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"WE MAKE AMERICA BETTER, WHEN WE AID OUR PEOPLE." - E. L. GOODWIN (PUBLISHER, 1936-1978)

SERVING GREATER TULSA SINCE 1921

WEEK
5,337

SINCE THE
1921
TULSA
RACE
MASSACRE

It's long overdue for the criminals who destroyed the Greenwood community in 1921 to be held accountable. Each week we remember a departed member of our community.

NATION
FLORIDA EDU., OUR
ANCESTORS BENEFITTED
FROM BEING ENSLAVED A14

By AZIAH SHID, WORD IN BLACK
FLORIDA SCHOOL CURRICULUM

NATION
PRES. OBAMA PENS LOVE
LETTER TO LIBRARIANS,
AGAINST BOOK BANS A15

By AZIAH SHID, WORD IN BLACK
OBAMA, LIBRARIANS

Will Justice Prevail For Race Massacre Survivors?

GARY LEE, A3

SURVIVORS LAWSUIT

"A Whistle Blew About 5:00 A.M., AND THE INVASION OF GREENWOOD BEGAN"

ROSS D. JOHNSON,
A WHISTLE BLEW



LOCAL & STATE

WHY MOST OKLAHOMA RURAL
HOSPITALS HAVEN'T ACCEPTED
CONGRESS' OFFER TO SAVE THEM

By LIONEL RAMOS AND YASMEEN SAADI, OKLAHOMA WATCH

RURAL HOSPITALS cont. A9

LOCAL & STATE

EDUCATION WATCH: TEXTBOOK
COMMITTEE BEGINS ANNUAL
REVIEW, FOCUS ON MATH

By JENNIFER PALMER, OKLAHOMA WATCH

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LOCAL & STATE

TREAT FORMALLY REQUESTS
DRUMMOND INTERVENTION IN
TRIBAL GAMING LAWSUIT

By MICHAEL MCNUTT, NONDOC

TRIBAL GAMING LAWSUIT cont. A10



8 10499 02044 7



Here for Your Health: COVID-19 Testing and Vaccines Available at Walgreens

Did you know you may be eligible to receive free, in-person testing and vaccines without insurance?*

By Jamal Downer, PharmD, Walgreens Pharmacy Manager

Despite the end of the federal public health emergency, COVID-19 is still present, disproportionately affecting Black and Hispanic communities. That’s why it’s crucial to keep protecting ourselves and our loved ones.

Your local Walgreens pharmacist is committed to keeping you safe and healthy, providing reliable services in testing and vaccines.

Testing remains essential for the diagnosis and containment of COVID-19. Walgreens offers in-person rapid tests as well as at-home tests. Uninsured patients may be eligible for a free in-person test.* If you do have insurance and questions about your coverage, you can reach out to your individual provider.

Testing can determine if you are infected, even if you have no symptoms, and help prevent the spread of COVID-19 by informing those who test positive for an infection, so they may isolate to prevent spreading to others.

If you do test positive, talk to your pharmacists about treatment options. Oral antivirals are available to qualifying patients at your local pharmacy to aid recovery. With convenient pickup and delivery options, getting the care you need has never been easier.

Vaccines are also available at no cost and have been proven to be the most effective way to prevent the spread of the virus. You can receive multiple vaccines, including those for shingles and pneumonia, at your local pharmacy, saving you time and ensuring you’re up to date on the recommended immunizations in a single visit.

Your Walgreens pharmacist is committed to providing access to necessary testing and vaccine services, restoring health to our communities.

Visit walgreens.com/findcare/services, use the **Walgreens app** or call **1-800-WALGREENS** to learn more about COVID-19 vaccines, testing, and treatments.

At Walgreens, getting tested is easy and quick. Here’s how our COVID-19 testing works:

- Choose a location and time for your COVID-19 test.
- Complete a brief questionnaire.
- At the time of your appointment, go to the pharmacy drive-thru or follow signs to the store’s designated testing area inside the store. Wear a mask if entering the store to ensure the safety and health of fellow patients.
- Show your confirmation email, a valid state ID or driver’s license, and an insurance card or voucher, if applicable.
- Perform the nasal swab yourself under the direction of a pharmacy team member.
- Receive an email with a secure link to test results.



Jamal Downer, PharmD, Walgreens Pharmacy Manager, New York, NY

*No cost COVID-19 testing may be available for uninsured patients who meet federal eligibility criteria. Contact your insurance provider to see if they offer testing coverage before scheduling your test. You may be billed by Walgreens, and if applicable, the laboratory, for up to the full price of the test if you owe a copay, your insurance denies coverage or if you don't meet eligibility criteria for government no-cost testing programs.

