCurdy Elementary in the Hazelwood School District. Now a student at St. Louis University High School, he continues to raise money to eliminate negative lunch debt for different elementary schools in the area

• **TEREA GOODSON** is Head Swim Coach of the MAKOS Swim Team at O-Fallon Park Rec Complex. The MAKOS, an all-Black swim team for boys and girls ages 5-18, recently joined USA Swimming. The Team is enjoying the thrill of victory in

competitive swim meets throughout the metro area. They will receive the *NAACP Youth Leadership Award*.

The NAACP is the nation’s oldest civil rights organization. Founded by a coalition of black political activists and white progressives in 1909, the NAACP is responsible for a number of victories from the ballot box to the boardroom, in the struggle for justice and equality in America. The NAACP has more than 2200 Branches in 50 states and over 500,000 members worldwide.

Since the founding of the St. Louis City NAACP in 1912, it has been the talent and tenacity of local NAACP members that have saved lives and changed many negative aspects of St. Louis society.





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MOKAN recently held its 49th Anniversary Celebration and Annual Awards Dinner. The event recognized and honored individuals, businesses and organizations that embody the mission and value of MOKAN especially in the areas of dedication and commitment to diversity in the workplace and inclusion of MBE/WBE businesses.

Proceeds from the event enable MOKAN to provide funding for students in MOKAN's Pre-Apprenticeship Training Program and MOKAN's Business Institute Program for minority contractors. MOKAN wants to ensure that these programs continue to prepare non-traditional construction workers to enter and succeed in the construction industry and provide industry-specific training for minority contractors.

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MOKAN is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization. Thomas Nellums, Sr., owner, TEE & E Trucking is Chairman of the MOKAN Board of Directors. Yaphett El-Amin is Executive Director of MOKAN.



**Eddie Hasan, former MOKAN President/CEO, receives the Lifetime Achievement Award.**



**Keith Walkoff receives the Private Sector Executive Leadership Award.**



**Marie Yancey, Contract Compliance Officer, St. Louis Lambert International Airport receives the Public Sector Executive of the Year Award.**



**Adam Froidl, accepts the Developer of the Year Award presented to the St. Louis Cardinals and The Cordish Companies for the development of Ballpark Village.**



**Pastors Ken and Beverly Jenkins of Refuge and Restoration receive the Developer of the Year Award for the development of R&R Marketplace.**



**Theresa Hilboldt, Vice President, accepts the Developer of the Year Award for Wright Companies for the development of the St. Louis County Police Precinct #3**



**Mike Tallis, Managing Owner of Cherokee Hauling, receives the Emerging Business of the Year Award.**



**Lakkia Davis Hynes, Owner of Hillisdale Demolition Contracting LLC, receives the WBE Contractor of the Year Award.**



**Andre Castro-Lester, Owner of ACE Service Experts LLC, receives the MBE Contractor of the Year Award.**



**James Seitz, Vice President, accepts the Financial Institution of the Year Award for Lindell Bank.**



**Melissa Jones, Vice President, accepts the Financial Institution of the Year Award for Enterprise Bank & Trust.**

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