

Local and National News

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The Sojourner's Truth

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"And Ye Shall Know The Truth..."

November 18, 2009

In This Issue

Perryman's Take
Page 2

Election Commentary
Page 3

Wilkowski's Reflections
Page 4

TORCH Awards
Page 5

Top Ladies
Page 6

The Economy Section

Cover Story:
Roy Hodge
Page 7

Boyce Column
Page 8

Real Estate Column
Page 9

Green Column
Page 10

Tribute to Russ Taylor
Page 11

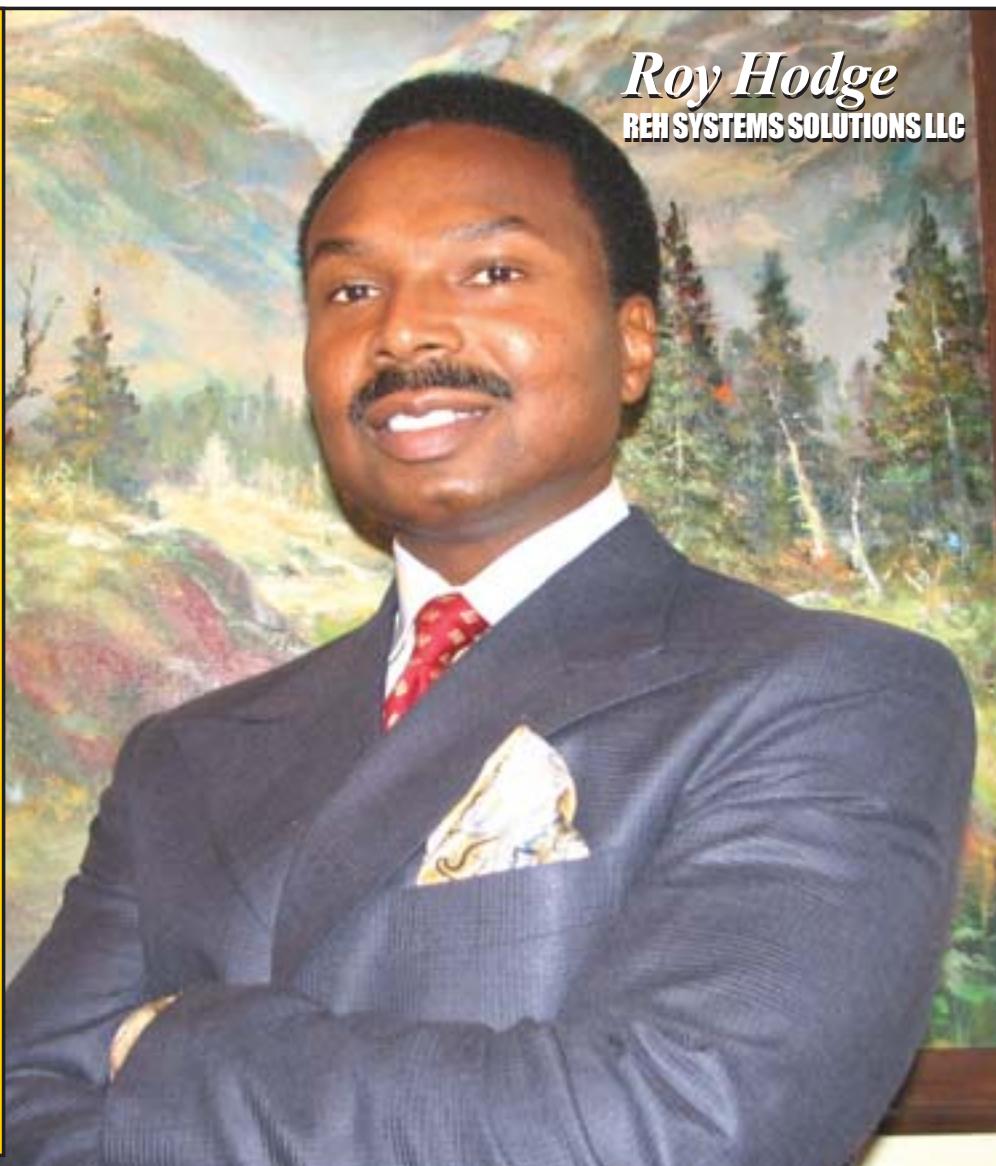
Port Rejects Top Candidate
Page 12

Minister's Warning
Page 13

BlackMarketPlace
Page 14

Classifieds
Page 15

Ask Yvon
Page 16



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The Commonality of Insufficiency

By Rev. Donald L. Perryman, D.Min.

"Reduce, reuse and recycle," explained a representative from The Ohio State University Extension to a group of parishioners attending a Dining with Diabetes seminar sponsored by the OSU and the Toledo - Lucas County Health Department. "Left-over Thanksgiving Day turkey can be used for turkey soup on Friday, salad on Saturday, and turkey casserole, sandwiches and omelets the next few days."

Of course the nutritionist could have saved both breath and time instructing the mostly senior and African-American audience in the techniques of family survival. Black families, no stranger to economic stress and strain, have out of necessity fashioned creative solutions and stretched what they had in order to deal with the problem of insufficient resources.

Sometimes that meant robbing Peter to pay Paul, "putting something on it" and paying the rest later, or letting one bill go unpaid in order to pay another. And if the situation was dire enough, all else failed and was a matter of survival – pleading or begging was not out of the question.

The problem of insufficiency is increasingly becoming a common experience as Mayor Carty Finkbeiner submitted his final proposed budget for the City of Toledo which projects a \$30 million shortfall in meeting the "bare minimum" municipal expenditures expected for 2010.

Despite lines in the sand drawn by both Finkbeiner and City Council over possible solutions that include "revenue enhancements," the core issue is the economic crisis brought on by the decline in the automobile industry and collapse of the low-skilled urban labor market. And while economic hardship has been widespread, the burden upon African-Americans has been staggering.

The most recent economic data shows unemployment at 10.7 percent for Ohio but nearly 20 percent for African-Americans and nearly 40 percent if the black long-term unemployed are included. The situation, not expected to get better by 2011 or 2012, is expected to drive more and more African-Americans into poverty which is statistically linked with poor outcomes for children including sickness, academic failure, emotional distress and unwed childbirth while increasing the likelihood that they will experience additional negative outcomes as adults.

What can be done?

Certainly there are times when it is not possible to "enhance" revenue, particularly in an economy that is undergoing structural change such as from manufacturing to service.

Eric Walker, Lucas County Workforce Development Director at The Source which educates, employs and trains adults, youth and dislocated workers for local businesses admits that there are extreme challenges. "Nearly 70 percent of the dislocated workers that come to us are not educated past high school and will have to learn a new skill set, a team approach and need to develop soft skills."

William Julius Wilson in *More Than Just Race: Being Black and Poor in the Inner City* offers corroboration. "Black male job seekers face rising rates of rejection, too often enter the job market lacking required soft skills: the tendency to maintain eye contact, the ability to carry on polite and friendly conversations with consumers, as well as the inclination to smile and be responsive to customer requests whether they be demanding or unreasonable."

Walker states, "However, we can assist them. Everyone needs to know how to operate a computer today. Everyone needs a resume and to know how to sell yourself in the first two or three minutes of an interview. Employers immediately want to know what do you bring to our organization and why should we hire you. We provide free classes in those areas."

In addition to entry level health care and some transportation jobs, Walker expects good-paying green jobs to become available but cautions that it will take three to five years for green energy jobs to take off.

"Although we offer green certification and training classes there are very few jobs that are available right now," he laments. "And when people don't have jobs, they are not buying cars, homes or consumer goods and it hurts the economy."

While Congress has extended unemployment benefits to strengthen the safety net with more temporary assistance for dislocated workers, much more is needed from a policy standpoint than to continue to slice state and local budgets and workers or raise taxes, all of which plunges the economy deeper into recession and makes recovery less likely.

The number one priority in defeating the recession as well as black poverty "must be the creation of jobs with good wages that reaches black communities," asserts the Economic Policy Institute.

"Too many people are unemployed and the country's jobs crisis requires immediate attention. We need to help families weather this storm and do what we can to generate jobs and a robust recovery," states EPI's Lawrence Mishel who backs a second, bolder stimulus package that targets jobs for Main Street this time. A major portion would provide fiscal relief directly to states and municipalities well above and beyond the first stimulus package.

The good news is that President Obama, last week announced a White House summit on jobs and economic growth scheduled for December in order to address the crisis.

What is also positive is that this crisis reveals that in many ways we all are poor. We are all, in a sense, beggars as well. The difference is that some of us are privileged to name our begging process in order to give it respectability.

However, whether the term we use for our process is lobby, advocacy, grant proposal or Temporary Aid to Needy Families, the only answer to our insufficiency may be to look to Washington as did Wall Street and the Auto industry, and not be too proud to beg.

