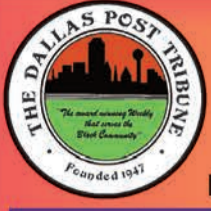


“For the love of money is the root of all evil.”

~ 1 Timothy 6:10



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VOLUME 77 NUMBER 25

SERVING THE BLACK COMMUNITY WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOR SINCE 1947

February 27 - March 5, 2025

TARGET CAUGHT IN DEI CROSSFIRE AS LAWSUITS AND BOYCOTTS AND ACTIONS MOUNT



Photo Credit: NNPA Files

By Stacy M. Brown

Target Corporation, which recently scaled back its diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives, is facing financial consequences, community backlash, and new legal challenges from both sides of the political spectrum. The retail giant's decision to retreat from its DEI com-

mitments and Pride Month merchandise has drawn conservative-led lawsuits while also fueling boycotts and economic pressure from civil rights groups.

Florida Attorney General James Uthmeier and America First Legal, founded by former President Trump adviser

Stephen Miller, have filed a lawsuit against Target. The suit, brought on behalf of a Florida board overseeing state pensions, alleges the company failed to disclose the financial risks associated with its DEI programs and 2023 Pride Month collection. The legal action is the latest in a wave of con-

servative attacks on corporate diversity efforts, aligning with former President Donald Trump's push to dismantle DEI policies in both government and private sectors.

At the same time, Target's DEI retreat has provoked backlashes from civil rights groups, Demo-

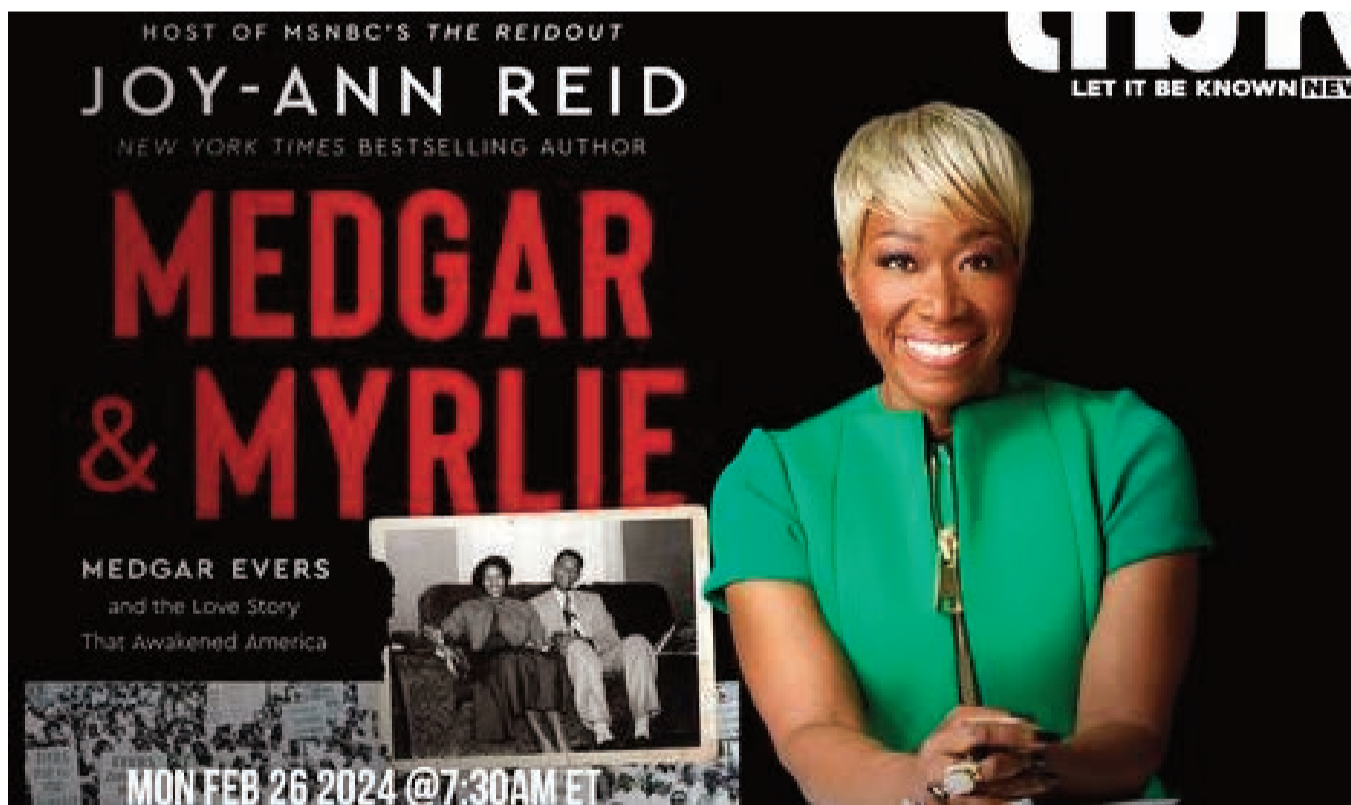
cratic leaders, and even the heirs of one of Target's founders, who argue that diversity is good business and should not be abandoned under political pressure. The company's decision to reduce minority hiring targets and discontinue reports to diversity-focused organizations led

to an 8.7% drop in its stock value. Data from Placer.ai shows store traffic decreased by 4% following Trump's executive order banning federal DEI initiatives, with an additional 9% decline the following week. Walmart experienced

Continue **Target** Page 6

Black Journalists, Activists Condemn MSNBC for Firing Joy Reid

By Stacy M. Brown



Joy-Ann Reid, MSNBC Network/NNPA Files

MSNBC has parted ways with Joy Reid, marking the departure of another prominent Black woman from the network. Reid joins Rashida Jones, the first Black woman to head a major cable news network, along with Melissa Harris-Perry and Tiffany Cross. All four women brought critical, unapologetic perspectives on race, politics, and power—

voices that many believe are being systematically eliminated.

