

The Scholarship Plug Helps South Florida Students Pay for College

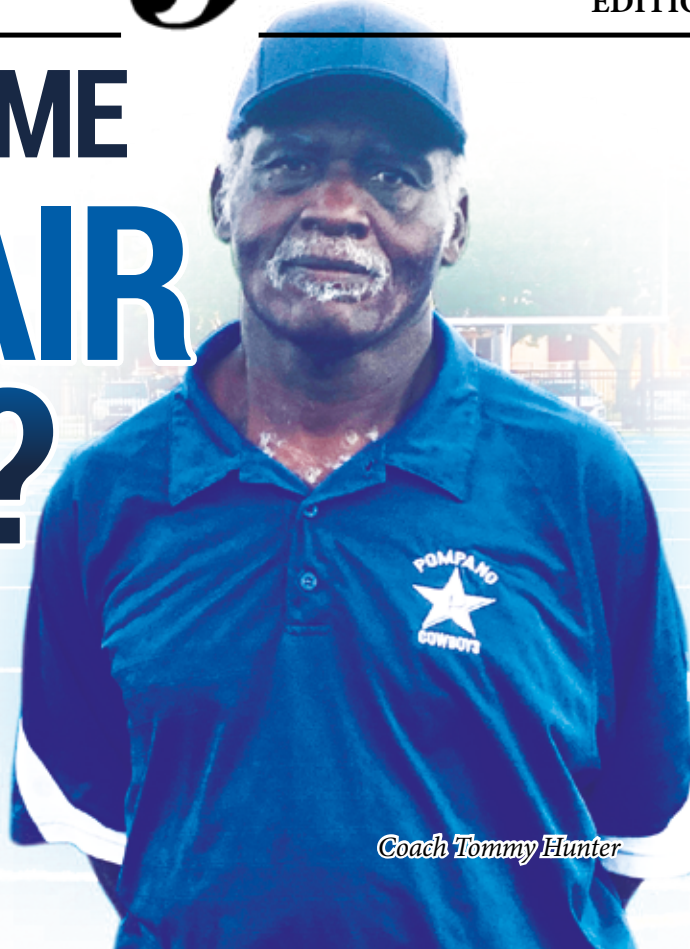


VOL 11 - DONATIONS ONLY

A NEW NAME *for* MCNAIR PARK?

By Attiyya Atkins

Coach Tommy Hunter, 67, has been a coach at Ronald McNair Park for more than 40 years. He has trained thousands of Pompano Beach's youth in football, track, and field. In fact, he's one of the original coaches left from the first Collier City Cowboys team formed in 1981.



Coach Tommy Hunter

HUNTER considers the kids he trains as family, checking on their grades and keeping them away from negative influences. And as McNair Park undergoes a multi-million-dollar upgrade, many community members and his former athletes want Hunter's legacy to be immortalized at the park where he's helped so many young people.

Eric Rawls, a former NFL player, is thankful for all that Hunter has done for him.

■ Rally, see page 11



Sidney Holmes Exonerated After Serving 36 of 400 Year Sentence for Crime He Did Not Commit

Pompano Beach resident, Sidney Holmes, is finally reunited with his family after spending over three decades in Fort Lauderdale prison.

By: Kristen Hernandez



Sidney Holmes

Fort Lauderdale, FL - Sidney Holmes, 57, along with his closest loved ones, boarded a luxury ocean liner bound for the Caribbean. It was a gift from one of many organizations that've assisted Holmes since his March 13th release from a Fort Lauderdale prison, after he paid for someone else's crime.

As he dressed for a planned reunion dinner on his first-ever vacation, Holmes finally studied his reflection in the bathroom mirror because in prison, mirrors are a no-no. Fine lines have etched themselves in his once smooth skin. Gray's stud his beard like dandelion weeds, pull one and a field grows back. The signs of age have almost surprised Holmes.

His sister, Nicole "Nikki" Mitchell now in her 40's, called out "Sidney", but it took him a moment to remember his name is no longer Inmate.

■ Sidney Holmes, see page 10

New Housing is Popping up, But Are Northwest Residents Being Priced Out of Town?

By Attiyya Atkins

Vacant lots in Pompano Beach's northwest corridor are disappearing.

Now "New Homes Coming Soon" signs and privacy fences set the lots apart from the ATV stunt sites and neighborhood shortcuts they used to be.

While investors and developers are happy about the billion-dollar growth, residents and business owners fear that those who live in the northwest are being priced out. "Yes, there are new houses popping up in District 4 (northwest Pompano) under

the cloak of affordable housing," said Larry Slappy, Broker for Chevalier Real Estate. "But affordable housing is now \$400,000."

And those price points don't match the incomes of those living in the northwest. DH Horton, America's largest home builder, is building new homes in the Highland Oak community at 921 NW 3rd Ave. The townhouses will start at \$400,000.

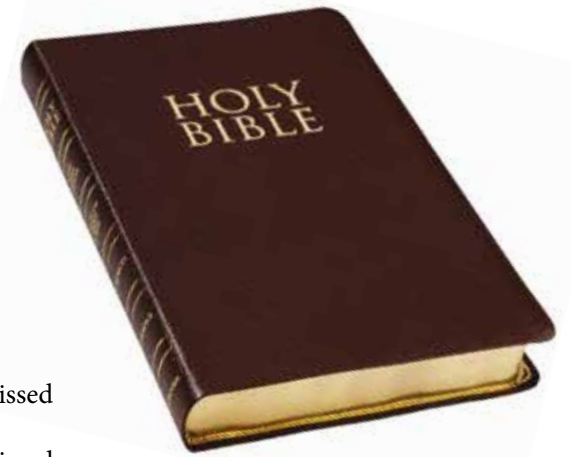
Down the street at 100 NW 8th St., the \$36 million Sonata Apartments project is near completion. The affordable housing complex is a tax-credit housing project

■ To Atlantic, see page 8





ONE MINUTE IN THE WORD



LIFE AFTER EVERY MISSED SHOT

The text says in Psalms 55 verse 6, "Oh, that if I had wings like a dove, I would fly away and be at rest."