Contact Rev. Donald Perryman, D.Min., at drdperryman@centerofhopebaptist.org

Community Calendar

November 18

South Kinship Club and Newgiver Welcome: Sponsored by the Area Office on Aging; Hunt Senior Center; 5:30 pm: 419-382-7060

Heatherdowns Rehabilitation & Residential Care Center Craft Show and Bake Sale: 10 am to 3 pm

November 20

Third Baptist Church Community Outreach Concert: "Music: A Feast for the Soul;" 7pm; Rebecca Eady, Monique Young, Jennifer Wenzel, Errin Brooks, Franklin Brewer and Greg Ashe – solos and in small ensembles; Bernstein, Mozart, Gershwin, Weill, among others: 419-494-9745 or 313-718-9653

November 20-21

Dance Auditions for Toledo's Best Dance Crew: Collingwood Arts Center; Friday 5 to 8 pm; Saturday Noon to 6 pm; Ages six to 13, ages 14-19: 419-244-ARTS

November 21

Citywide Christian Trustee Association Meeting: James B. Simmons Bldg; 10 am: 419-380-9477

3rd Annual "Well Watered Women of Faith" Program: "Oasis of Hope;" Trulight Cathedral Global Ministries; Noon to 3 pm; Tamaron Country Club; Speaker Evang. Natalie Caldwell and Psalmist Dorethea Nemeth: 419-870-6026 or 419-344-7673

November 22

Music for the Soul: Musical celebration hosted by the Naomi Ministry of Tabernacle of Praise Christian Church; 5 pm: 419-794-8671

November 25

Ebenezer Outreach Ministry's Annual Need to Feed Thanksgiving Dinner; Free; 11 am to 2 pm: 419-729-1466

November 26

Thanksgiving!!

Thomas Temple Church of God in Christ Annual Free Thanksgiving Dinner: 1 to 3 pm St. Mark MBC Thanksgiving Dinners: Served to all in need; 11 am to 2 pm: 419-241-1726

November 28

Maumee Bay's NANBWPWC, Inc: Holiday Bazaar and Rummage Sale;" 10 am to 4 pm; Westside Community Church; Vendor opportunities available: 419-841-3318

Project360 Records 1st Annual Benefit Holiday Concert: "A Holiday to Remember;" 7 pm; Friendship Baptist Church; Benefit for N.A.O.M.I. Transitional House; Recording artists Louis Self, Jason Carter and Amy Hancock: 419-810-6945 or 419-810-2818

Crystal Dixon Book Signing: Border's; 2 to 4 pm

November 29

Toledo District Full Gospel Fellowship 5th Sunday Worship Explosion: City of Zion, Mt Zion Church; 6 pm

Brian Thomas Chorale's 25th Anniversary Reunion Concert: Bibleway Church; 6 pm

December 4

"Tis the Secor Holiday Celebration and Art Sale;" Exhibition of artwork and open studios of Secor artists; The Secor Building; 6 pm to midnight: 419-297-3822

December 5-6

Vocal Carol:" In the spirit of Christmas, musical selections from "A Second Chance at Christmas" and "The House I Live In;" St. Mark's MBC; 6:30 pm

December 5-6

Grace Temple's Annual One Stop Shopping Christmas Bazaar: Saturday from 11 am to 5 pm; Sunday from 1 to 4 pm: 419-841-4614

The Sojourner's Truth

**Toledo's Truthful African-American
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Grading the Election – One Voter's View

By Steve Flagg
Guest Column

The election of Mike Bell as mayor was perhaps the one leap of faith by voters in this election. Bell, a long-time public employee without any real private sector experience, won over Keith Wilkowsky who ran as an agent of change.

One might think that the election of Bell is a step into the future. However, the "A" and "B" teams of the Democratic Party were deeply involved with "B" teamers in the Bell camp and the "A" teamers working hard for Wilkowsky. Who will be in a Bell administration? That curtain will open soon.

There is no question that Bell has his work cut out for him. Eye popping future deficits, public sector unions that have used political leverage to gain economically unsustainable contracts, high chronic unemployment, a declining tax base as residents flee the city, large numbers of foreclosed properties, a crumbling infrastructure and residents that have become disillusioned and apathetic.

Taxes and fees will be discussed ad infinitum in 2010. There will be some calling for an increased income tax, reduction or elimination of the income tax credit for Toledoans working outside Toledo, fees of every kind aimed at businesses and residents and a few other "creative" ideas to get more dollars out of a drained citizenry.

Regardless of the circumstances, Bell should not let the campaign rhetoric of "Tax Hike Mike" come true. In the short run increased taxes will bring increased revenue. But every action has unintended consequences and those capable of moving will eventually move to greener pastures exacerbating an already difficult problem.

You don't retain and attract residents by raising taxes. Long term

growth is the only sustainable solution.

Election grade: C; could move up.

As to City Council, Rob Ludeman, George Sarantou, Phil Copeland and Joe McNamara are aligned with the same political philosophies and leadership styles that have

riculum. You just can't help asking if he believes it or is it marketing. He did add stable productive labor management relations to his platform which appears to be code for giving Lawrence what she wants.

Vasquez never gave the Board a second thought until after his failed council races of 2005 and 2007. Expect Vasquez to attempt to pack up his card-board cutout and move to City Council in 2011.

Hill, 35-year TPS teacher and union representative, was backed heavily by Lawrence. Expect Hill to be at the end of the strings pulled by Lawrence. Nary will a question be asked about any collective bargaining agreements from Hill.

The current TPS board election identifies the deficiencies of "pay to play" laws in Ohio as Lawrence again spent large sums to produce and air commercials for Vasquez and Hill. Lawrence did the same in the 2007 election as well as funneling contributions through other campaigns.

This Board is easily the best that TFT money and influence can buy.

Don't expect "hungry for change" to be the City Council mantra over the next two years.

Election grade: D; we have to hope for the best.

Expect the new Toledo Board of Education to keep absolutely everything from the voting public until after decisions are made.

One fact is certain. Francine Lawrence of the Toledo Federation of Teachers (TFT) will be well represented. She backed Brenda Hill and Bob Vasquez and, along with holdovers Lisa Sobecki and Jack Ford, they will assure a voting block that will not challenge the hegemony of the TFT nor will they address the many anti-student provisions found in TPS' collective bargaining agreements.

Vasquez plagiarized much of his platform regarding fiscal responsibility, community partnerships and engagement and a diverse, well-rounded cur-

Election grade: F; is there hope?

My View

By Jack Ford
The Truth's Political Columnist



Many thanks to those of you who saw fit to vote. Every vote counted as we saw an extremely close mayoral election and some tight seats for Toledo City Council.

And in Oregon, sharp-tongued Mayor Marge Brown bit the dust. Down in Dayton, Rhine McLin lost after serving eight years as mayor.

It is my opinion that Mayor-elect Mike Bell had a lot of good fortune which resulted in his victory.

First, Bell is a quality guy. As Woody Hayes once said, "you win with quality." Bell is a hero and it is tough to run against a hero.

Second, Bell has great parents. Norman and Ora Bell are well loved in Toledo and some of that love spills over onto Mike.

Third, Bell stayed on his message of keeping government out of business. It was a subtle point but it distinguished him from his opponent, Democrat Keith Wilkowsky.

Next, Bell was handled pretty well by FLS Marketing. They let Bell be Bell and did not attempt to stifle his individuality. Finally, Bell had the day to day help of a good street team inspired, not led, but inspired by Weldon Douthitt.

Douthitt ought to be on the payroll for FLS Marketing. He actually did his work as an evening volunteer and he worked like a mad man on behalf of Bell. He put up hundreds of billboards and distributed – get this one – 10,000 "Jack Ford Endorses Bell" pieces of literature in the parking lots of 96 churches in one week and 102 during the last week prior to the election.

Can you visualize putting campaign literature on 10,000 cars in the course of two weeks?

Douthitt also organized the church rallies at Ebenezer Missionary Baptist Church.

Kudos to Rev. John Walhall of Mt. Ararat, Bishop Marjorie Holt of Bethesda Christian Center and Rev. J.L. Jordan, Jr., of Ebenezer. Kudos also to Jordan's powerful son, Keith. I say "powerful" because he walks and talks with authority and is not afraid to stand up for a black man.

It seems to me that the Democratic Party has a real problem in Lucas County. A cosmetic makeover will not clean this mess up. If I am Gov. Ted Strickland, I would call Chris Redfern, state party chairman, and tell him to go to Toledo and fix the mess. And I would start with Douthitt not Bell. Bell is not going to compromise his principles but Douthitt might be willing to work within the party structure ... if things can be worked out.

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Keith Wilkowski Reflects on His Mayoral Campaign

By Fletcher Word
Sojourner's Truth Editor

So just how high was that mountain? Just how much of a challenge did Keith Wilkowski face against his very popular opponent?

Wilkowski, who lost his bid to become Toledo's mayor on November 3, always knew what he was getting into when he decided to enter the race. He always knew that his stiffest challenge would come from his former high school and college classmate, Mike Bell. And while Wilkowski announced his candidacy well before the former Toledo Fire Chief did, in early 2009, he knew that if Bell, who at that time was the Ohio State Fire Marshall, jumped into the fray, the odds against him would double.

"Mike Bell began with a tremendous store of goodwill...and well earned," said Wilkowski, the endorsed Democratic candidate, last week when he sat down with The Truth to reflect on the long campaign. "It was the nature of his position and his many charitable works."