Bobby Henry, chairman of the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA), called Reid's removal unacceptable and urged immediate action.

“As Chairman of the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA), I stand in unwa-

vering solidarity with Joy Reid and the impactful legacy of The ReidOut,” Henry said. “Joy’s voice has been a beacon of truth, justice, and empowerment for our community, and now is the time for us to show up for her. I urge you to join us— together, we will lift our voices, strategize, and continue to support those who champion our stories. Our

collective strength is our greatest asset—let’s stand united for Joy and for the future of Black journalism. The Black Press of America and Black-owned media is needed now just as we were almost 200 years ago.”

Reid's departure has drawn immediate criticism from viewers, journalists,

Continue **Joy** Page 5



Photo Credit: NNPA Files

Soul and R&B Mourn Loss of Roberta Flack. Gwen McCrae and Jerry Butler

By Stacy M. Brown

Roberta Flack, the Grammy-winning singer and pianist whose smooth vocals and intimate style made her a defining artist of the 1970s, died Monday at her home, surrounded by family. She was 88. Her publicist, Elaine Schock, confirmed the news in a statement. Flack revealed in 2022 that she had been diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), also known as Lou Gehrig's disease, which

had taken away her ability to sing.

Her death came just one day after the passing of soul-funk singer Gwen McCrae, who died Sunday at 81. McCrae, best known for hits like “Rockin’ Chair” and “Funky Sensation,” was celebrated for her enduring influence on soul and disco music. It also came just days after three-time Grammy

Continue **Flack** Page 4

Texas Lottery remains in lawmakers’ sights despite move to ban third-party sales of tickets

By Ayden Runnels and
Jasper Scherer/ Texas
Tribune

The Texas Lottery Commission's executive director said Monday he would move to ban couriers from

buying lottery tickets after finding that state law bars the practice, an about-face from the agency's yearslong claim it had no control over such third-party sales that was met by skepticism from senators at a hearing.

Since 2016, the commission has maintained to retailers and lawmakers it lacked authority to regulate couriers, which allow customers to buy lottery tickets

Continued **Lottery** Page 5



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EDITORIAL PAGE

The All State HBCU Legacy Bowl Continues To Shine and Reach New Heights

By James B Ewers Jr. Ed.D, and Deborah L. Ewers MSW



James B. Ewers Jr. Ed.D

Let's score another victory for the Allstate HBCU Legacy Bowl. Its appeal to fans in football land is soaring higher with each passing year. The game with teams named in honor of legendary coaches, Eddie Robinson (Grambling State University) and Jake Gaither (Florida A&M University) was held on Saturday, February 22nd at Yulman Stadium in New Orleans Louisiana. It was televised on the NFL Network.

Congratulations are extended to a lot of people and organizations. Of course, high fives to Doug Williams and James "Shack" Harris, who both had outstanding college careers at Grambling State University and in professional football. They are credited with creating the HBCU Legacy Bowl.

Over the course of time, many HBCU football players were overlooked when it came to

playing football at the professional level. Not anymore.

The National Football League has been a driving force in creating this game for HBCUs. They have given resources and personnel to create a world class atmosphere for these student-athletes.

They have combined with The Black College Football Hall of Fame to organize a week-long series of events and activities that the players will never forget. They will tell their children and grandchildren about their NFL experience.

Yulman Stadium on the campus of Tulane University has been the site of the HBCU Legacy Bowl. The administration has been supportive of this game since its inception. It is our opinion that Yulman Stadium will be the permanent home for this classic.

The Hyatt Regency Hotel was the official hotel for the All State HBCU Legacy Bowl and all of its off-field activities. The accommodations were outstanding as they hosted both the press conference and the career fair.

Employers were present and offered these student-athletes both full-time positions and in-

ternships. We saw firsthand the players taking advantage of these moments. To be able to come to one location and have these national companies represented was truly a blessing.

All State Insurance Company is to be congratulated on being the major sponsor for this football game. They have developed a superb partnership with Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Their commitment is a testimony to the richness of talent found at HBCUs.

Growing crowds and increased enthusiasm have been the hallmarks of the Allstate HBCU Legacy Bowl. Fans have come from across America to see these HBCU players. We watched them cheering and being happy with each first down and touchdown.

Prior to kickoff, with the crowd primed for some football, the Xavier University of Louisiana Marching Band took to the field to the delight of the crowd.

It was football time, and both teams took the field. It wasn't long before Team Robinson scored the first touchdown at the two-minute mark in the first quarter. Both offenses and defenses gave us highlights that made us

stand on our feet.

With fans doing a lot of cheering and hollering, Team Robinson scored another touchdown late in the second quarter to make the score 14-0. If you were rooting for Team Gaither, your rooting was not in vain.

We checked the clock, and with minutes to go before halftime, Team Gaither went into the end zone and made the score Team Robinson 14 and Team Gaither 7 at halftime.

Our halftime treats were made more enjoyable as we watched the Alcorn State University Marching Band. They were outstanding. Bands, football, and HBCUs go together like a hand in a glove.