VILLIJ NEWS

Understanding life is like watching a basketball game, you're going to make some shots, and you're going to miss some shots.

David in our text felt like his enemies were closing in on him, and instead of seeing God's hand in, on, and around his life, he wanted wings like a dove to fly away from his perceived problems.

VILLIJ NEWS

Life is filled with missed shots:

- There's job opportunity missed shots.
- There's entrepreneurial missed shots.
- There's political missed shots.
- There's marital missed shots.

And we all have witnessed Game 7 NBA basketball missed shots.

VILLIJ NEWS

Everyone celebrates and cheers for you after every shot you make, but here's three things you must do after every missed shot in your life:

- #1- Look Back at It
- #2- Lead Because of It
- #3- Learn From It

And that's your One Minute in the Word, listen I'm not out of words, but I am out of lines, until the next edition, know this, I'm pulling for you and I'm praying for you. God bless you, stay connected.

Life Question: Who, what, and how do you respond after you have missed a shot in life?

Catch The One Minute Preacher on YouTube @ TLG Fashion & Instagram @ The1MinutePreacher

I'M in the book of Psalms and for every emotion and mood we have there's a Psalms to match.

VILLIJ NEWS

Today, our very survival depends on our ability to stay awake and know after every missed shot there's still life.

Church Directory



BISHOP GARY MCLEOD

Bishop Gary McLeod, Mount Sinai Missionary Baptist Church of Deliverance, 1401 S. Dixie Highway E, Pompano Beach, FL 33060

Service Sundays at 11:45 a.m.; Tuesdays at 7 p.m.



PASTOR ROBERT STANLEY

Pastor Robert Stanley, Hopewell Baptist Church, 890 N.W. 15th Street, Pompano Beach, FL, 33060

Corporate Worship Service Sundays at 9:30 a.m.



APOSTLE JOHN L. MOHORN JR.

Apostle John L. Mohorn Jr., Word of Living God Ministries, 149 N.W. 26th Ave, Pompano Beach, FL 33069

Service Sundays at 10 a.m., 7 p.m.; Fridays at 8 p.m.



PASTOR HENRY AND LADY BELINDA GOODWIN

3835 N. Andrews Avenue, Oakland Park, FL, 33309

Sunday School 8:45 a.m.; Sunday Worship Service 9:45 a.m., Wednesday Night Bible Study 6:30 p.m.



Residents Tips Led to Arrest of 18-year-old in Collier City Triple Drive-by Shooting

By Kristen Hernandez

Collier City -Tips from the public and relentless detective work all came together and led to the arrest of Damian Wastene Charmant, an 18-year-old man who was just 17 at the time of the February shooting.

Critical Crime Stopper tips and a review of evidence identified Charmant as one of the shooters. Charmant is currently in custody on unrelated charges, and now faces additional charges that include two counts of first-degree murder and three counts of first-degree attempted murder with a firearm.

According to BSO investigators, on Sunday, February 26th, deputies responded to a shooting call at a convenience store located at 401 N.W. 27 Avenue in Pompano Beach. They discovered five people suffering from gunshot wounds. Pregnant 31-year-old

Delana James and 35-year-old Dayvon Johnson were pronounced dead at the hospital, and the three remaining victims sustained non-life threatening, but life-changing, injuries.

The remaining suspects involved in the fatal shooting are considered armed and dangerous.

BSO's Homicide Unit is asking anyone with information about the shooting, identity or location of the suspects to contact Homicide Detective Gino Parram at 954-321-4262 or submit a tip through the SaferWatch App. If you wish to remain anonymous, please contact Broward Crime Stoppers at 954-493-TIPS (8477). You can also go online at BrowardCrimeStoppers.org, or dial **TIPS (8477) from any cell phone in the United States. Any Crime Stoppers tip that leads to an arrest in this case is eligible for a reward of up to \$10,000.

Ask Annie:

My Girlfriend Proposed

Q: I've been with my girlfriend for five years now and things are pretty good. We don't have any kids and enjoy traveling and eating out and just having a good time. She's three years older than me and she's been talking a lot about marriage and children lately. She's 32 and I'm 29. I've been telling her that I do want to do these things with her, but I'm not ready. Well, we got into a big fight about it and I thought our relationship was about to be over, but what she did surprised me. My girlfriend proposed to me, she bought a ring, got down on one knee while we were out at one of our favorite restaurants. It was hella weird. I was embarrassed so I told everyone it was a prank and told her we'd talk about it later. Now she's talking about moving out and ending our relationship. I love her, what should I do?

A: Wow. Women these days are on a whole other level. Sir, she got down on one knee?! I bet you felt like a sissy. As a woman, this is hard for me to look past, but I'm going to try and stay objective. First, she must have told you 1,000 times that she was ready to settle down. Being in a relationship together for five years is long enough to know whether or not you want to be with that person. Save that "I'm not ready" ish for your mami... because you ready when it's time to go on them dates, you ready when it's time to go to live together, and you ready when it's time to hit the sheets. Women need security and she wants that from you and if you love her and want to be with her then propose, otherwise, I don't see this relationship working out. She's already emasculated you in public, spent her money on a ring, and you still said no. If you don't bite the bullet and ask for her hand in marriage, it's time to pack it up and say goodbye.