And the former fire chief's personality, Wilkowski might have added.

Bell was fire chief for more than 16 years, a hero leading

other heroes. And a highly visible hero at that. Over the course of those years, and during another two that Bell spent as Fire Marshal, one would not be at all surprised to encounter Bell in a grocery store – just spending an hour or two greeting and talking with people, answering questions, asking about concerns.

Although Bell, who ran as an independent, opened his campaign late in the season, in a sense he had been shaking hands and kissing babies for almost two decades.

Even if Wilkowski had not an inkling of the challenge Bell presented when he first announced, he certainly would have once a few polls were conducted in the spring. Those polls showed that "Mike Bell was universally known and universally well-respected," said Wilkowski. "That he would be a formidable opponent."

Those polls also should that immediately after Bell announced, he led Wilkowski by as much as 25 points.

"Not that I had negatives, but I wasn't as well known," said the Democrat.

Wilkowski and his team made a strategic decision to conduct a campaign by drawing a contrast between the



candidates on policy, principally the role of a mayor in economic development, rather than to try to downplay Bell's popularity. As Wilkowski notes now, he eschewed character or personal attacks. He wanted the campaign to be as positive as possible.

By Memorial Day, polls showed that Bell's lead was down to single digits. "That reinforced that we were doing the right thing," said Wilkowski.

When the primary election rolled around, the point at

which the voters would winnow the field from six candidates to two, Wilkowski topped Bell – if only by about 600 votes. The vote totals for the two top candidates swamped those of the three also-rans (Republican Jim Moody, independent D. Michael Collins and Democrat Ben Konop) ... and the prophetess Opal Covey.

As the general election closed in, a poll taken two weeks before November 3 revealed that among decided voters, Wilkowski had a lead of eight percentage points.

That poll also showed that many were still undecided, more than 20 percent, in fact.

So based upon those polls and the primary results, the Wilkowski strategy of raising his profile by focusing on the economy was indeed working.

"But it did not succeed," said Wilkowski accurately summing up the results of the general election that left him 3,124 votes shy of his rival out of almost 68,000 cast.

He did, however, run the campaign he wanted to run and one that he says now, is a campaign in which he will always be able to take pride.

The outcome notwithstanding, the life-long Toledoan – as is Bell – has not dropped his concerns for the city he sought to lead.

"I feel strongly that the city has to change," said Wilkowski. "We have to be much more aggressive in pursuing the industries of the future such as solar and biofuels, so much of what is coming out of The University of Toledo. We have to be creative in terms of programs and policies, if not, we will not move forward.

"And, we have to make fundamental changes in how the City of Toledo operates itself – internally," he added. "The terms of employee contracts, of the safety forces ... change needs to be made."

"The terms of employee contracts, of the safety forces ... change needs to be made."

As for his own future, the former mayoral candidate and City of Toledo Law Director is looking for a job with an established law firm. Wilkowski gave up his own practice to run a full-time campaign for mayor.

He also intends to remain fully engaged in neighborhood development, getting involved with a community development corporation, for example.

"Building neighborhoods, there's a lot of real nitty-gritty hard work that needs to be done," he said. And he wants to keep his hand in helping to push forward several of the ideas he championed during the campaign – a city-wide reading program and, perhaps, using his law practice to develop solar and other alternative energy ideas and programs.

As for another run at elected office – probably not.

"I don't think so, but one never says never. I gave it my all," he said. "I put out the case for my candidacy as well as I could."

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Sorority Honors Seven for Community Service

By Artisha S. Lawson
Sojourner's Truth Reporter

In celebration of the 87 years of Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc. the local chapter Iota Theta Sigma organized a reception to honor seven individuals and their organizations for providing service to the Toledo community.

The Sigma TORCH Awards for Humanitarian Acts ceremony was held on Saturday, November 14, 2009 in the lower level of Bethesda Christian Center Cathedral on Lodge Street.

"Seven where chosen because the sorority was organized in 1922 by seven school teachers. The award name, torch, was chosen because it holds a special meaning to our sisterhood – it provides a source of light and warmth. That's why these seven were nominated, they provide that same light and warmth through their service," said Monica Ford, chapter vice president.

The honorees all received certificates for their nominations, and a gift. The Padua Center and Executive Director Sister Virginia Welsh were nominated for feeding those in need with over 75 baked goods donated from Panera Bread every Tuesday and for growing two gardens to feed students who attend after school tutoring.

The center also provides counseling and free summer workshops for various age groups.

Wesley United Methodist was nominated for hosting three food pantries per month that feed over 100 low-to-moderate income families.

Breast cancer awareness activist Deborah Barnett was nominated for turning her 60th birthday party into a fundraiser for Susan G. Komen Foundation to benefit breast cancer research and education for Northwest Ohio. "I am truly honored by this award. Let me just say, ladies, early

detection is key. You can't think that breast cancer won't happen to you, or someone in your family. Three of my girlfriends were diagnosed, and then my sister, but now breast cancer isn't a death sentence. We all need to take care of ourselves," said Barnett.

Pastor Kimberly Cunningham-Turner of St. James Holiness Church on Nebraska was nominated for his continuous approachable personality and ability to connect with young women as a mentor in her women's church ministry.

Community organizers of Lagrange Village Council of North Toledo were nominated for their volunteer efforts to maintain a certain standard of living by fighting to keep a grocery store in their neighborhood. Their well known battle with Kroger's hasn't stopped them from seeking other alternatives.

They also have organized with the assistance of Toledo Public Schools, a program called Mobility, which aims to keep students in one school for an entire academic year. "Our fight isn't over, we have talked with the City of Toledo and are working to achieve our goal of a grocery store in our neighborhood. LVC has worked in North Toledo for 17 years and we thank the ladies of Sigma Gamma Rho for this

award," said Sherry Walker, president of LVC.

Self Expression Teen Theatre and Executive Director Minister Charles Muhammad were nominated for their work over 25 years of providing a safe environment for inner city youth and allowing them to express themselves positively through artistic forms while promoting education and culture awareness.

Another community organizer, Venus Chapman, was nominated for volunteering and working with several local and national non-profits, charities and agencies for over 25 years. Most recently, she partnered with the Padua Center for a 15-week neighborhood development program, which organized three neighborhood meetings, partnered with ONYX for a cleanup, and reported over 150 abandoned homes and vacant lots to the City of Toledo.

"As you know the work is never done. Honestly, I think I got this drive from my father, he was a civil rights activist. But I wouldn't be able to continue, without the support of my mother, sister and family," said Chapman.

The program concluded with certificates of appreciation being awarded to Belle Z Ballard No. 6 Girls Assembly and Bethesda Christian Center Cathedral's Royal Court



(Left to Right) Honorees: Pastor Kimberly Cunningham-Turner, Venus Chapman, Sherry Walker of LVC, Sister Virginia Welsh of Padua Center, Washington Muhammad of SETT, Deborah Barnett.

Kidz Ministry for their participation in the chapter's food drive for World Food Day in October. The reception concluded a week-long celebration that included days that focused on sisterhood and fellowship.

Nationally, Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc. was organized in 1922 by seven women

at Butler University. Through their slogan "Greater Service, Greater Progress," the sorority focuses on national projects: Buckle Up America, Operation Big Bookbag, Mwanamugimu Essay Contest, Project Reassurance, Wee Savers, Sigma Youth Symposium, and Hattie McDaniel's Cancer Awareness.

ness.

Locally, Iota Theta Sigma Chapter of Toledo was chartered December 8, 2001 and recently donated to Ronald McDonald House, Seagate Food Bank and Sparrow's Nest. For further information, the chapter's website is <http://www.sgrho-toledo.org>.



Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc. Iota Theta Sigma Alumnae Chapter

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Toledo's TLOD Chapter Hosts Leadership Conference

By Artisha S. Lawson
Sojourner's Truth Reporter

Over 250 Ladies, Lords and Top Teens from Michigan, Indiana, Ohio and West Virginia gathered for the 35th annual Leadership Conference for Area V from November 12-15, hosted by The Toledo Chapter of Top Ladies of Distinction.

The four-day conference was held at Perrysburg's Holiday Inn French Quarter Hotel and featured a surprise host night for conference attendees. Toledo club members were informed of the planned evening of artists and awards, but the regional and national officers were not.

The evening began with a parade of TLOD members and dignitaries to the song "Celebrate" by Kool and the Gang. Members dressed in organizational colors waved flags and smiled as they circled around the assembly room before seating to watch the program.

Along with local members, national officers included: Lady Jackie Pope, national president; Lady Audrie Lawton, national first vice president; Lady Denise Black-Poone, national editor

of The Crown; Lady Madeline Newton, national Top Teen director; Lady Janice Jones, national induction chairman; Teen Erin Yulee, national Top Teen president; Teen Craig Peterson, Area Top Teen first vice president; Lady Veronica Nesbitt, Area V director; Lady Grace Daniels, Lady Ann Battles, charter member; Lady Mary Dawson, Toledo Club president; and host night co-chairmen Lady Joan Harrison and Lady Barbara Tucker.