The second half was equally as exciting as Team Robinson pulled out the victory by the score of 17-14. The offensive player of the game from Team Robinson was Daniel Richardson (Florida A&M University) and the defensive player of the game also from Team Robinson was Trequan Thomas (Alabama State University).

We are already making plans for next year's All-State HBCU Legacy Bowl. We hope you are too.

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THE TRUTH CLINIC

Let Us Rise Up and Build (Neh. 2-18)

Part 1

By James W. Breedlove

When the Israelites entered The Promised Land under Joshua, they were the "superpower" of their day. The Lord was with them because they were with the Lord. Over time, however, they became corrupt in the structure of their society and in their obedience to God. The Lord then left them vulnerable to the attacks of the many enemies that surrounded them.

"Now on the seventh day of the fifth month, which was in the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, (586 BC) Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard of the city, came to Jerusalem. He burned the house of the Lord, the king's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem; even every great house he burned with fire. So all the army who were with the captain of the guard broke down the walls around Jerusalem. Then the rest of

the people who were left in the city were carried away into exile." (2 Kings 25:8-11 KJV) Jerusalem lay in a state of desolation and ruin for almost 100 years.

The Book of Nehemiah is the story of the rebuilding of the walls of decimated Jerusalem, which took place in the fifth century before Christ. It is part of the long history of that troubled city, which is in the news even today because of the perpetual conflict.

But Nehemiah did more than rebuild a wall and a city.

His is also the story of restoring a people from despair and desperation to a new vigorous relationship with God and renewed self-respect. Perhaps this model, created some 500 years before Christ, can be used by Black America as a guiding template to overcome its own 400 year bat-

tle against oppression. Consider the correlations between Nehemiah's Israel and Black America. They both suffered a period of slavery, both gradually were tolerated as second class citizens, both experienced wealth inequality, both had selected citizens who held high status, and both failed multiple times in attempts to achieve equality status.

Nehemiah Hears the News:

In the month of Kislev (December) in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, Nehemiah had visitors from Judah, a close friend, and a few other men. Nehemiah questioned them about the Jews that survived the exile and also about the current state of Jerusalem.

They told him, "Those who survived the exile and are back in the province are in great trouble, living in

poverty, and are disrespected by all around them. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire." (Nehemiah 1:1-3 NIV)

Do you get the picture? Jerusalem was still a virtual ghetto, broken down, devastated, and messed up almost 100 years after the Babylonians had conquered it. There had been many attempts to rebuild Jerusalem following the destruction of the city, but with no success.

If we take the Jerusalem situation as a proxy for ghetto like conditions today in Black America, there are places throughout where the walls are broken down. Understand that a wall does not have to be a physical wall but can be anything that results in despair, frustration, and turmoil.

Continue Truth - 3/6/2025

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

RELIGIOUS/NEWS

Confident of an Assured Conclusion

Hebrews 6:9-20



Rev. Johnny Calvin Smith

Christ. The writer of this grand book has proven convincingly that Jesus Christ is supreme both in His Person and Work. The author of Hebrews has proven explicitly that Jesus Christ is superior (better than) the Prophets (Hebrews 1:1-3) because the Prophets' revelation was only partial and fragmentary at best; however, God's revelation found its finality with or in Christ. The author presented further that Jesus Christ is superior to Angels (Hebrews 1:5-2:18) for Angels, who were highly revered by the Jews, were mere messengers; however, Christ is the Son who will inherit the Messianic Kingdom! In Hebrews 3:1-6, the author revealed the truth that Jesus Christ is superior to Moses, because Moses was a servant in the house, but Christ is the blessed Son who made the house!

Thus far, the author has

unfolded several warning passages, and they consist of: the danger of drifting (Hebrews 2:1-4), the danger of hardening the heart (Hebrews 3:7-4:13), and the danger of falling away (Hebrews 5:11-6:20). In an effort to spur his Jewish readership to spiritual diligence, let us observe: "A Sure Exhortation" and "A Solid Expectation."

I. A Sure Exhortation – Hebrews 6:9-12

First and foremost, the author was firmly confident of the fact that his readers were not apostates, but solid believers, for he declared: "But beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak" (v. 9). The author was thoroughly convinced that his readers demonstrated evidence of being genuine believers! The

fruit that gave the writer his firm assurance is found in verse 10: "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye shewed toward His name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister." Christian saints, one way we demonstrate the reality of our salvation is through the love we express to other believers (I John 3:14). Confident that the fruit of their salvation was discernable, the author urged his Jewish readers to be diligent in their spiritual development for verse 11 says: "And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end"

The writer exhorts his readers to keep on doing what they are doing and to get a firm grip on the hope that is theirs. They were exhorted to be imitators of those who encountered various

kinds of opposition and difficulty; however, by persistent faith entered into the good of all that God had for them! (v. 12). God's promises must be grasped by faith, and our faith will be challenged by the various trials and difficulties we face in life. We must trust God even when the promises He has made to us have not yet been fulfilled. The promises of God are never nullified by time! Having discussed "A Sure Exhortation", let us now observe "A Solid Expectation".

II. A Solid Expectation – Hebrews 6:13-20

Having exhorted his Jewish readership to spiritual diligence, he tells them that their God is prepared to help them. God had pledged Himself to see them safely home! God's pledge was supremely illus-

trated in the experience of Abraham, for verses 13 and 14 say: "For when God made promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no greater, He sware by Himself, Saying Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee." Abraham received the pledge of God through faith and patience. The pledge of God was confirmed to Abraham by an oath that God made (Genesis 22:16-18). Although Abraham's faith was severely tested with his willingness to offer his son Isaac on Mt. Moriah, God rewarded Abraham's faith with a pledge confirmed by an oath! Abraham received what God had pledged, God's pledge is confirmed by an oath!