The Fight for Westview Continues: House Passes a New Bill to Protect Abandoned and Historic Cemeteries

By China Boynton

On Tuesday, April 25 the Florida House Representatives passed bill HB 49 which protects abandoned and historic cemeteries in the state. The bill passed unanimously, and the main purpose of the bill is to create a historic cemeteries program within the division of historical resources of Department of State (DOS), create a historic cemeteries advisory council, authorized certain entities to acquire conservation easements to preserve cemeteries, and provide appropriation and authorize positions.

The passing of this bill comes right on the heels of a meeting that took place late April at E. Pat Larkins Center regarding the Westview Community Cemetery, 428 NW 6th Ave., Pompano Beach, by a newly elected board for Westview.

The old cemetery board versus new board has been a source of community conflict for at least a year, when the old board agreed to put a portion of the cemetery up for sale. The election of the new

board is still in question because after Walter Hunter became president of the Westview Cemetery board in October 2020, he created a new emeritus position on the board for the former president Derrick Gay who served as President since 2006.

Instead of election, others were appointed to the committee who had previously been in talks with developer KZ Copans to sell four-and-a-half acres of the cemetery to build a storage facility.

Residents in the community found out about the potential sale and formed a steering committee to fight back by filing a lawsuit against the board to stop the sale of the historic property.

The steering committee held an election in January 2022 to elect a new board of trustees and subsequently held a meeting to notify the community of the actions of the previous board.

However, in May of 2022, the former board consisting of Walter Hunter, Derrick Gay along with the rest of the former board decided to sign the warranty deed entitling

■ *New Bill, see page 12*





The Scholarship Plug Helps South Florida Students Pay for College

By China Boynton

Shedly Casseus Parnter worked as a BRACE (Broward Advisors for Continuing Education) advisor in Broward schools for 13 years before she realized her true calling was helping students create the type of future they would like to pursue.

PARNTHER wanted to create a space for students to access scholarships and other programs that could aid in their future college education, so she created the website thescholarshipplug.com. Her website provides students with access to expert college planning and coaching to help students reach their financial aid goals.

In addition to the website Parnter, has written a book

■ *Scholarship, see page 12*

DESSALINES LIVES!

Trumpet virtuoso Jean Caze comes to Pompano!
Caze has been compared to Miles Davis and has performed with the likes of Herbie Hancock, Aretha Franklin and Michael Bubl .

Jazz Trumpet Artist, Composer & Educator, Jean Caze

MAY 26 | 7:30PM

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How BSO, Pastors and Residents Are Taking Their City Back

RESIDENTS ARE TAKING BACK THEIR CITY AND THEIR SAFETY

By Kristen Hernandez

Mitchell Moore Park – Trusted Pompano Beach pastors and members of BSO have formed the People Pastors Police, or PPP Initiative, in direct response to the deadly wave of gun violence that's recently washed over the entire city. PPP will include the collective help of not only familiar reverends, pastors, and BSO deputies, but also from the community. The announcement came during an April event called A.D.A.M., or Awesome Dads Awesome Men, family playday at Mitchell Moore Park.

“IT'S so important to put pastors out there,” Pastor Ron Harper of I am Kingdom Ministries in Deerfield Beach said. “We don't just care about you coming into our four walls, we're going to meet you where you are, along with our police department. I think that is what'll bring us together.”

Residents' pleas are personal for Open Arm's church leader, Pastor Henry L. Goodwin, uncle of Dayvon Johnson who was recently murdered during a drive-by convenience store shooting in February.

“Pastors are trusted faces in trusted places,” Goodwin said. “This initiative is what'll make the difference. I'm just sorry it took the murder of my nephew, Dayvon, for this to happen. At least this way, it wouldn't be for nothing.”

Goodwin, along with Reverend Tim Griffith of Hopewell Baptist Church who initially sparked the concept, Pastor Ron Harper with I am Kingdom Ministries, and Pastor Miguel Cruz with Puerta De Salvacion Iglesias have partnered with police to be the voice of



any resident with information related to any crime.

People hesitate to come forward because of years of senseless violence, too many cold cases and not enough action. “We have to get over the stigma of ‘don't say anything or be quiet,’” Cruz said. “It could be your nephew or your brother

that committed the crime and you're fearful to say something. Now, they can come to us.”

Residents with tips can turn to trusted leaders of their local church, anonymously. The clergy will pass that information to BSO during twice monthly briefings on the second and fourth Wednesday each month.

“These valuable tips will allow us to make a difference, and make real change,” BSO Captain Stallings said. “Residents have a true fear, so we've built that 954-493-TIPS (8477) line and you don't have to give your name. Communication is key to this thing because we don't know what to expect from

the people who commit these crimes. Now, we can filter out rumors and bad information from good much faster.”

Announcing the PPP initiative at family day was just one of the ways pastors and BSO will get the word out. In the coming months, expect to see members of PPP out at local events, marches, and even knocking on doors to let people know they're listening.

“PPP means Pastors, Police, and People,” Goodwin said. “It'll take more than just trusted faces like church leaders and BSO. It will take help from this community.”

Community Based Connections CEO, Mike Olbel, partnered with BSO to host A.D.A.M.'s day to challenge local dads to bring the family and spend the afternoon at Mitchell Moore Park.

“A.D.A.M.'s challenge was created to lead the effort to promote fatherhood and family preservation,” Olbel said. “We wanted our kids to come to a park in their own neighborhood with family and be safe. Where there's no gun violence, no drugs, no addiction happening at Mitchell Moore Park. Unfortunately, some folks believe they can't come to enjoy it. This is a testimony to what partnership and family atmosphere can make possible.”