The host night continued with the presentation of the American flag and the State of Ohio flag by the Color Guard, and welcome by Toledo club president and the event co-chairs. "I am so happy to welcome all of you here, we're here to celebrate. This is our 35th year of Top Ladies of Distinction, we're here and we're proud," said Dawson.

"Good evening to all the ladies of Top Ladies of Distinction, Lords and Top Teens. This evening is about relaxing and enjoying one another," said Tucker.

The event welcomed sev-

eral local performers, Scott High School's Scottette's Drill Team combined a face-pace hip hop routine with a Michael Jackson "Thriller" tribute at the conclusion in all black attire.

Another Jackson tribute was performed by Josuah Bey, who sang, danced and moon walked to "Billy Jean." Concluding the dance numbers was Tyree Bell, who brought the audience to their feet with a soulful ballet routine to Maxwell's "Women's Worth."

For musical selections Solid Rock Adult Praise Team and soloists Yvette Miller and Tae Yana Willis serenaded the audience with soft melody songs. During the conclusion of Willis' rendition of "Hero," she reached out and pointed to her elementary school teacher and TLOD member Jackie Houston.

"I don't know if you all noticed, but Ms. Willis pointed to Lady Jackie Houston, her teacher at Steward Academy for Girls. She must be doing a great job over there," said Lady Clara Petty.

Along with the talent



"I don't know if you all noticed, but Ms. Willis pointed to Lady Jackie Houston, her teacher at Steward Academy for Girls. She must be doing a great job over there,"

showcase, several awards were given to Ladies, Lords and Top Teens of Top Ladies of Distinction. The Un-

sung Top Lady award was awarded to 11 Ladies who work hard within their chapters mostly behind the

scenes. The Top Lady Spirit award honored several Ladies for their willingness to cooperate and show great



Thank you, Toledo.



Mayor-elect Mike Bell

Now is the time to unite and move Toledo forward, to overcome our challenges and to meet our promise.

- We will bring Toledo back.**
- We will create jobs.**
- We will keep our community safe.**
- We will balance our budget.**

We will unite. We will succeed.

attitude. Awards were also presented to spouses of TLOD members, chapter presidents, the host chairmen, and members who organized their chapters.

The conference closed with a Marti Gras style formal banquet on Saturday, November 14.

TLOD was organized in Tyler, Texas in 1964, and has grown to over 104 chapters and 4,600 members. TLOD have adopted 12 programs to focus on, these include: The Ronald McDonald House, Dress for Success, Restoration of African American cemeteries, United Negro College Fund, NAACP, National Council of Negro Women, National Alzheimer's Awareness, Literacy, Sickle Cell Research, National Caucus of the Black Aged Inc, African American Sisters Network Inc.

Paid for by Mike Bell for Toledo, 405 Madison Ave, Suite 1550, Toledo, OH 43604, Norman Bell, Treasurer



Page 7

The Truth ECONOMY

Tackling Tough Times

Roy Hodge: REH Systems Is Designing Solutions for Companies' Technology Needs

By Fletcher Word
Sojourner's Truth Editor

During his senior year at St. Francis High School in 1982-83, Roy Hodge took his first computer programming class. Sometimes it is just that easy to find one's path in life.

When Hodge entered The Ohio State University the following year, he decided to major in computer information systems. He later transferred to DeVry University and graduated with a bachelor's of science degree in the same discipline.

After college, he took a position with the Lucas County Board of Mental Health as manager of Database Systems and in 1995 joined Vanstar Corporation as a senior systems engineer.

In 1996, it was time to take the big step and move out on his own.

He founded REH Systems Solutions, LLC in order "to collaborate with organizations and corporations as part of a strategic information technology alliance to provide development, implementation, training and support services for computer networking technologies and business solutions," says Hodge.

REH Systems, a minority business enterprise certified by both the City of Toledo and the State of Ohio, is a reseller for Foundry Networks/Brocade, Cisco Systems, Microsoft and RIM BlackBerry, specializing in infrastructure development, network switching/routing, wireless email/mobile applications and unified communications integration.

Why and how did Hodge found an IT company that has, in 13 years, succeeded in bringing in contract after contract both from the public and private sectors?

The "why" is certainly easy to answer.

"It was necessary for several reasons," says Hodge. "First, it took the ceiling off my earning potential. Second, it enables me to maintain current pace with energy technologies and, third, we are able to be exposed to a variety of challenges and opportunities when dealing with a diverse customer base—public, school systems and private."

The "how" is a bit more complicated. REH Systems acts as a consultant for companies and public entities in their network electronics. A new contract brings Hodge and his staff in for a look at an organization from the standpoint of workflow—the connectivity, for example, to the Internet and the company's ability to communicate, internally and externally.

"We assess the workflow process and design solutions around it," says Hodge. "We set up automated system leveraging—hardware and software—so we can implement [systems] based on their needs, for instance, with a restaurant that needs to be online with their suppliers."

One such company with which Hodge has a contract is American Greetings and their network of 14,000 part-time merchandisers. "My role



is to assess the workflow process and determine the shortcomings, to batch data and to calculate the return on investment in addition to be architecting the system."

For REH, a contract with a company such as American Greeting is a full cycle that will entail three to five years of involvement—assessing workflow, determining the financial benefit for the company to upgrade its IT systems, assisting with financing and evaluating—in the long term—the necessary upgrades to the system.

As an example of REH's broad reach, the company has been involved with both Toledo Public Schools and the City of Toledo projects. REH

has worked on four jobs with the TPS new schools building program.

Hodge's strategy as he builds his company is two-fold. First, he keeps the company's focus very narrow in the scope of work REH undertakes. Out of five specialties in the technology pool—phones, paging, security, video and network electronics, REH specializes only in network electronics.

"I am trying to leverage a skill set and expand the market place," says Hodge. "Instead of performing five functions, I try to perform one well and that helps to establish contacts and ensure long-term and short-term success."

Secondly, Hodge attempts to obtain contracts as a prime contractor but if that is not possible, particularly in public projects, he wants to be the company that all prime contractors rely on for network electronics.

"The key to my success is being able to reach out to primes," he says. "So if there are four or five prime electrical contractors bidding on a TPS electrical technology contract, they all ask me for a number. That way I'm working with all of the primes who are in position to get the bid."

And what sort of issues has he faced as a minority contractor?

"I don't really have any issues," he says. "I've been blessed; I've been fortunate. I'm not suing anybody and I'm not being sued. I'm not being blackballed and I'm not being stereotyped. But I do see challenges and opportunities."

In this vein, he mentions the City of Toledo and the dollars they spend on IT. While the City has let contracts to minority contractors for a few IT contracts, there have been many others involving millions of dollars, says Hodge, that have had no MBE representation.

Since TPS has recently, and finally, moved in the direction of breaking down contracts so that smaller firms have the capacity to share in the large public works projects, Hodge believes that REH will continue to benefit

from this decision.

"The City of Toledo has a different philosophy," he says. "Their philosophy is to discourage subcontractors—they want one throat to choke. Firms often come here from out of town, perform the work and then they are out of here. Few local firms have gotten [IT] contracts."

As for the future of REH Systems, 2010 looks bright, says Hodge. He anticipates working on about a dozen projects during the year and his opportunities to expand have increased dramatically just recently. Last week, Hodge was one of seven panellists—the only African-American one—at the Regional Growth Partnership's inaugural Venture Fair, an event designed to bring aspiring IT entrepreneurs together with venture capitalists.

Hodge is a Microsoft Certified Systems Engineer (MCSE), a Microsoft Certified Trainer (MCT), a Cisco Certified Network Administrator (CCNA) and a BlackBerry Certified Administrator (BCA). In 2003, he earned an MBA from The University of Toledo.

He has served on the boards of such organizations as the Black Chamber of Commerce, the Lucas County Workforce Development, the Toledo Chamber of Commerce—TASBA, the Regional Growth Partnership and the Ohio Department of Development ITEC.

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Boyce's Bottom Line: The Treasury is Protecting Your Money

By Kevin Boyce, State of Ohio Treasurer
Guest Column



As Ohio Treasurer, I'm usually asked what is that we do at the treasurer's office and how can we help Ohioans.

Starting this month, I am privileged to write a monthly column that I hope will educate you on our work, stimulate interest in public finance issues, and promote smart money choices for Ohioans and their families.

So, what goes on at the Treasurer's office?

My initial response is to assure people that we don't print money there – as much as we would like to during tough budgetary times.

Then, in all seriousness, I explain that it's my first priority to safeguard the state funds in our care and grow those dollars through prudent investments. Second, we use those resources strategically to create and retain jobs here in Ohio. And third, the office promotes financial education to give Ohioans the know-how to make sound decisions for themselves and their families.

Behind everything we do at the Treasurer's office is the belief that all of our futures are connected in what Martin Luther King Jr. once spoke of as an "inescapable network of mutuality." And that's why we work hard to provide opportunities to Ohioans to succeed.

It's one of the reasons why the Treasurer's office continues to invest in our program for small businesses. So many of our small businesses are struggling in this tough economy, and it's critical for Ohio that we help them survive and thrive.