What God says is sure and certain because of who He is. The promise that God made to Abraham rests on His unchangeable char-

acter - God cannot lie, (v. 18). And because God cannot lie, and we rest on His immutable word, we have secured hope and an anchor for our souls. Our souls are securely anchored in Jesus Christ. On life's seas, we are often beset by many turbulent winds, but we are securely anchored in Jesus Christ. Although we are on life's seas, and we experience turbulence, our anchor is cast upward to the inner sanctuary of heaven, where it lays hold of Christ and cannot be moved. Christian saints, despite what you may be experiencing on the sea of life, keep trusting in your forerunner, Jesus Christ (Hebrews 6:20). We have a sure and steadfast anchor; and we have a "Forerunner", Christ who has opened the way for us and will see to it that we one day join Him in glory!

May God Bless!

LIFE IS LIKE A CAMERA, JUST FOCUS ON WHAT'S IMPORTANT!

- DANCE MOVES -
(Solution, will appear on page 5, March 6)

- ACROSS**
- Mrs. in Germany
 - *Nae Nae's partner
 - m in F = ma
 - Deadly sin
 - Hindu serpent deity
 - Blood line
 - State location of Miami University
 - Last word on radio
 - Best friend quality
 - *Sideways dance step
 - Buzzing pest
 - "That is" in Latin
 - Corvine bird's sound
 - Omicron or Delta, e.g.
 - Verb derived from "wreath"
 - Although, for short
 - Demijohn
 - Kings of ____ band
 - Act against
 - Bruin legend Bobby ____
 - Southern cuisine pods
 - Cold war initials
 - Transmitted radio signal
 - French vineyard
 - Strong suits
 - Overnight flight
 - Like a dancer in The Royal Ballet company
 - Polynesian island country
 - Dracula's bane
 - *Dancer's gardening tool simulation
 - Cass Elliot and Michelle Phillips
 - Eon, alt. sp.
 - Reminiscent of certain hardwood, to sommelier
 - In a tilted position
 - Flower holder
 - Cartoon lightbulb
 - Police informer
 - Before, poetically
 - Koppel and Turner, e.g.

- DOWN**
- Use cat o'nine tails
 - German industrial valley
 - "Heat of the Moment" band
 - Sir Thomas More's famous book
 - Actress Viola ____
 - ____ provocateur
 - Like some necessities
 - *Michael Jackson's backward move
 - Maisie Williams on "Game of Thrones"
 - Immediately, to a doctor
 - Salt, in Mexico
 - Nine-day Christian devotion
 - Aquatic scum
 - Authoritative proclamation
 - "____ Me a River"
 - Pull strings
 - Not those
 - Comedy Central's public humiliation
 - *a.k.a. caterpillar, with The
 - 9 a.m. prayer
 - Ancient
 - Follow as a consequence
 - Sturgeon output, pl.
 - Lingerie staple
 - *Serena Williams' Super Bowl LIX move (2 words)
 - Theater, to Socrates
 - Sis' sibling
 - King's mantle fur
 - Painter Max or Director Lubitsch
 - Armed gang member in India
 - Asparagus unit
 - What phoenix did
 - Numbers
 - Gulf V.I.P.
 - "Keep this information" button
 - Place a load on
 - Augmented
 - Swedish shag rugs
 - *Running ____

Statepoint Crossword Puzzle
Theme: DANCE MOVES

CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8		9	10	11	12	
13						14				15				
16						17				18				
	19					20			21	22				
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48					49		50				51		52	
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71							72				73			

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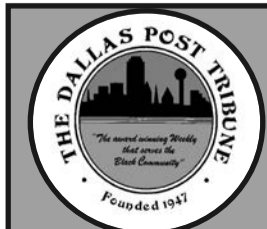
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HEALTH

Know (and understand) your numbers

How healthy is your heart?

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in Dallas County according to the most recent [Dallas County Community Health Needs Assessment](#).

February is American Heart Month, and Parkland Health providers encourage you to not only know your blood pressure numbers, but to understand what those numbers mean.

Blood pressure measures how hard your heart works to pump blood through your body. When a healthcare provider checks your blood pressure, they give you two numbers, such as 120/80. These numbers tell you how healthy your heart and your blood vessels are.

- The first number (120 in this example) is called **systolic** blood pressure. It shows how much pressure your blood puts on your blood vessels when your heart beats and pumps blood.
- The second number (80 in this case) is called **diastolic** blood pressure. It tells you how much pressure is in your blood vessels when your heart is resting between beats.

Healthy blood pressure is usually less than 120/80. When both numbers are in this range, it means your heart is working well and your blood vessels aren't under too much pressure. If your blood pressure is higher than 120/80, you may be at risk for problems like heart disease or a stroke.

Here's a quick guide to understanding your blood pressure numbers:

- **Normal:** Less than 120/80
- **Elevated:** 120-129/less than 80
- **High Blood Pressure (Stage 1):** 130-139 OR /80-89
- **High Blood Pressure (Stage 2):** 140 or higher/90 or higher

If your blood pressure is too high, you can work with your healthcare provider to make healthy changes, like eating better, getting more exercise, and managing stress.

Parkland offers no-cost blood pressure screenings throughout Dallas County. For a location near you, visit www.parklandhealth.org/access-to-care-program.