In the United States, there are about 18.4 million children that live without a father in the home. That's enough to fill New York City twice, or Los Angeles four times over, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Research proves that a father's absence affects children in numerous adverse ways.

Development Director of Community Based Connections, Amber Vaughan, spoke of her own experience growing up without a father. “I know now what difference having a father in my life would've made,” said Vaughan. “It takes a village so to see the community come together like this, this is special.”



As Gov. DeSantis Tries to Erase Black History, NAACP Warns Black Americans to “Stay Away from Florida”

NAACP Orlando Chapter Votes Unanimously to request National Board of Directors to Issue Travel Advisory

By Kristen Hernandez
Pompano Beach, FL - In a direct attempt to prevent Florida state governor, Ron DeSantis, from becoming President of the United States, the NAACP met in Orlando to discuss how to “send a message” to voters over legislation regarding race, gender identity, diversity and equity. They unanimously voted to send a request to the NAACP National Board of Directors to issue a travel advisory.

IF issued, the travel advisory would urge black and brown individuals to avoid moving to or visiting the state of Florida, due to the governor’s blatant attacks and

relentless efforts to cause further divide among minority groups all over the state. NAACP leaders described the governor’s laws and policies as “Draconian” and “repressive.”

President of the Fort Lauderdale NAACP chapter, Marsha Ellison, told Villij News, “We wanted the request to get to the board right away to make sure it’s on the agenda for their May meeting. Once these ridiculous bills pass through, we plan to amend the request to include things that are directly affecting people of color. Like permit-less carry, universal [education] vouchers, a number of things not passed yet, but are on their desks.”

When the governor pushed the Stop Woke Act, which restricts gender orientation and instruction and race-based conversations and analysis in business and education, DeSantis said, “What you see now with

the rise of this woke ideology is an attempt to really delegitimize our history and our institutions, and I view the “wokeness” as a form of Marxism.”

Hillsboro County NAACP president, Yvette Lewis, noted during a press conference that attempts to curtail the civil liberties of African Americans and other marginalized groups predates the current legislative session. “Saying you don’t want Advanced American Studies because they have certain topics on it, certain words; don’t want companies to have the words diversity, equity and inclusion because it has institutional racism in their policy. You know, it takes us back. And we’ve been fighting so hard,” said Lewis.

“Governor DeSantis is very insensitive as it relates to issues facing people of color in the state of Florida,” Isaiel Rumlin, president of the NAACP Jacksonville branch, said. “We’re just not

going to take it anymore; we’ve been taking it long enough. Somebody’s going to have to stand up against the governor, and one of the ways we’ll do that is in the form of a travel advisory, which will have an impact on the economy.”

DeSantis has made cultural issues a cornerstone of his administration, particularly extinguishing what he calls “woke” entities and philosophies centered on issues of discrimination involving race, gender and sexual orientation. Many community leaders have been outspoken about how the governor has systematically alienated and singled out people of color, and individuals in the LGBTQ+ community, adding to already volatile racial tensions throughout each county. In a brief statement responding to the travel advisory request, Gov. DeSantis seemed to laugh it off and called it a “stunt” and a “joke.” This

is the reason why our country goes through all of these...stupid fights. If you want to waste your time on a stunt, that’s fine. But I’m not wasting mine,” he said.

Ellison said she feels differently. “We want attention on the things that have happened in the past few years – SB90, HNI, the anti-protest amendment to disenfranchise many black and brown people,” Ellison said. “The banning of books such as the Rosa Parks story. The re-writing of history by taking race out of it.” The NAACP is on the front lines of racial and cultural issues facing all people of color. Founded in 1909, the NAACP is the nation’s largest and oldest civil rights organization. From the ballot box to the classroom, their leaders and members fight for social justice. To get more information about the Fort Lauderdale chapter of the NAACP, visit their website <https://naacp-ftlbroward.com>.

Acclaimed Jazz Trumpeter Jean Caze Celebrates Haitian Heritage Month

Pompano Beach Arts Plans Multiple Events to Honor Haitian Art and Culture

Submitted by Kay Renz

Pompano Beach Arts is proud to celebrate Haitian Heritage month with a dazzling lineup of events including Dessalines Lives!, a concert by world-renowned jazz trumpeter Jean Caze, and a fun-filled dance event entitled Konpa Pompano.

“DURING the month of May we are honored to focus the spotlight on the artistry of the Haitian community,” said Ty Tabing, Cultural Affairs Director. “We are offering an array of thrilling events celebrating the vibrant Haitian culture through paintings, dance, music, film, poetry and more.”

One of the highlights of the month is Dessalines Lives! This is a free concert by Jean Caze on May 26, 2023, at 7:30 p.m. at Ali Cultural Center, 353 Dr. Martin Luther King Blvd., Pompano Beach. A prodigious talent, Caze has emerged as one of today's most exciting new voices in jazz, touring with Michael Bubl  and having performed with the likes of Herbie Hancock, Najee, Arturo Sandoval, John Fadis, Randy Brecker, and



Bob Mintzer. Jean also played with the legendary rock group “Chicago” live on NBC and has opened for the Wynton Marsalis Quartet.

Caze is known for his original blend of Haitian American music, with rhythms inspired by Rara, Konpa, Racine and American backbeats. The lyrics tell the tales of heroic freedom fighters that shaped the fate of millions, while the show itself engages the audience by inviting them to sing, move, and even dance, as they discover the richness of Haitian culture.

Jean Caze’s latest CD, Amed ,

features his blend of Haitian American musical styles and features the Queen of Haitian song, Emeline Michel, among other talented artists.