That's why we support

them through GrowNOW – our partnership with community banks that cuts down on interest rates for small businesses looking to create or retain jobs. Since August 2007, the Treasurer's office has helped grow or save more than 18,000 jobs.

And as our economy increasingly takes on a green, environmentally-friendly hue, we need to look at ways for Ohio to be on the forefront. That's why we launched ECO-Link – a program that provides reduced rate financing for homeowners who undertake energy efficiency improvements. It's a way to help stimulate green economic growth, but also keep more money in the pockets of Ohioans.

Giving people an opportunity to succeed, though, doesn't just stop at strategic investments.

It's essential to promote financial education in this state so Ohioans can make smart financial choices for themselves and their families.

Not only is this important for improving the quality of life for individuals, it's critical for our state's future.

We have to look no further than our foreclosure crisis to understand why that's true. No doubt speculators took risks and tried to flip homes in a booming market. No doubt there were dishonest lenders who acted irresponsibly and even dishonestly. But there were also home buyers who became easy prey; they lacked a basic financial understanding that the home they were buying they would never be able to afford.

I was fortunate to have a grandmother who taught me the essentials of financial literacy to avoid those pitfalls. In fact, I remember when I was 16 years old I went to my grandmother and asked her to help me buy a new pair of sneakers. She said, "ok," and then took me to the local grocery store ... to fill out a job application as a bagger. The message was simple: if you want something in life, perhaps someone else will provide the opportunity, but

it is up to you to take advantage of it.

Unfortunately, too many Ohioans lack that kind of guidance. That's why as Treasurer I'm committed to making financial education a priority in this state.

That's the driving force behind our SaveNOW program, which gives Ohioans – once they complete one year of financial education – an enhanced interest rate on savings accounts. This will empower individuals to build wealth, critical to the state's financial health and vital for building a stronger economic foundation.

Making financial education a priority is also why, this summer, the Treasurer's office launched an 11-city Smart Money Choices tour. It was a way to provide Ohioans with the financial tools to make sound decisions. The office recently received a national award for our financial education efforts.

These education efforts and investing in small business growth and the green economy — these are all things that we're doing at

Treasurer's office to give people and businesses opportunities to succeed.

MY BOTTOM LINE IS ...

The Ohio Treasury continues protect, grow, and strategically invest your dollars but if we are going to come out of this recession better than we started then it will take all of us working together to make the difference. We all have a role in making tomorrow better than today. My role as Treasurer is to provide you the support and resources you need to make informed, confident financial decisions, and in turn, strengthen Ohio's economy. See you next month!

Financial term of the month: Liquidity — The ease and rate with which an asset can be converted into a medium of exchange. Liquidity is considered to be advantageous. Money is the most liquid due to the fact that it does not need to be converted into anything in order to make purchases.

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Real Estate: Student of the Game

By Rodney Neely
Real Estate Contributor

In today's real estate world, things are very fluid and complex. All of the moving parts regarding sales, purchases, foreclosures, asset protection, or simply the question of "how do I pass my property to loved ones upon my death," make it difficult to know what to do, when to do it, and why you are doing it."

Each month after writing these articles on various real estate topics, I receive many emails asking for advice on specific deals, requests to speak at various events, or interests in working with me in some capacity. Although I am flattered that so many have found the information to be useful and resourceful, I haven't taken the opportunity to assist in most cases due to time constraints.

In order to really add the kind of value to each individual deal or to properly advise real estate professionals with depth and integrity, I must be fully engaged. After considering how difficult it is to make money in a market

where banks are supplying limited debt financing and investor equity is under so much pressure, I have decided to accept more of the offers to work with individuals on projects.

I believe the 15 years of experience I have gained in both boom and bust markets can benefit either novice or experienced real estate people.

In the area of sales: prospecting, time management, knowing what to say and how to say powerfully and other topics will be part of what I will provide guidance on for those who need help.

For investors: market knowledge, prospecting, deal structures, and other topics will add the kind of streamlined value to these small businesses to encourage success and mitigate unnecessary risk. Moreover, a customized coaching strategy for those investors who want to go to the next level based on their specific personal and professional needs can be developed to outline the de-

sired goals, achievement thresholds, and how to get there.

This program is geared for career-oriented real estate professionals only. In each of us there is an unimaginable amount of untapped potential. I believe by focusing on the fundamental principles of business development using tried and tested concepts that have proven to be a winning formula for the wealthiest corporate titans, each of us has the opportunity to reach our ultimate success in business, but more importantly in life.

Over the past year I have written on many topics. In most of these discussions I avoid going into infinite details to prevent any confusion in the subject matter and to stay focused on the specific intent of the article. Many of you have wanted to understand more completely the "why's and how's" in some of these scenarios.

As any professional who has spent years in a particular field can tell you, the real

deal experience is impossible to duplicate in a textbook. By working with you directly I will help you to navigate through the mine field of circumstances each project provides by being a separate set of eyes and ears. I will become another resource to lean on in gaining some additional understanding in most situations.

Although no one knows every eventuality or can be one hundred percent accurate at all times, my student partners will have something many of us didn't in the beginning - a real estate business mentor.

And hey! Guess what? Now is the perfect time to become a student of the

game. Money is cheap, if you can secure a loan from a bank. Equity investors love brick and mortar projects when the stock markets are volatile, so deal structure will become even more important in the next one to two years.

Furthermore, federal government programs, tax credits, and the availability of low interest capital to get projects done as private investors, non profit organizations, or small business owners will be accessible if you learn where to get the information and how to apply for the funding.

Understanding how things work on many different levels all contribute to your success in real estate. Just as I have dedicated myself to my business, I will also help you to stay on track in seeking your goals as well.

My experience in real estate brokerage, development, construction, and finance will give my student partners the kind of assistance I wish I had when I started in this business. Although I won't be able to work with everyone, I will select on a deal by deal basis to provide you any help I can give. Please contact me by email at Rodney@q3development.com with your interest and lets talk about your next deal.

Always remember that in life success is the greatest revenge...

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FINANCIAL FOCUS**Changing "Seasons" of Life May Require Changes in Investment Strategy**

As we make the transition from autumn to winter, you may be reminded that seasons don't just change on the calendar — they also change in your life. And as you move from one season of your life to another, you'll find that some of your goals may have changed. Consequently, as time goes by, you may need to adjust your financial strategies as well.

To illustrate the "seasonal" nature of your investment strategies, let's quickly go through a typical life cycle and look at the differing financial goals at each stage:

- **Starting out** — When you are beginning your career, you may not have a lot of money to invest, but it's important to try to put away something each month. If you have a 401(k) where you work, take advantage of it — your money is deducted, pretax, from your paychecks, so it's an easy way to start investing.

And at this stage of your life, consider investing primarily for growth. Of course, when you invest in growth-oriented vehicles, you typically assume an above-average degree of risk because the price of these investments can fluctuate greatly over time. However, if you buy quality investments and hold them for many years, you may be able to overcome the "blips" along the way and benefit from the growth prospects these vehicles can offer.

- **Middle years** — During this season of your life, things have likely changed. Your kids may have already graduated from college or otherwise left home, so you may need to re-evaluate your life insurance needs. You're likely earning more money and have more available to invest — which means, among other things, that you should consider "maxing out" on your IRA and also putting as much as you can afford into your 401(k) or other employer-sponsored retirement plan.

Because you may have a decade or more until you retire, you still may need considerable growth potential from your investments. At the same time, though, you might not want to invest quite as aggressively as you did when you started out, so you may want to increase the percentage of bonds and other fixed-income vehicles in your portfolio.

- **Retirement years** — Many people assume their expenses will drop when they retire. And some will drop — but others, such as health care, will increase. Furthermore, it's not at all unusual for people to spend two, or even three, decades in an active retirement — and during those years, inflation can be a factor. Consequently, even as a retiree, you'll find that growth-oriented investments are important, balanced with others that provide income.

Furthermore, you'll want to manage the withdrawals you take from your IRA, 401(k) or other employer-sponsored retirement plan to help make sure you don't outlive your resources. At the same time, you should consider exploring estate-planning techniques, such as life insurance trusts, that can help you leave the legacy you want without burdening your heirs with heavy estate taxes. To help you meet these needs, work with your tax advisor and estate-planning professional.

The seasons of the year change every three months. The seasons of your life change much more slowly, but these changes can have a big impact on your financial situation.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor; Lawrence Hodges III, 419-474-4715



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Maybe We Need Another Civil War

By Rubin Patterson, Ph.D.
The Truth Contributor



Of course, I don't mean this literally — I needed to get your attention.

For those of us who seek to help America advance, in a big way, toward renewable energy and a green economy, the Civil War is instructive because it reminds us just how intransigently entrenched economic entities can be against the winds of progressive change.

The Civil War broke out because the system of slavery in plantation agriculture and the system of free labor in industry could no longer peacefully coexist in America. Something had to give.

The North fought to gain domination of the federal government, to consolidate its power over the country, and to implement economic policies for industrial expansion without inhibition by agricultural interests.