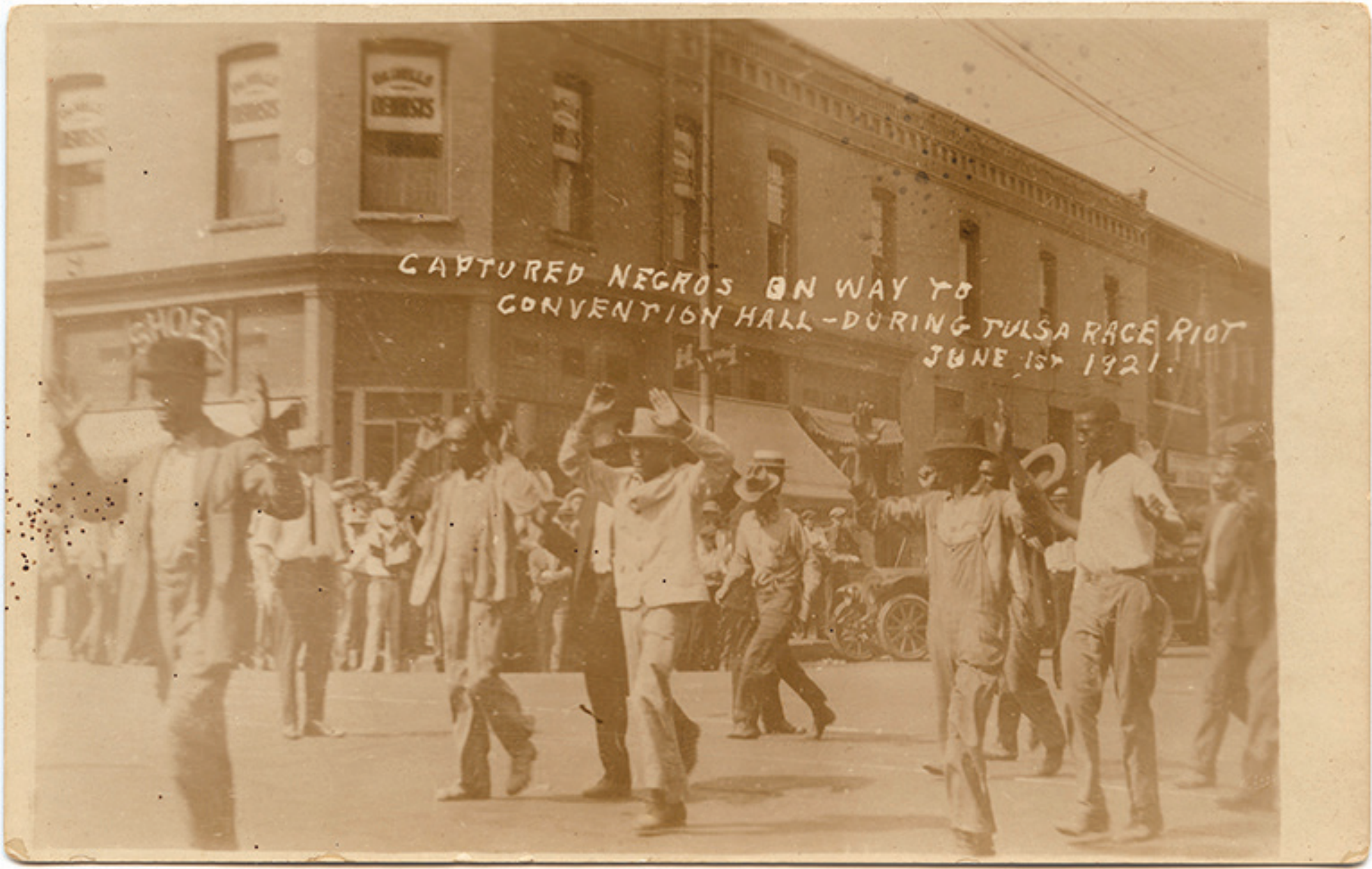


RACE MASSACRE CASE ANATOMY

The Tulsa District Court's dismissal and the years-long effort for justice and accountability. **A6**

SAVING OKLAHOMA'S RURAL HOSPITALS

Thirty-three hospitals in Oklahoma have shuttered because of financial strain since 2007. **A9**



"CAPTURED NEGROS ON WAY TO CONVENTION HALL" -- During Tulsa Race Riot, June 1st, 1921. PHOTO DEGOLYER LIBRARY, SOUTHERN METHODIST UNIVERSITY, WIKIPEDIA

The Ramifications of the Court's Dismissal Reach FAR BEYOND TULSA

SURVIVORS LAWSUIT *from A1*

With Tulsa County District Judge Caroline Wall's dismissal of the Race Massacre survivor's case for reparations, the burning question is whether there is any remaining hope for justice for the victims of the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre, the most murderous, violent acts in the city's history.