Jean has received abundant praise from critics, peers, and jazz enthusiasts alike who have taken to Jean’s lyrical tone and tasteful ideas. He has been hailed a “True Improviser” and even compared to Miles Davis by fellow trumpet player Carl Saunders. Though his roots are solidly planted in jazz, Jean can flawlessly switch between genres.

Another key event, early in

the month is Konpa Pompano at 7 p.m. at the Ali Cultural Center. This high-energy event intended to introduce participants to Haitian music and dance cultural. Konpa (komp s) is a dance-style that originated in Haiti during the 1950s. Konpa Pompano will follow the format of our popular dance events, “Sabados de Salsa” and “Baila Pompano,” beginning with a one-hour instructor led dance class with instructors from KOTR Konpa Dance Studio followed by a dance party with the band 5Lan and DJ Mike Cooley.

For a full lineup of events, visit www.pompanoarts.org

Our list below includes other outstanding events and visit our website for the latest updates.

HAITIAN HERITAGE MONTH EVENTS:

Exhibition | ANN APRESYE ZEV ATIS AYISYEN (LET’S APPRECIATE THE WORKS OF HAITIAN ARTISTS)| April 21 - July 19, 2023 | Reception April 21

May 4 – Lunch w/ Art Poetry Edition | Haitian Heritage Month | FREE | Pompano Beach Cultural Center

May 6 – VIRTUAL Story Time at the Blanche Ely House Museum | FREE

May 6 – Konpa Pompano | 7PM | \$20 | Ali Cultural Center

May 9 – Haitian Heritage Month Film Screening | 7PM | FREE | Pompano Beach Cultural Center

May 21 - Art on a Platter (in partnership w/ Be Eccentric, Inc.)| 3p – 6p | \$40 | Ali Cultural Center

May 25 – Montage Virtual Film Series| Boy with Angel Wings by Frantzy Moreau | FREE | Virtual (Zoom)

May 26 – Dessalines Lives! Concert by Jean Caze| 7:30 PM | FREE | Ali Cultural Center

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Attiyya Atkins

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Girl Power Activated: GIRLfessionals Helping Women Achieve Their Business Goals

CELEBRATES 10 YEARS THIS MONTH

By Attiyya Atkins

It's not true that girls just want to have fun. Girls want to have fun, grow their businesses, network, and look great while doing it. GIRLfessionals Network Inc., a Pompano Beach-based business sisterhood, is here for just that.

THE organization will celebrate 10 years of uniting Black women at its "Respect My Existence: I Matter Conference" on May 20, 11 a.m. at the Doubletree by Hilton - Sawgrass Mills, 13400 West Sunrise Blvd., Sunrise, 33323. There will be breakout sessions, guest speakers, brunch, vendors, music, networking, raffles and more.

"GIRLfessionals is a creative



platform for African American women to tap into," said founder Cheryl Davis. Davis created the organization a decade ago to act as a support system for Black women in the business world.

"A lot of the time Black wom-

en are behind the eight ball when it comes to work, career, and business strategies," she said. "GIRLfessionals is a platform to show other Black women that a few of us are here, willing, and able to share tips and advice."

GIRLfessionals focuses on giving back to women, including community service, scholarships, memberships, and partnerships. The organization also hosts its signature event Chit, Chat, Chew, and Collabo-

rate, a monthly brunch that invites influential women across several different industries to share their resources in a safe space.

The growth of the GIRLfessionals Network hasn't been easy, Davis said.

"This journey taught me how to be resilient," she said. "For anyone who is growing and going in their purpose know that you're going to face failure. Not everyone is going to agree with your mission. Stay the course and stay in the part that God has brought you to do."

Davis added an African proverb: "If you want to go fast – go alone. If you want to go far – go together."

Tickets to the conference start at \$80. Purchase your tickets here. For more information, visit the GIRLfessionals website, Instagram, and Facebook.



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I MATTER Conference

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Founder & Visionary: **CHEROLYN DAVIS**
 Keynote Speaker: **Geralda Larkins**
 Invocation: **Shanice Royal**

PANEL • SPEAKERS

INFILTRATING THE SYSTEM
 Reberca David, Kimberli Ransom & Dalisa Bowers

THE ART OF STORYTELLING
 Jenny Rainey, Samantha Ramarine & Tollisha Joseph

IDENTITY CRISIS
 Peggy Flood-Smith, Penny Robertson, April Graham, & Melissa Jones

AN IDLE MIND
 Jacqueline Louis, Shareza J & Michael Wilson

CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND ACCOUNTABILITY
 Sherea Green, Sakia McClaim, Alysha Roper & Evette K. Thompson-McCrea

10 Year ANNIVERSARY

MAY 20 2023
11AM - 3PM

DoubleTree by Hilton
 13400 W. Sunrise Blvd
 Sunrise, FL 33323

Register At:
<https://GIRLfessionalsRespectMyExistence.eventbrite.com>

Kappa Luau Mansion Party

Foundation Grants College Scholarships to High School Students While Guests get Lei'd

By Kristen Hernandez

Pompano Beach – Guests got lei'd by alumni of Kappa Alpha Psi as they were welcomed to the League's Mansion Luau Party at Sample-McDougald house last month. Locals came dressed in their finest Hawaiian-themed threads to celebrate the gift of education with the Kappa Foundation of Pompano Beach at a location steeped in historical significance.

IT was the fraternity's second annual reunion-like party to showcase the accomplishments of students. Residents witnessed aspiring Blanch Ely high schoolers receive life-changing scholarships.

"We need more events like this," Willie Brown said, one of the original members of the Pompano Beach Alumni Chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi. "Our community has a void in its heart. We've been locked in with Covid and people needed to come out, exhale and breathe. We wanted to reach the heart of



Pompano." Volunteers transformed the mansion's manicured lawn into a Hawaiian retreat with a Pompano vibe. A clear blue sky hung over the mansion, gifting attendees with a gorgeous, in-

spiring day.