Continued Flack Page 1

nominee and Rock and Roll Hall of Famer Jerry Butler, a premier soul singer of the 1960s, died at 85.

Butler, known as "Ice Man," had numerous hits including "For Your Precious Love," and "Make It Easy on Yourself."

Butler's niece, Yolanda Goff, told The Associated Press that Butler died of Parkinson's disease at his home in Chicago.

Roberta Flack: A Life in Music

Born Roberta Cleopatra Flack on February 10, 1937, in Black Mountain, North Carolina, she was raised in Arlington, Virginia, where her musical roots were cultivated at the Lomax African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. Flack began piano lessons at nine and earned a full scholarship to Howard University at 15. She initially studied piano before switching to voice. She graduated at 19 and later taught music and English in

Continue Flack Page 6

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Quinn Minute

Wild animals as pets

By Rix Quinn

Many towns now prohibit citizens from housing jungle animals.

What, exactly, is a "wild pet?" That depends on your town, and what its council considers more dangerous than a roving bachelors' party.

For instance, some communities term boa constrictors "wild." In others, they're considered "non-poisonous reptiles with a lethal hug." That's reminds me of my great aunt, who visited us on

holidays.

Coyotes, wolves and hyenas are also wild, even though they disguise themselves as loveable, giant-fanged dogs. My neighbor Charlie once owned a wolf, and it ate four parakeets and two of Charlie's toes before he wised up and sold it to the sister he never liked.

Extremely large animals, like elephants or rhinos, don't fit well in back yards. Also, walking an elephant is awkward, and

cleaning up after it might require that pet owner to pull a wagon, too.

How about chickens? One community outlawed them, even though few are aggressive, and most are toothless.

They were banned not for aggression, but for crowing. No city person wants to hear anybody mouth-off at dawn, especially a birdbrain. (Maybe that's why they forced my friend Dave out of town, too.)

Bottom line: If you want to view carnivorous animals, visit the zoo. If you want to pet a loud animal, invite my friend Dave to dinner.

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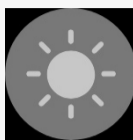


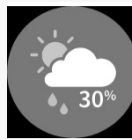
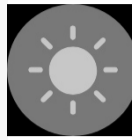


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SPORTS/NEWS PAGE

7 Day Weather Forecast for DFW

Thursday, Feb. 27	Friday, Feb. 28	Saturday, Mar. 1	Sunday, Mar. 2	Monday, Mar. 3	Tuesday, Mar. 4	Wednesday, Mar. 5
 H - 66° L - 44°	 H - 70° L - 49°	 H - 72° L - 54°	 H - 71° L - 56° 40%	 H - 73° L - 54°	 H - 77° L - 53° 30%	 H - 67° L - 47°

Exonerated Five' Member Raymond Santana Launches Bid for New York City Council

By Stacy M. Brown



Photo Credit: NNPA Filles

Raymond Santana, wrongfully convicted as a teenager in the 1989 Central Park jogger case, has announced his candidacy for the New York City Council. Santana, 50, is running as a Democrat to represent parts of East Harlem and the Bronx, the same neighborhoods where he grew up and was falsely arrested more than three decades ago.

Santana's campaign focuses on criminal justice reform, affordable housing, and addressing what he described as the deterioration of neighborhoods plagued

by drugs, rats, and soaring rents. "You look around and see the normal stuff isn't working," Santana told the New York Times. "That's why we need someone who's outside the system, who can come with a different lens."

Santana and four other Black and Latino teenagers were accused of the brutal rape of a white female jogger in Central Park in 1989. The case captivated the nation, fueled by sensational media coverage and demands for harsh punishment. Donald Trump, then a New York real estate de-

veloper, took out full-page newspaper ads calling for the reinstatement of the death penalty, stating, "Bring back the death penalty. Bring back our police." Despite the group's exoneration in 2002—after a convicted rapist confessed to acting alone and DNA evidence confirmed his guilt—Trump has never apologized. As recently as his 2016 presidential campaign, he continued to insist on their guilt.

"The damage he did with those ads can't be undone," Santana said. "Even after we were proven innocent, he kept coming after us."

Santana spent roughly five years in prison before being released on parole. In 2014, New York City agreed to a \$41 million settlement with Santana and the other four men—often referred to as the Exonerated Five—awarding them about \$1 million for each year they were incarcerated.

Since his release, Santana has become a national

advocate for criminal justice reform. He traveled as a motivational speaker, started a clothing line, and worked with lawmakers to pass legislation to prevent wrongful convictions. His policy priorities include requiring minors to consult with attorneys before waiving their Miranda rights and banning deceptive police interrogation tactics.

If elected, Santana would join fellow Exonerated Five member Yusef Salaam, who won a City Council seat in Harlem in 2023. The two men have remained close, often collaborating on advocacy efforts. "I've always said those who have been closest to the pain should have a seat at the table," Salaam said. "Raymond is living proof of why that's important."

For Santana, the campaign is personal. "To have a community that stood by me when Donald Trump and the rest of the world attacked us—they always had my back," he said. "So, I have to have theirs."

Luka Doncic reveals experience with Mavs' Nico Harrison at Lakers' recent game

Kade Kimble | Dallas Mavericks

For the first time in his young, remarkable career, Luka Doncic has faced off against the Dallas Mavericks as an opponent.

In the early stages of his career, it seemed Doncic would be the next Dirk Nowitzki -- a franchise superstar who represents the DFW until the end of his career. That wasn't the case as Mavericks general manager Nico Harrison dealt the generational talent to the Los Angeles, netting Anthony Davis in return.