By the time the dust had long settled from the war, robber barons such as the Morgans, Rockefellers and Mellons and their agents had taken charge of the South's financial institutions, railroads, mines and distribution companies. And with that, industry expanded continentaly.

In short, the war was fought to subordinate agriculture to industry.

The backward slavocracy establishment had envisioned America's future as simply more of the same: cotton, tobacco and rice. After all, before the Civil War, the South was producing the bulk of the world's cotton.

Conversely, more progressive industrialists and financiers at the time saw the country's future as leading in industrial chemicals, steel, electrical equipment, transportation, and other state-of-the-art and emerging high-tech fields at the time.

Historically, industrial revolutions in societies have universally come at the expense of agriculture. And as you might expect, those planters and agricultural corporations sought to protect their economic interests. Sometimes those struggles have led to warfare.

The challenge before us today is to initiate and sustain a green industrial revolution at the expense of existing fossil fuel industries without warfare. Essentially, we are talking about shifting subsidies from the predominant industries today over to the fledgling green industries.

Such an industrial shift is difficult to achieve, with Congress being dominated by industrial pollution-supporting senators and representatives. How do we get this transformation without experiencing today's version of the first shots fired in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1861, which signaled the start of the Civil War?

In the end, the slavocracy establishment must have known that they were fighting a rearguard action as symbolized by their arming the people they had enslaved. In the words of historian Raimondo Laragh, by that time the planters were "just looking for a congenial way to die."

Although we aren't at that point yet where the fossil fuel and other heavy industrial polluters are "just looking for a congenial way to die," they do seem to have come face to face with their own industrial mortality. All of these industrial-polluting firms are rushing to advertise their green sensibilities and bona fides. This action might be their early version of arming those enslaved.

Progressive forces for a green economy need to encircle the recalcitrant polluting industries so that we can get our Appomattox surrender from them without engendering hostilities.

Education and mobilization are key. For instance, the public needs to appreciate that renewable energy-based electricity creates more than twice as many jobs per unit of energy and per dollar invested than are created by fossil fuel-based electricity. Also, the global public

needs to be aware of another factor: if the more than one trillion dollar annual subsidies that oil and coal companies are presently receiving could be shifted over to renewable energy firms, we could have a green economy much sooner than later.

In small yet important ways, this transformation has begun to happen. The Department of Energy has finally funded the Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy, known as ARPA-E, which is its version of the Department of Defense's Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency or DARPA.

DARPA was established a half century ago to expand the frontiers of military technology for the Pentagon. The commercialization and wide expansion of computer chips and the Internet into civilian applications were facilitated by DARPA.

ARPA-E was enacted back in 2007, but the Bush administration refused to fund it. The new entity received its first \$400 million appropriation in the Obama economic stimulus package to invest in transformational energy research projects or high-risk but potentially high-reward renewable energy technologies. Without a doubt, funding for ARPA-E has to expand multifold in short order.

The faster that more subsidies can be withdrawn from fossil fuel industries and poured into renewable energy industries, the quicker we will be able to put people to work at building and expanding green economies. But we can expect today's economically entrenched interests to resist transformational change where possible.

Carl von Clausewitz, the nineteenth-century military historian and strategist, said that war is simply a continuation of policy (or politics) by other means. We don't need to get to those other means — we just need much more aggressive politics by progressive forces to be mobilized in America for a green economy.

Rubin Patterson, Ph.D., is professor of Sociology and the interim director of the Africana Studies program at The University of Toledo. He can be contacted at rpatter@UTNet.Utledo.edu.

A Tribute to Russ Taylor

By Robert Smith, African American Legacy Project
Guest Column

I can't remember how or when I first met Mr. Russ Taylor. I remember him giving me a hard time every time I saw him and I saw him often. I saw him every night.

I ran a 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. rhythm and blues radio program on what was then WKLR, Kooler Radio, 99.9 on your FM dial. Taylor followed me with an all-night jazz program. Hey, I was 18 and he was, well ... he was a man. We were worlds apart in age and experiences. I was playing the Temptations and he was playing Thelonious Monk.

Russ Charles, that was his radio moniker, was the first audiophile I ever met. He kept his record collection pristine. He was meticulous. I would sit and watch him through the production room glass window, staring into the on-air studio, watching him as he wiped every LP free of dust both before and after he played a cut from an album.

He was intuitive and respected intelligence. He was intelligent! Mr. Taylor – tough at times – was really an earthy guy and he loved his people. He honored his roots and loved his culture. So much so that in the late 1960's he founded what was popularly known as the Creative Arts Workshop.

Russ got an old building donated at the corners of

Dorr and Forest and proceeded to build a place where children and others from the community could begin to explore. He didn't wait for monies or the climate to be more conducive to seeking resources. He just rolled up his sleeves and started working. He cajoled folks, he negotiated materials and supplies. He worked through the night and into the next day, and he had the nerve to turn around and unabashedly asked others to join him. He just did it!

For dancer/choreographer Donna Thomas – Walker, a Toledo native, was residing in Atlanta, GA – the loss of Taylor was really personal.

"Russell C. Taylor was my friend for over 41 years," said Thomas. "I was 17 years old when he gave me a chance of a life time, to teach African dance at the Soul & Arts Creative Workshop in Toledo, Ohio in 1969. Because of Russell Taylor, black musicians, visual artists, thespians and dancers from Toledo, made a transformative impact upon the international stages. Russell Taylor's was a true visionary for his time, and because of him, black artists were given a place to create."

Kurt Ardrey taught theater at the Workshop and has a particularly insightful



Russell Charles Taylor, 76, died on October 12, 2009 in Darlington House Nursing and Rehab Center after a fight against kidney and congestive heart failure. Born and reared in Toledo, Taylor retired from a career with the City of Toledo.

He is survived by his son, Jijuana (mother Mary); sisters, Marilyn Henry (Milton, deceased) and Betty Brantley (Charles); brothers, Michael and Gerald (Anyse); niece, Shannon (Reggie) and nephews Gerald, David (Carol) and Peter.

The memorial service was held at St. Martin de Porres Church on Wednesday, October 2009.

perspective, "Like Russell Taylor would say...It was all about a feeling...and

folks helping folk," recalled Ardrey. "The CAWS was not about politics...or somebody getting the credit....or ego-tripping. It was about sacrifice...and giving...and collaborating....and love. It was about people pursuing their dreams...and others helping to find a way that those dreams could come true."

Ardrey, director of Theater at the Workshop, hu-

morously recounted those early days.

"I was working two jobs and always broke, but we had plays," said Ardrey who is currently negotiating to bring his next play to life. "Most of the things that went on at the CAWS were paid for out of the pocket of staff members. There would not have been a music studio or theater if Billy Wingard hadn't taken his hammer and lumber and

built the stage. There wouldn't have been a dance studio if Russ and a bunch of folks hadn't sanded and waxed the floors and installed mirrors for the dancers. There wouldn't have been art classes if people like Johanna Nicols, Marvin Vines, and Ernie Jones and others didn't volunteer their time. There wouldn't have been The Creative Spirits Musical Ensemble if Vernon Martin didn't dedicate his expertise and wisdom to teaching willing young folks the elements of music."

While Taylor was not a man of letters, he gave much. He gave himself. Russ worked where he was needed most – in the heart of the community. He molded young men and women. He created a haven for young souls. He dared them to create, to love, to think.

In his latter days, our conversations often turned to his contributions to community and his thoughts were, there was work left undone. He felt he could have done much more.

It was then, during his quiet moments of reflection, I would gently remind him that his personal legacy was in place. He left an extraordinary legacy. His legacy will be heard in the children's laughter, seen in the dancer's feet, traced on the artist canvas, conferred in the poet's stanza and magnified through the beating heart of the African drum.

His legacy was his undying commitment to the arts. His legacy will forever be represented through the people whose lives he touched.

Northwest Ohio Scholarship Fund Awards \$614,800 in Need-Based Scholarships to 658 Students in NW Ohio.

The Northwest Ohio Scholarship Fund, Inc. (NWOSF) has awarded \$614,800 in need-based scholarships to 658 students for the 2009-2010 school year in order that they can attend kindergarten through eighth-grade private schools or be home schooled.

The students are attending one of 47 private schools located in northwest Ohio and southeast Michigan, including Toledo Islamic Academy, Maumee Valley Country Day, Gesu Catholic School and others. The average scholarship per child is \$934.

NWOSF has awarded \$7.5 million in need-based scholarships in the last eleven years to over 9,300 students in NW Ohio so that they could attend a private school or be home schooled. Eligible families are required to demonstrate their financial need as measured by standards similar to the Federal School Lunch program.

The Northwest Ohio Scholarship Fund believes that all children, regardless of their economic circumstances, deserve access to quality educational opportunities. A recent survey done by the Department of Education reported that parents exercising school choice are more satisfied with their children's education.

The Northwest Ohio Scholarship Fund is one of 37 programs throughout the country affiliated with the national Children's Scholarship Fund, founded in 1998 by Ted Forstmann and John Walton in New York City.

"The NWOSF means more socioeconomic diversity for our school. It allows students to attend a private school that otherwise would not be able to," Heather Elbriki, principal of Islamic School of Greater Toledo says of the Northwest Ohio Scholarship Fund.