Brown, a self-proclaimed product of the first mentorship, stressed the importance of more brothers taking on the mentor roll. "Our mentorship teaches black men about legacy, perspective, and certain skills some kids can't learn at home because they have no father. We give those kids support. Teach them how to tie a tie. Show them how to carry themselves as a black man in this society."

Brothers who graduate typically return to Pompano and become mentors themselves. "My kids tell me, 'If it weren't for you,

I wouldn't be here," Johnson said. "I tell them, no, if it wasn't for you, you wouldn't be here. They have to have it inside them."

Each year, the Kappa Foundation grants scholarships, and provides tours of select universities. Brown's message to kids is always the same. "Keep hope alive and believe in yourself." Brown mentioned how during the early years of the mentorship, college participation rate was about 40 percent. Now, high school Kappa members' college participation rate has soared to 100 percent and has held steady.

The luau at the historic Sample-McDougald mansion demonstrated that parties can be non-violent and have a purpose. "This was an encouraging, good day," Brown said, smiling and swirling a fresh drink. "We spread education, and the bonus was happiness."

To see their calendar of events, visit the Sample-McDougald house website.

The Kappa Foundation website offers a wealth of information, including a donate page and info about scholarship recipients. Visit <https://kfpompano.org> or call 786-262-7497.



Sidney Holmes

continued from page 1

“Your future is not allowed in prison,” Holmes said. “I was only 22 when they took my freedom away. But you have to change your lifestyle. I had to develop a positive attitude and I educated myself. Spirituality was my platform. And I never gave up hope.”

Holmes reflected on what almost was. The day of his arrest in 1988, Holmes was with his family and little Nikki, eight at the time. They were “screaming their heads off” on the go-carts in celebration of Father’s Day. He had no idea what crime they were accusing him of.

It turned out to be a case of mistaken identity. One that cost Holmes 36 years of his adult life. He was “identified” by the brother of one of the victims, in a second photo lineup.

“I remember when the prosecutor asked the judge for an 825-year sentence. I couldn’t believe it, there was no way, I was innocent of this. When the judge said, ‘perhaps that’s a bit much,’ I was even more shocked when he suggested 400 years instead.”

Brandon Scheck, Staff Attorney for the Innocence Project Florida explained, “If Sidney was given life, he would’ve been eligible for parole after serving 25 years. Alternately, a term of years means the person must serve out that term of exact years. Living until the age of 400 is obviously not going to happen. It ensured that he’d die in prison. They were wrong.”

Before his wrongful conviction, Holmes was studying to be a medical technician. “There

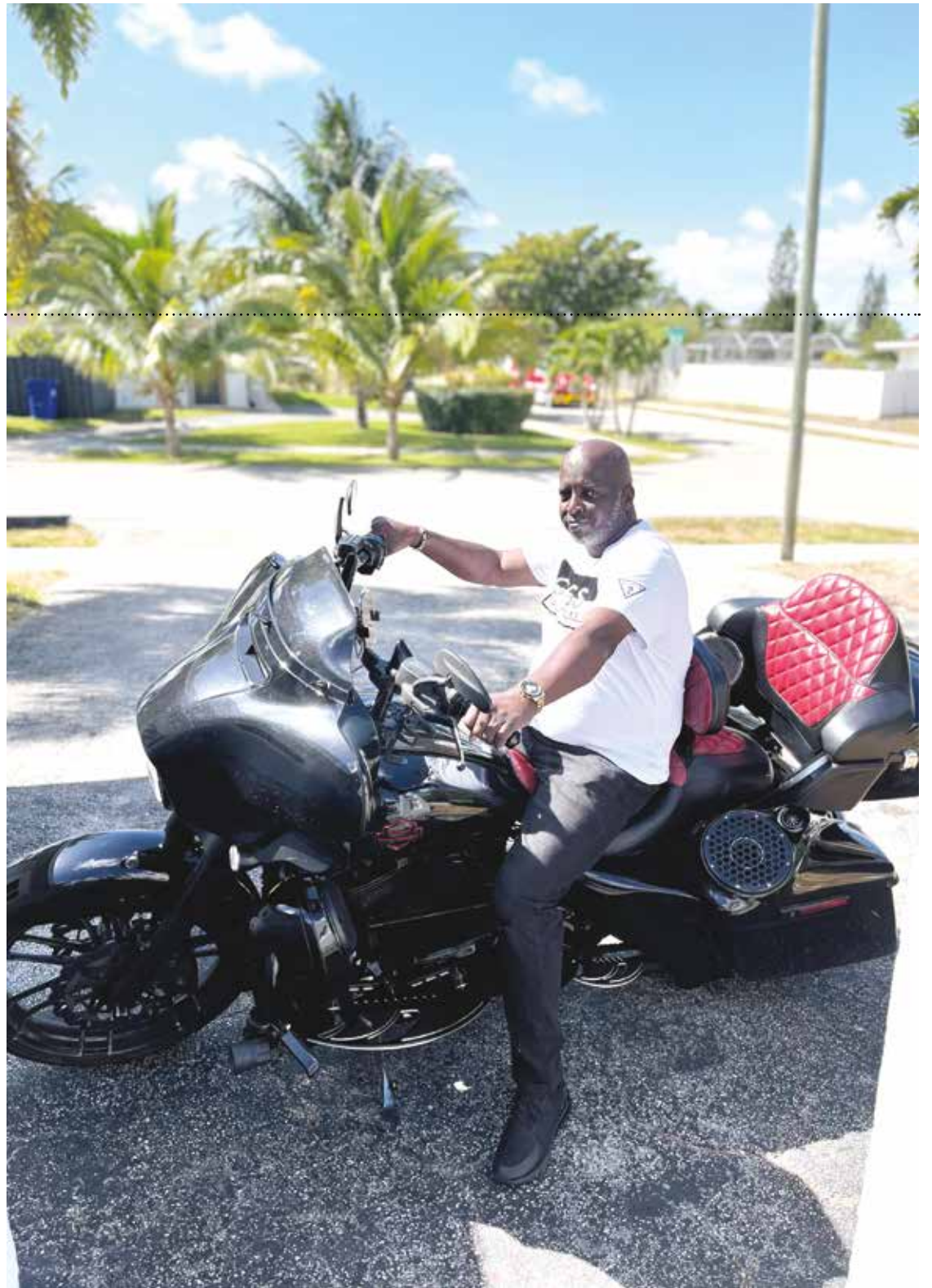
were some dog days. I focused on staying positive and educating myself. Education is paramount. I got myself a degree, an associate in theology, and developed culinary skills. I plan on opening a food truck with my brother-in-law and it’s in the works,” Holmes said.