Doncic recently squared off against Dallas, and he was superb, filling the box score despite some scoring efficiency issues. The Lakers advanced to 35-21 on the season after defeating the Mavericks 107-99, too.

Los Angeles Lakers guard Luka Doncic (77) dribbles the ball against the Dallas Mavericks during the second half at Crypto.com Arena. / Gary A. Vasquez-Imagn Images

Doncic scored 19 points, tacking on 15 rebounds, 12 assists, three steals and two blocks en route to the Los Angeles victory. While his shooting was subpar, his impact was absolutely felt as he was a plus-eight in the box score.

The former Mavericks superstar and current Lakers guard was sure to greet a majority of members of his former club after securing victory, though he didn't talk to everyone.

One member of the Mavericks Doncic didn't talk to was Harrison, the general manager who shipped him away from the club. Doncic himself revealed such when asked about the matter following the matchup in Crypto.com Arena.

"I didn't see him," Doncic said of Harrison.

This isn't much of a shock. It's hard to imagine that it would be a friendly conversation.

Continue Lottery Page 1

remotely. But in a policy statement on Monday, the agency said it now views the practice as illegal and will revoke the lottery license of any stores that sell tickets to a courier. The shift comes just days after one of the state lottery commissioners resigned and as public safety officials are investigating at least one courier for criminal activity after recommendation from lawmakers.

Executive Director Ryan Mindell said in a statement the commission's new crackdown comes after a review of state law and information from "retailer investigations." He said he would formally propose the new rule at the agency's March 4 board meeting.

"Lottery courier services operating in Texas have been a significant concern for many of our stakeholders," Mindell said in the Monday statement. "Since I became executive director less than a year ago, I have been keenly focused on making changes to improve

the public's perception of Texas Lottery games and how they are played and operated."

Criticism of the lottery commission has not slowed in light of the new guidance, and commission officials including Mindell faced hours of questioning from legislators in both chambers over couriers' proliferation. Among those critics was Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick, who was not present during the hearings Monday but personally investigated an Austin store where a courier purchased a ticket earlier this month for a resident who won an \$83.5 million Lotto Texas jackpot.

Patrick, who oversees the Texas Senate, said the new changes to the commission's rules on couriers would not end his office's investigation or the upper chamber's pursuit of a law banning couriers outright. He also blasted Mindell's statement, saying he had "never read so much garbage from a state agency press release in my 18 years in office" while framing it as too little, too late.

"Today's action is an ob-

vious admission that the Texas Lottery Commission had the oversight authority all along and allowed these businesses to creep into Texas and undermine the integrity of the Texas Lottery," Patrick said in a Monday post on X about the commission's new guidelines.

Gov. Greg Abbott joined the fray just before the Senate hearing, announcing Monday afternoon he had directed the Texas Rangers — a division of the state's Department of Public Safety — to investigate the recent jackpot win. Abbott also told the agency to look into a prior \$95 million jackpot won in Colleyville in April 2023 by a foreign group that spent millions to make bulk ticket purchases in a way that all but guaranteed a win.

Mindell revealed during a Senate State Affairs Committee hearing Monday that Winner's Corner — the top-selling retailer that partnered with a courier to sell the \$83.5 million ticket and the subject of Patrick's investigation — was issued a

violation over its courier practices. Mindell said the business had over 16 lottery terminals that print tickets.

But later in the hearing, a representative with IGT Solutions, the company that provides the terminals, said that as of Monday morning, Winner's Corner was in possession of 47 terminals.

Officials said most of the over 21,000 licensed storefronts need only one machine, and Mindell said that beginning Monday no retailer would be allowed to have more than five terminals. Winner's Corner's excess machines were seized by the commission after the new guidance went into place.

Mindell's appearance at the State Affairs Committee hearing Monday was part of a review for Senate Bill 28, the chamber's proposal to ban couriers co-authored by a majority of senators. During the hearing, Mindell also said the same group that won the 2023 jackpot and is now under investigation attempted another bulk purchase of tickets in December of 2024 but was

blocked by officials after suspicious activity was flagged.

Greg Potts, a lawyer for Lottery.com, a courier site that helped facilitate the 2023 jackpot win, confirmed the company and its previous executive management are under investigation by the U.S. Department of Justice. Potts testified at the hearing and explained the relationship Lottery.com had with the commission in the run-up to the jackpot.

Senators said public knowledge of the second attempt was a "bombshell" and that commission officials should have notified lawmakers more immediately, and was further evidence the mass purchases could be signs of money laundering. "This is a blockbuster you did not tell us about at the finance committee," Sen. Paul Bettencourt, R-Houston, said during the hearing.

Lottery officials have since put a restriction on how many tickets lottery terminals can print in a single day, Mindell said during the Senate hearing. But be-

fore that restriction, Potts said Lottery.com was made to understand the commission was fine with the company and the other groups maintaining the dozens of lottery machines necessary to print the 25 million ticket combinations.

"We fully expected that they would laugh at us and say, 'Well, no, of course you can't do this,'" Potts said during the hearing. "We only did it after we were told we were able to move forward legally, under the lottery license we had, and do this project."

State law requires lottery tickets to be bought in person, but couriers circumvent this process by having customers pay them to buy and send a picture of the tickets, creating a remote option for play. Couriers cannot be directly licensed to sell tickets, but most are also partnered with brick-and-mortar stores that are licensed, and "almost always," in some cases, are owned by the same entities and operate in the same building, Mindell said during the Senate hearing.