Interested families can find more information about the program and the application form on the NWOSF website at www.nosf.org. For more information please contact Ann Riddle, program coordinator of the Northwest Ohio Scholarship Fund at (419) 244-6711 x 219.



So Why Was Ricci Gardner Passed Over Again for The Port Authority Presidency?

By Fletcher Word
Sojourner's Truth Editor

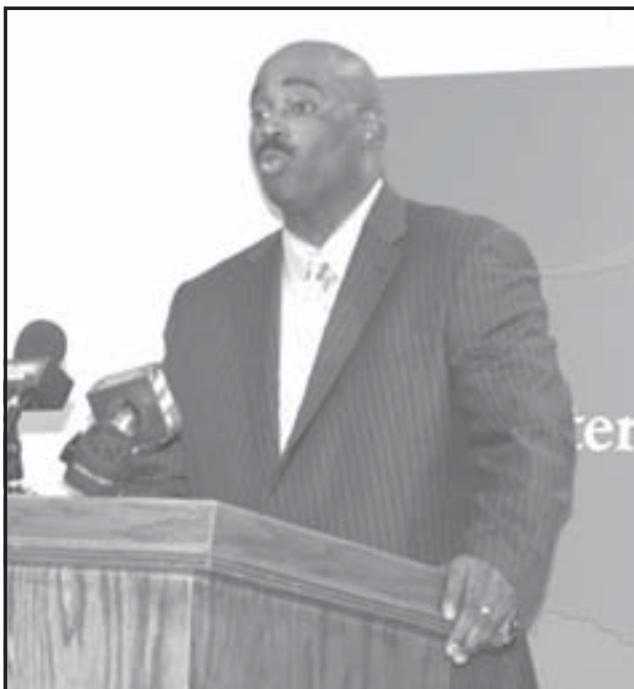
So what went wrong with Ricci Gardner's application to become president of the Toledo Lucas County Port Authority ... twice? In fact, Gardner never really got the chance to apply the second time around.

William Carroll, chairman of the board for the Port Authority, recently issued a statement in the wake of the board's announcement that Paul Toth would succeed Michael J. Stolarczyk as president, and justified the board's swift action as being necessary to "stabilize the situation" after "18 months of turmoil."

That statement followed several weeks of more than mere turmoil after the board's lone African-American member, Bernard "Pete" Culp, took his colleagues to task for the seemingly hasty nature of the appointment.

Culp had assumed, wrongfully according to Carroll, that the one African-American candidate for the president's post six months previously, would be a logical choice for the job since he had finished in the number two spot behind Stolarczyk.

That candidate was Gardner, who was said by Carroll, back in February, to have been one of the three top finalists. That list did not include Toth. One of the finalists subsequently took himself out of the running, leaving two for the five-person selection committee to bring before the board at-large for a vote.



Stolarczyk received the board's nod of approval.

In February, Carroll dismissed the candidacy of Toth, the then-interim president and long-serving Port Authority employee whose position before and after his interim duties was vice president of technical and financial services.

According to Carroll in February, Toth had not been the "broader experiences" of the top three candidates. However, when Stolarczyk resigned after just six months on the job, the board reached out to the previously not-quite-as-qualified Toth to fill the vacancy, passing

over the opportunity to appoint Gardner, now serving as the City of Toledo Economic Development Director.

"No one ever said Ricci Gardner was number two and so I don't know where [Culp] is getting that," said Carroll after Culp had blasted his fellow board members and the news of

his comments, made during a private executive session, were leaked to The Blade.

So was Gardner truly one of the top candidates, as Carroll had announced in February, or just the top African-American candidate as was intimated after he was passed over the second time?

The Truth had received comments several weeks ago from the City of Toledo's representative on the interview committee in February, Robert Reinbolt, the City's chief

of staff, who had placed Gardner in "the top couple of candidates, in my mind, right up there in the top candidates."

So who else would think that Gardner was indeed a top candidate, along with the search committee in February, but apparently not in October?

The Truth reached out to George D. Wilkinson, president and COO of Walker International Transportation.

Wilkinson joined Walker recently from Dana Corporation where he served as vice president of Global Logistics.

Prior to this experience, he was with General Motors for a number of years as the executive for global logistics.

During his tenure with GM, Wilkinson led the implementation of the strategic plan for GM's \$5.7 billion global logistics

supply chain. He broke down his analysis of the two candidates along four lines: key job elements, professional experience, education and global experience.

"When reviewing the candidates' planning, directing, controlling and executive experience, it is very evident that Mr. Gardner has more experience in this area with more experiences, more specific experience, such as vice president of strategic planning, vice president of product development, vice president of human resources," said Wilkinson.

"Mr. Stolarczyk has had some strong experiences as well, however, not as diverse and profound as the executive experiences of Mr. Gardner."

As for professional experience, Wilkinson noted that Stolarczyk edged out Gardner "with absolute port authority experience." He added, however, that "Mr. Gardner holds much more transportation experience with rail, air, truck, multimodal and facility/purchasing experiences that are far more reaching and much more impactful in terms of the complexity and the dollars involved in his experiences and the results he brought to the table for his company."

Wilkinson said of the candidates' educational experiences that "at first blush, it would appear that they are equal in this category." Gardner attended the University of Tennessee where he earned a bachelor's of science degree in transportation and economics. Stolarczyk attended West Virginia University and earned an undergraduate degree in business administration.

So even though both hold undergraduate degrees, Wilkinson placed higher value on Gardner's because "the University

of Tennessee transportation and supply chain school is extremely prestigious and is well known in the professional setting for its program and caliber of students."

As for global experience, while Stolarczyk has experience in another nation – the Czech Republic in this case, Wilkinson gave Gardner higher marks because "he had global responsibility for supply chain needs in every region of the world, this is significant in terms of its complexity, ability to engage different cultures, coordinate a global staff and team and then operate the business."

Was Gardner one of the top two candidates in Wilkinson's evaluation of the credentials of the two men?

"If all were based on paper, which it is not, I can say without fear of successful contradiction that Ricci Gardner is the better choice on paper, by far," concluded Wilkinson.

Wilkinson did not, of course, sit in on the interviews of the candidates. Reinbolt did, however, and he concluded that, in his estimation, Gardner actually moved up in the standings after the interviews in which the city's chief of staff participated.

As The Truth wrote two weeks ago, Carroll declined to address with us the specific question of Gardner's credentials and where he stood on the short list of candidates either before or after the short Stolarczyk tenure. He instead issued a statement calling Toth "highly qualified."

Did Gardner ever really have an opportunity to take control of the massive economic development and transportation agency or was his failed candidacy a foregone conclusion?


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Before We Self Destruct: Rap Beef, Black Beef and Problems

By Michael Hayes
Minister of Culture



Hip-hop has a problem with loyalty, growth, honor and common sense because black America has a problem with loyalty, growth, honor and common sense. There is an understanding you must develop when you approach business. Grown man business. Music business. Hood business. Other cultures can have music stars and even mobsters achieve career longevity. Other cultures have made generational wealth dealing in crime, entertainment, politics... hell you name it. Because the type of business isn't as important as the type of business people involved. In the rap game, the dysfunction you see in some parts of our black community has started to erode an enterprise which has created countless millionaires and role models. Think about it.

All of your favorite multi-millionaire rappers have charitable organizations. From Camp Cool J, to the Daddy's House afterschool programs ... even Nelly.

Okay, you know what, you're not even ready for that so scratch that. Just think of the business model for the rapper-turned-mogul. You go from dying to getting rich to being able to employ hundreds of qualified, young, educated and ... naw, you're not even ready for that either.

It's simple.

We have an issue with self-hatred. Which is why we are the only race to gauge our success by how much hate we

attract from our peers. Willie Lynch was not effin around I guess, because even the very enterprise that could be our salvation (not rap music, but black music in general) has been tainted by our inability to peacefully co-exist.

WHAT'SBEEF?

Biggie told you what real beef is, but since so many of y'all were so infatuated with Tupac's hateration of Big Poppa you didn't listen. So now you have it twisted on what beef truly is. Beanie Sigel (with an assist from 50 Cent) going on in Jay Z is shameful. It breaks my heart. Not just because of fond memories of that Roc La Familia. But because it's even more proof that even our most intellectual poe-

ts can:

a. Become a pawn in someone else's pointless war

b. Compromise their integrity to regain the Bentley-whippin lifestyle they once had

c. Play a part in black America and hip-hop continuing to look more and more foolish.

GETRIGHT!

Beanie Sigel never scanned one million units!

Yet he had his own clothing line, his own record label, feature films...etc.

What the hell can this gut beef about? OMG, and then his explanation talks about how he only owned 20 percent of the clothing line and 20 percent of the record label—but so the hell what!

This is a dude who had ideas, but didn't have the business sense to not shoot at people in public, so he went to jail!

Imagine investing all that money into an artist, having that success and then he does something dumb! How can he complain about having 20 percent of businesses that most rappers in his position have zero percentage of?

Who cares if Jay & Dame owned the majority, that means you have an enterprise operat-

ing underneath an already successful empire.