Holmes is also working on developing a plan to mentor young black and brown residents to help them change their lifestyle, so the “next 22-year-old doesn’t get accused of something they didn’t do.” Because so many young men grow up without a father figure, the streets swallow them up.

He joined Toastmasters International so he could nurture public speaking skills and “give back and help someone like he was blessed.” Holmes wants kids to know that prison is not someplace they want to be and “it’s no joke.” Dreams and goals vanish like the sunlight.

And truly horrible things happen behind the gates, like an inmate that dove to their death off a top tier balcony because they were high on something synthetic. “I witnessed someone get stabbed and killed over one single cigarette.”

“These kids running around the streets of Pompano don’t realize the legalities of what’s going on,” Holmes said. “They want to be a thug or gangster, but they need to understand prison is worse than the streets. In the streets, you’re free. In prison, you must comply. You’ll have to wake up early every morning because you think someone will come up into



Sidney Holmes and family

your room and slice you. I was scalded with burning water for seeing the wrong thing in the wrong place, at the wrong time.”

Holmes pointed out how the new Broward County courthouse administration inherited a broken system. “This system was developed decades ago. They’ve been able to lock someone up without proper evidence. The system needs to be fixed. It’ll take local politicians, police department, a real collective effort. I see it’s moving in a positive direction.”

While in prison Holmes contacted somewhere between 200-300 institutions such as

Yale University and Howard University, anyone who’d listen to his story. All the case facts pointed to his innocence, as Holmes has said all along. It took an intense 2-year review and collaboration between Innocence Project Florida and Broward County State Attorney’s office to get Holmes freed.

Since 2019, the collaboration between the two organizations has exonerated 7 innocent people from Fort Lauderdale prison. “The evidence proved it from the beginning. Sidney Holmes is factually innocent of this 1988-armed robbery,” Scheck said. The case is still un-

solved.

After Holmes and his family returns from vacation, he plans on getting his food truck off the ground “with a blessing from God” and plans to speak at events around Pompano Beach. Above all, Sidney Holmes wants to bond with his family - his daughter, 5 grandchildren, sister and his mother. “I’m so blessed that my mother is still living and I can give her a hug instead of putting flowers on her grave.”

To find out more about the Innocence Project Florida, visit them at www.FloridaInnocence.org.

Rally

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“He followed me from youth league to high school, from high school to college, and from college to the professional league,” Rawls wrote in a letter. “When I was playing college football, he was someone that would call and ask about my grades and made sure that I understood football wouldn’t last forever. So, when I learned about the new construction of McNair Park, I couldn’t think of someone more deserving to name the park after other than Coach Tommy.”

There’s been a quiet storm brewing to rename the park from Ronald McNair, an astronaut with no Pompano Beach affiliation, to Tommy Hunter Park. Hunter says he’s flattered, but it’s not about him.

“It’s not just about the kids when they here with me play-

ing football,” he said. “It’s about where are they five years down the road...Some of the kids I coached, I coach their kids. I don’t do it for me, I do it for the kids. I’m not one that’s here today and gone tomorrow.” Wade Edmond, former Blanche Ely high school principal, agrees.

“For over 40 years, Mr. Hunter has shown a high level of dedication and commitment as he has tutored, mentored, and shaped the youth of the Pompano Beach northwest community. Hundreds of kids have benefited from participating in his youth programs especially in the Collier City community. During my tenure as principal of Blanche Ely High School, I am personally aware of many young men who played on our football team who had been coached by

Coach Tommy,” Edmond wrote. “Our community has benefited greatly from his devotion and the contributions that he has given and made. On that note, it is well befitting that Coach Tommy Hunter be highly considered for having his name enshrined at the new football facility in Collier City. I highly recommend and support him for this well deserving honor.”

Hunter has coached Lamar Jackson of the Baltimore Ravens NFL team, Harlem Howard, a standout safety at Blanche Ely on his way to Oregon State University, Xavier Lucas, a cornerback at Dillard High School who received nearly 30 offers from colleges to play football, and many more.

“Ninety percent of the kids I coach go to college,” Hunter

said. “It’s not just about sports, it’s about getting an education.”

Former city commissioner Cyndy Floyd says changing the name of the park isn’t a bad idea. “I know him and he’s done some good in the community,” she said.

Hunter says he has a wall with pictures of the kids that are in college, if the kid drops out, they come off the wall. It’s a family, Hunter says. He even has a banner of former players and coaches that have passed away. It says “Gone, but never forgotten.” Hunter says he’s got to add a few more names including Dayvon Johnson, a 35-year-old that was killed in a drive-by shooting at a corner store in Collier City in February.