Continued Joy Page 1

and activists. Kevin Simmons, a supporter of The ReidOut, wrote on X, formerly known as Twitter, "The racists are rejoicing" after MSNBC announced the show's cancellation. "The ReidOut had a great run. Joy will be okay. Crazy this announcement comes after she just won two

NAACP awards last night." Justice Correspondent Elie Mystal called Reid irreplacable.

"I owe the television part of my career to Joy Reid, as do so many other Black voices y'all never would have heard of if not for her," Mystal wrote. "And that's why she's gone. They can treat Black folks as interchangeable, but everybody

Black knows that Joy was indispensable."

Many have pointed out that while MSNBC cuts ties with Reid, the network keeps shows like Morning Joe, whose hosts Joe Scarborough and Mika Brzezinski reportedly visited Donald Trump at Mar-a-Lago after his 2016 victory. The decision to retain programming aligned with po-

litical power while eliminating Black voices critical of that power is being viewed as deliberate.

MSNBC's move comes as Trump continues targeting the press. He has filed a lawsuit against 60 Minutes, claiming the program manipulated an interview with Vice President Kamala Harris. Trump also ordered federal agencies to cancel

subscriptions to major outlets, including The New York Times, Politico, and Reuters, cutting public employees off from independent news sources. He has praised Fox News as his administration's "official" media outlet, further tightening control over the information pipeline.

Trump has declared that only the president can de-

cide what is lawful—a statement more in line with authoritarianism than constitutional democracy.

Henry, the NNPA chairman, said the Black community must remain vigilant.

"Our collective strength is our greatest asset," he said. "Let's stand united for Joy and for the future of Black journalism."



**DIVERSITY,
EQUITY AND
INCLUSION**

Here are some companies that **NO LONGER SUPPORT Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)**.

WHY ARE YOU STILL SUPPORTING THEM?

A growing number of prominent US companies have announced they have scaled back or eliminated Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives.

Their retreat from DEI began after a June 2023 U.S. Supreme Court ruling against affirmative action in college admissions and accelerated after President Donald Trump's executive orders against all federal diversity initiatives.

Now longstanding programs to improve the hiring and promotion of African Americans and other minority workers in corporate America are now under serious threat.

The attack on diversity has been swift. After taking office on Jan. 20, President Trump issued a series of executive orders aimed at dismantling Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) programs across the federal government and the private sector. The attack on diversity is bad for a multi-ethnic country and bad for business which needs a diverse workforce. DEI programs seek to ensure fairer representation for groups historically marginalized such as African Americans, women, LGBTQ+ community members, and disabled people.

Diversity helps businesses by boosting innovation, expanding talent pools, and enhancing brand reputation, ultimately leading to improved financial performance and a more competitive edge. A diverse workforce opens

up opportunities to access a wider range of talent and skills, allowing businesses to tap into a broader pool of potential employees with unique experiences and expertise.

A diverse workforce can better understand and meet the needs of a diverse customer base. This allows businesses to tailor their products, services, and marketing strategies to resonate with a wider range of consumers.

However, if companies retreat from committing to the principles and practice of diversity in a multi-ethnic America, why should they be supported? The Philadelphia Tribune's response to the Trump administration's attacks on diversity and democracy begins with reporting the truth and holding those in power accountable.

More specifically, we ask you to strongly consider whether you should continue to spend your dollars with companies who have publicly announced their decision to retreat from diversity. Here's a look at some companies that have retreated from DEI:

Amazon

Amazon said it was halting some of its DEI programs, although it did not specify which ones. In a Dec. 16 memo to employees, Candi Castleberry, a senior human resources executive, said the company has been "winding down outdated programs and materials, and we're aiming to complete that by the end of 2024."

Target

The retailer said in January that it was ending a program it established to help Black employees build meaningful careers, improve the experience of Black shoppers and to promote Black-owned businesses.

Target, which operates nearly 2,000 stores nationwide and employs more than 400,000 people, said it also would bring to an end its diversity, equity and inclusion, or DEI, goals it previously set in three-year cycles.

The goals included hiring and promoting more women and members of racial minority groups, and recruiting more diverse suppliers, including businesses owned by people of color, women, LGBTQ+ people, veterans and people with disabilities.

Meta

Meta Platforms Inc the parent company of Facebook and Instagram said it was getting rid of its diversity, equity and inclusion program, which featured policies for hiring, training and choosing vendors.

McDonald's

Four years after launching a push for more diversity in its ranks, McDonald's said that it is ending some of its diversity practices, citing the U.S. Supreme Court decision that outlawed affirmative action in college admissions. McDonald's said on Jan. 6 that it will retire specific goals for achieving diversity at senior

leadership levels. It also intends to end a program that encourages its suppliers to develop diversity training and to increase the number of minority group members represented within their own leadership ranks.

Walmart

The world's largest retailer confirmed in November that it would not be renewing a five-year commitment for an equity racial center set up in 2020 after the police killing of George Floyd.

Ford

CEO Jim Farley sent a memo to the automaker's employees in August outlining changes to the company's DEI policies.

Lowe's

In August, Lowe's executive leadership said the company began "reviewing" its programs following the Supreme Court's affirmative action ruling and decided to combine its employee resource groups into one umbrella organization. Previously, the company had "individual groups representing diverse sections of our associate population."

John Deere

The farm equipment maker said in July that it will no longer sponsor "social or cultural awareness" events, and that it would audit all training materials "to ensure the absence of socially-motivated messages" in compliance with federal and local laws.