He could've bought more and more of his company over time and become a business man. He was given the opportunity to become a mogul...but he went to jail.

Jail. An American business blackman take part in and never profit from.

When you have given an artist, a young black man with all the potential in the world... when you give that dude a key to change his destiny...an avenue to become something great and then he squanders it, ends up needy and now wants to attack you...you understand that even with President Barack Obama in the White House we are far from out of the woods.

And you say "okay, Mike, what does our president have to do with this gutter rap beef nonsense?" - and I say, black people are inundated with nonsense! If there was an enema that would clear out all the nonsense I would petition Oprah to buy one for all 36 million of y'all instead of some damn KFC (still trippin about that).

Have you ever been in argument with someone and at a certain point you see that this person is not operating with logic and reason? Like...you are there. In right mind, making progress to a resolution and you see "Damn, this person isn't even equipped with the capacity to see a resolution...this ni**a is just arguing!"

That's where we are, people.

The mentality of Toledo's music scene, for example, the lack of professionalism here

(I could tell y'all a story about my weekend you would not believe) and the problems you see in the music industry are very closely tied to the problems in our black community.

No matter right or wrong, some just want to argue.

No matter how it may undo years of progress, some just

want a war.

No matter all the eight-year olds watching us to see what we do next, some just want to carry on in sheer buffoonery.

It breaks my heart.

Honest to goodness, it does.

50Cent is becoming a living cancer in the music business. Unable to shine his light as bright as it once was so all he can do is make sure that others stay dim.

And there are people like that here in Toledo.

JAY Z vs. Gucci, Baby, Game, 50Cent & now his own artist Beanie Sigel

To me, Jay Z should not respond to all the numerous attacks coming at him.

He's beyond it. I said on T.J. Caz's station facebook how Jay Z only battling with other people on his level...someone with 10-plus years as a consistent rap music heavyweight... that makes sense.

In my opinion, a good rap battle if both sides are willing and it doesn't get violent...that's okay. Jay Z and Nas were good for hip-hop. The true was great for hip-hop. Even Kanye and 50Cent's sales battle two Septembers ago was good for hip-hop. But

when no one follows the code, when we revert intellectuals back down to Neanderthals... when we succumb to the whim of the lowest common denominator, we have not only lost our way but forfeited the success achieved up until this point.

You may want to concoct your conspiracy theory about Jay Z, Diddy, Oprah, President Barack Obama or any other historical level successful black person... but if you were using common sense you would see that having these icons to look at does an immense amount of good.

It's crazy... white people, black people and every people in between helped to put our icons in the position they are in but the first people in line to tear them down are...black People.

All I'm asking is that you follow the code of common sense and have some honor.

Have a problem with someone for a legitimate reason, not because you just feel like having a problem.

Hip-hop fans. I don't know what to tell you.

Jay Z delivered a brilliant album, gave us the art of lyricism we so desperately needed

and restored quality to our fractured and miserable genre.

And all everyone can think to do, is attack and hate him for it.

If something doesn't change soon, the beacon of light so many of us have looked to since childhood may grow dim.

For every dumb ass wack rapper that gets airplay, there are those listeners who long for our music to once again have balance. Room for dumb rappers, room for great artists who happen to rap and maybe offer their people a glimpse of hope through their own personal achievement.

But it's looking bad lately, real bad.

If you are reading this... and you KNOW you're a hater, I know you feel it in your gut.

You are lacking that balance, common sense, integrity and value we need to have in our art and in how we deal with each other.

In our communities, our artforms and our enterprises we need to exercise that demon of hate. Before we, our idols and our ideals self-destruct.

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Englewood Peace Academy's Safe Walk to School

Special to The Truth

On October 30, 2009, Englewood Peace Academy celebrated International Walk to School Month by promoting a **Safe Walk to School Event**. EPA became involved in this event through the group effort of staff, parents and students.

Initially, EPA's school counselor, Odessa Rowan, began planning and organizing for this event over the summer after being awarded a grant from the Ohio Department of

Transportation and encouraged everyone to get involved. Thanks to everyone's efforts EPA's students have a better understanding of how important it is to be able to walk to school safely.

In addition to participating in the morning of the walk, students also participated in an essay contest that asked them to explain why they believed that it was important for students to be able to walk to school. The essays could fo-

cus on a variety of issues including safety, environmental issues and being healthy.

Students and staff members gathered together on Friday, October 30, 2009 for an all-

school assembly to learn that eighth grader Royal Mumford was the winner of the contest.

Joining the school in awarding their essayists was Mayor Marty Finkbiener, who awarded certificates of participation to each student who entered the contest.

In addition to the Safe Walk to School event, students also participated in **Red Ribbon Week**. Red Ribbon Week is traditionally celebrated each Octoberto remind school com-

munities of the importance of choosing a drug free lifestyle.

Englewood students actively drew awareness to this cause by hosting different events all week that promoted living a life that is drug free. Our awareness campaign was led by the elected student members of EPA's Peace Council.

If you would like more information on these events and Englewood Peace Academy, please visit

www.Englewoodpeace.org



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CLASSIFIEDS

November 18, 2009

Page 15

INVITATION FOR BIDS

The Lucas Metropolitan Housing Authority is seeking bids from qualified contractors to furnish all labor, materials, and equipment for the following project(s):

JOB NO.: 29096

PROJECT NAME: Northern Heights Concrete Replacement

WALK-THRU DATE: Thursday, November 5, 2009 @ 10:00am

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All bids will be publicly opened and read aloud in the 2nd Floor Conference Room on the dates shown above, in the Modernization Department, at 201 Belmont Street. Contract documents and technical specifications/drawings will be available from the Modernization Department, and will be provided upon request.

Each bid shall be accompanied by cash, an approved surety company bid bond, or a certified check upon a solvent bank, made payable to the Lucas Metropolitan Housing Authority in an amount equal to five (5) percent of the bid, tendered as a bid guarantee (if required) that the bidder will, if the award is made to him, enter into a bona fide contract with Lucas Metropolitan Housing Authority for this work and furnish proper guarantee bonding as required under the specifications within a period of ten (10) days after the awarding of the contract.

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By S. Yvon Harper, CEO
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Cash Settlement Now Available to Chapter 7 Bankruptcy Filers

Are you or someone you know one of the millions of Americans who was discharged from a Chapter 7 bankruptcy between March 15, 2002 and May 11, 2009? If so, you may be entitled to a cash settlement from a class action lawsuit against the Big 3 credit reporting agencies (CRAs) of Equifax, TransUnion and Experian. In fact you may have received a settlement postcard indicating this recently. The key is that in order to participate in the class action suit you must act by no later than **November 30, 2009**.

This is a major lawsuit settlement against the Big 3 CRAs mentioned above. Due to their negligence of improperly updating and reporting post bankruptcy credit information on the credit reports of millions of Chapter 7 consumers. The Big 3 CRAs failed to update credit accounts and late payments to show zero balances when they were included in bankruptcy once they were discharged.

The failure of the Big 3 CRAs to properly do this has caused some bankrupt consumers extended grief in a variety of ways. The impact to these individuals may have resulted in denied credit card or auto applications, mortgage loans and even new jobs, when credit was a decision making factor.

The settlement fund up for grabs, called the White and Hernandez settlement, is \$45 million. Awards will vary dependent on certain factors. These factors include whether you were indeed damaged by the CRA's errors and how you were damaged. Claimants need only to provide general information to be considered in the settlement. Once the needed information is submitted here is the estimated settlement you can expect:

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Denied Home Loan/Rental of Property \$500
Denied Job Opportunity \$750

The lawsuit also puts in place at least two other major measures for current and future Chapter 7 bankruptcy filers. These measures are designed to correct and eliminate future CRA errors when reporting credit information for this bankruptcy class. They require the Big 3 CRAs to:

1. Retroactively do credit corrections - this requires the

Big 3 to go back and correctly update all Chapter 7 consumer information to report zero balances for discharged accounts.

2. Systemic Safety Nets - now requires Big 3 automation of Chapter 7 bankruptcy balance information so that it is automatically updated without waiting for the consumer to report the need to do so in the future.

This is a major win for those Chapter 7 filers who have had to continually challenge incorrect information on their credit reports with the Big 3 CRAs. Unfortunately, this lawsuit does not include Chapter 13 bankruptcy filers.

What if you filed Chapter 7 and didn't get or lost your notification? You can still participate and request inclusion by going directly to www.BankruptcySettlement.com or by calling **1-866-237-3432**. You must have been discharged between March 15, 2002 and May 11, 2009 from a Chapter 7 bankruptcy. If you are a California filer the dates are May 12, 2001 to May 11, 2009, which is a little longer time period. Remember everyone must act by no

later than **November 30, 2009** to be included in the settlement.

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sult with a qualified legal or tax advisor to analyze your specific financial situation before application of any advice from this column.



Thank You Toledo!

To all of my friends, family, volunteers, supporters and community...
Thank you for your confidence and support throughout my campaign. I am honored to serve you for the next four years. I could not have done this without you!

Thank You Unions!

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Thank you to all of those of who gave me useful advice that are not mentioned here.

Thank You Media!

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