Hunter’s coaching style has allowed him to touch the hearts

and minds of thousands of Pompano Beach children. But Hunter doesn’t only inspire the kids, he inspires coaches too.

Van Warren considers Hunter a mentor. He played football with the Pompano Cowboys and when he entered adulthood knew that he wanted to give his back to his community, similar to how Hunter did. “Time is more precious than money,” Warren said. “And I felt I owed my community that time.” Warren has been coaching the Cowboys for over 30 years.

“The key is watching the youth grow,” Warren said. “The greatest reward is when they come back and say thank you.”

If you would like to see McNair Park renamed, email Barry Moss City of Pompano Beach District 5 commissioner at Barry.Moss@copbfl.com.

New Housing

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Larry Slappy, Chevalier Real Estate

approved by the Florida Housing Finance Corporation. A portion of the units will be available for people who make up to 70 percent of the area’s median income.

“The housing crisis is universal, but there are areas that are more challenged,” Slappy said. District 1 (by the beach) might not be too affected by a one percent increase in home prices because their equity is growing, but it is not the same for the people in District 4 (northwest) or the people saying, ‘can I take your order?’”

According to Redfin, the average home prices in Pompano Beach’s 33060 zip code have jumped 13.6 percent from March 2022 to March 2023. Homes are also taking longer to sell, fewer are selling, and insurance costs and taxes are on the rise.

“We’re getting priced out of the county,” Slappy said. “Priced out of where we live.”

Still, Slappy believes that the American Dream is still attainable. He knows that investors are buying properties left and right and older residents are leaving children their properties without a will, which can hurt families and generational wealth.

“A real estate company that cares can really help you get through some of these troubles,” Slappy said. “We have to learn a person’s unique situation to really help them.” Through Chevalier Real Estate, Slappy and his



Agents outside Chevalier Real Estate



Agents inside Chevalier Real Estate

agents have helped people escape reverse mortgages, keep their homes, and leverage their finances to purchase more properties.

For more information about real estate in Pompano, stop by the Chevalier Real Estate office at 126 N. Flagler Ave., or call them at 954-586-4944.

Scholarship

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called "How to Apply for Scholarships in 5 Easy Steps."

Most of the work is done at The Scholarship Plug training center located at 4300 N. University Drive, C-200 in Lauderhill. One of her success stories is current Florida State University student Kayla Laveille-Lindor who credits The Scholarship Plug for finding financial help with school.

"I found Shedly's Instagram one day and I was interested because she used to post scholarships daily," Lindor said. "I was a student at Blanche Ely, but lived in Lauderhill so I started attending The Scholarship Plug center shortly after."

Lindor filled out over 50 scholarships and received \$15,000 in scholarship money through The Scholarship Plug program.

"Now that I'm in (college), I've noticed that most of my classmates have to work or do something extra on the side to take care of themselves," Lindor said. "I feel blessed because I don't have to work, I can just focus on school."

Parnther couldn't do it alone, she had help from the City of Lauderhill. The city's Education Advisory Board started a scholarship this year to give

\$1,000 to five local seniors in partnership with the Scholarship Plug. Businesses can also submit their scholarship information on the organization's website.

"It's a valuable program and Miss Shedly is helping students thrive in their academic pursuits and puts them on a path to more dynamic futures," said Khya Cummings who serves as an aide to the Mayor of Lauderhill, Ken Thurston.

Parnther is looking to create a franchise of The Scholarship Plug so that students can continue education on a national scale.

"In the future, I would love to see if I could franchise this organization so that it's in every city that has a high advisor-to-student ratio because that center should support the local schools," Parnther said.

Right now, her main focus is perfecting the first Scholarship Plug center.

For more information visit www.thescholarshipplug.com or @thescholarshipplug on Instagram. For information on the City of Lauderhill scholarship go to www.lauderhill-fl.gov



The New Westview Cemetery Board

New Bill

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the land over to developer KZ Copans.

The newly elected board has hired an attorney and is currently waiting on a decision from the appellate court to determine who the rightful board members are for Westview Cemetery.

In the meantime, local legislators

from the House of Representatives have made their loyalties clear as they passed HB 49. The appellate court decision to determine who the rightful board is set to have an answer in the summer.

For more information on HB 49 visit myfloridahouse.gov



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Letter From the Editor

JUST SAY NO

You deserve a break. The hustle and the grind has put us in a state of perpetual stress. I know my girl Rihanna said it, "Just get ready fi work, work, work, work." Collectively ya'll, we need to learn how to chill! Even God rested one day. Aren't you tired?

HUSTLE culture is sucking the life out of us. Hustle culture is defined as a toxic state of working long hours and increasing productivity in order to

achieve wealth or status. The side effects are burnout, depression, anxiety, and other health issues. Like why though? Why do we do this to ourselves? I am writing you today, to encourage you to take a minute, reestablish your boundaries and be OK with saying 'NO' sometimes. No, you don't have to pick up that extra shift. No, you don't have to pull an all-nighter. No, you don't have to go to that birthday party. The world will continue to spin, and that's OK. And while I have your attention, let me shout out all the mothers. Mother's Day is this month and all the mother's whether employed or not, are the hardest working people I know. Momma, this is



for you. Take a break, pamper yourself, get your nails done, spend a little extra time loving yourself... you deserve it. For the men, love on yourself too. Buy the Jordan's, treat yourself to good seats at the game, order the filet mignon. If we don't stop to enjoy life, it'll pass us by.

Don't get caught up in daily hustle. We're all going to die one day, but very few of us understand the difference between being alive and truly living life.

Living my best life,
Attiyya Atkins

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