Tractor Supply

The retailer in June said it was ending an array of corporate diversity. Tractor Supply said it would be eliminating all of its DEI roles while retiring current DEI goals.

Unfortunately the list of companies retreating from diversity is growing. We will post this list in print, online and on social media when available. If new companies announce their withdrawal from diversity we will add them to the list of companies whose practices we are now calling into question.

We must speak out and send a loud and clear message to corporate America that a retreat from diversity means a withdrawal of our support and practices will be documented and provided to our readership.

Continued Flack Page 4



Wikimedia Commons

North Carolina after her father's death.

In Washington, D.C., Flack balanced teaching with nightclub performances, captivating audiences at local venues like Mr. Henry's on Capitol Hill. Her breakthrough came when jazz pianist Les McCann discovered her and arranged an audition with Atlantic Records. Her 1969 debut album *First Take* initially received little attention until Clint Eastwood featured her rendition of "The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face" in his 1971 film *Play Misty for Me*. Released as a single in 1972, the song topped the Billboard Hot 100 for six weeks and earned Flack her first Grammy Award for Record of the Year.

Flack's success soared with her 1973 recording of "Killing Me Softly with His Song," which became her signature hit. The song spent five weeks at No. 1 on the Billboard Hot 100 and earned her two Grammys: Record of the Year and Best Female Pop Vocal Performance. With the win, Flack became the first artist to earn consecutive Record of the Year awards.

Her partnership with Donny Hathaway produced hits like "Where Is the Love," which won a Grammy for Best Pop Performance by a Duo or Group. She continued her chart success with "Feel Like Makin' Love" in 1974, making her the first female vocalist to top the Hot 100 in three consecutive years. Flack's later collaborations with Peabo Bryson and Maxi Priest yielded popular tracks like "Tonight I Celebrate My Love" and "Set the Night to Music."

Throughout her career, Flack advocated for artist rights and founded the Roberta Flack School of Music, providing free music education to underprivileged youth. She received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in 1999 and per-

formed for Nelson Mandela that same year. Flack is survived by her son, musician Bernard Wright.

Gwen McCrae: Soul and Disco Legacy

Gwen McCrae, celebrated for her rich voice and lasting impact on the disco and soul music scenes, died Sunday at 81. A statement from her official brand account called her passing "more bad news" for the music world and acknowledged how fans "are still jamming to 'Rockin' Chair' all these years later."

Born Gwen Mosley in Pensacola, Florida, McCrae began singing in church choirs before meeting George McCrae, whom she married in 1963. The couple performed as a duo and signed with Henry Stone's Alston label. By 1970, McCrae had achieved early success with "Lead Me On." In 1972, she released "Always On My Mind," a song later popularized by artists including Elvis Presley, Willie Nelson, and the Pet Shop Boys.

Her biggest commercial success came in 1975 with "Rockin' Chair," which topped the R&B chart and reached No. 9 on the Billboard Hot 100. While the single remains her most widely recognized hit, many fans and DJs remember her for the 1981 club favorite "Funky Sensation," which has endured as a dancefloor staple.

McCrae's career spanned decades, and her other notable songs included "Keep the Fire Burning." Despite her accomplishments, she often spoke about the lack of recognition and fair compensation for Black artists of her era.

After suffering a stroke in 2012 that left her partially paralyzed, McCrae retired from performing. Her daughter, Leah McCrae, carries on the family's musical legacy as a solo artist and member of the group Daughters of Soul.

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Continued Target Page 1

a dip of less than 3% during the same period.

In Minneapolis—Target's headquarters and the city where George Floyd's murder sparked national protests—civil rights lawyer Nekima Levy Armstrong urged consumers to boycott the retailer. "We thought Target would stand firm in its values," Armstrong told reporters at a news conference. "Instead, they bowed to the Trump administration. We will not step back."

Jaylani Hussein, executive director of the Minnesota chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, said the company should be held accountable for turning its

back on DEI. "If you were moved by George Floyd's murder to seek justice, it's time to boycott Target," Hussein told PBS.

The boycott movement has gained traction, with local Black Lives Matter chapters participating in events where activists cut up their Target credit cards. Organizers have encouraged consumers to shop at companies like Costco, which recently reaffirmed its DEI commitments.

The National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA), representing the Black Press of America, and civil rights organizations like the NAACP have launched campaigns to inform Black consumers about corporate retreats from diversity initiatives.

"Black Americans spend \$2 trillion annually. We must reconsider supporting businesses that disregard our contributions," said NNPA President and CEO Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis Jr. NNPA Chairman Bobby R. Henry Sr. vowed that the Black Press would hold corporations accountable. "We will not be silent while corporations reverse progress that directly affects Black communities," Henry asserted.

Rev. Jamal Bryant, pastor of New Birth Missionary Baptist Church in Atlanta, has called for a 40-day "economic fast" targeting Target. "Black people spend \$12 million a day at Target," Bryant stated during an appearance on Let It Be Known. "We're focus-

ing on Target first because of their broken promises to our community." The campaign, which coincides with Lent, has drawn over 50,000 participants within a week at targetfast.org.

Target now finds itself under pressure from both conservative and progressive forces. After previously positioning itself as a leader in corporate diversity, the company has been forced into a balancing act that has left it vulnerable on all sides.

"We encourage you to spend your money where you're respected, support Black-owned businesses, and demand businesses prioritize people over profit," said Keisha Bross, financial strategist at the NAACP.

TARGET

TARGET

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