The legal team fighting for the survivors is preparing to appeal Wall's July 7 decision to reject the case to the Oklahoma Supreme Court. The appeal must be submitted by August 7. The team must launch a new legal battle if the Supreme Court decides to move forward.

The lawsuit was initially filed in 2020. It stated that the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre represented an "ongoing public nuisance" to survivors Viola Fletcher, Lessie Benningfield Randle, and Hughes Van Ellis Sr. The lawsuit also said the destruction of what had been America's most prosperous Black business community continues to affect Tulsa. Wall rejected the case "with prejudice," which means it can not be resubmitted.

"Most legal experts who are looking at this case say we absolutely have a right to move forward and have the opportunity to prove our case," said Damario Solomon-Simmons, the Tulsa attorney who is leading the defense on behalf of the three race massacre survivors in an interview with The Oklahoma Eagle.

Keeping hope alive

Solomon-Simmons is keeping hope alive that the Court will eventually rule in the survivors' favor.

"We feel very strongly that the law is clearly on our side, that there's no legal basis for us to be in for us, our case to be dismissed at this stage of a motion to dismiss," he told the Eagle.

Solomon-Simmons added that he draws from the example of his ancestors to guide his way forward.

"I look at the picture of B.C. Franklin and I.W. Spears, practicing law in a tent [a] day after the massacre also fallen against the very people that perpetrated the massacre. And I'm saying if they really, if they had the courage or the strength? What I'm dealing with, all of the obstacles and opposition, literally pales compared to

what they did. So that is how I believe, that is how I can say, okay, let's go ahead."

Oklahoma St. Rep. Regina Goodwin (Dist. 73) concurs. "We have to follow the legal procedures and hope that they did the right thing," she said in an interview with The Oklahoma Eagle. "Of course, prayer will also be needed," she added. Goodwin is a prominent north Tulsa descendant of race massacre victims and an outspoken advocate for race massacre survivors.

"Unfortunately, this is what we have been accustomed to," Goodwin continued. "This is our third go-round and going all the way back to my great-grandmother and 1922. There was another lawsuit in the early 2000s. And now here we are in 2023, and we're making the same unjust decision.

Plain and simple: It is wrong."

Solomon-Simmons, Goodwin, and other supporters of the race massacre survivors expressed shock and disappointment that Judge Wall ruled against the case.

"After the ruling came down, I went through a period of 36 hours of hurting and just feeling depressed," Solomon-Simmons said. "And I concluded after speaking to some supervisors and family members and praying and getting myself back into what we call fighting form."

Survivors shocked

"It was hard to read the dismissal news," Goodwin added. "We know that in any fair system, that suit should not have been dismissed."

The survivors were shocked at Judge Wall's ruling, Solomon-Simmons said. "But these are people who have survived every possible trauma," he added. "They see his as something we will get through."

The ramifications of Wall's dismissal of the case reach far beyond Tulsa and Oklahoma. Dozens of Black communities across the U.S. seeking reparations for the ills of slavery were watching the lawsuit closely to determine if the courts might be an avenue to pursue.

"With this decision, many advocates of reparations elsewhere realize that they cannot put total faith in the courts," said Solomon-Simmons.

Some observers expressed skepticism

"The city police department and the county sheriff's office deputized and armed white Tulsans to murder, loot, and burn the nearly 40 city blocks of the Greenwood District"

Randle v. City of Tulsa
Tulsa County District Court

that the Oklahoma Supreme Court would even decide to hear the case.

Some even pondered whether Judge Wall's decision marked the death knell for the three Tulsa Race Massacre victims' legal battles for compensation. In an interview with the Oklahoma Eagle in June 2022, celebrated journalist and author Nikole Hannah-Jones noted that in similar instances nationwide, the court has prolonged the case until all of the survivors involved in such cases have passed. All three survivors in the lawsuit are more than 100 years old. "Maybe that's what they are doing in Tulsa," she said.

The history of the survivors seeking reparations through the courts underscores their pessimism.

In 2005, the U.S. Supreme Court declined to hear a reparations case appeal after federal courts determined that the statute of limitations had expired. Following that ruling, dozens of survivors stood dejected outside the Supreme Court.

The lawsuit that Judge Wall ruled against identified seven entities or organizations it alleges were directly involved in the massacre. They include the city, county, state National Guard and Tulsa Chamber of Commerce.

"The city police department and the county sheriff's office deputized and armed white Tulsans to murder, loot, and burn the nearly 40 city blocks of the Greenwood District," the lawsuit stated.

"The State National Guard participated with this angry white mob in killing and looting and destroying the property of Black residents of Greenwood. The city, sheriff, chamber, and county targeted Black community leaders and victims of the massacre for prosecution as instigators of the massacre — despite knowing who was truly responsible."

The lawsuit accuses the chamber of joining other officials after the massacre to impose martial law and round up survivors into "concentration camps," only releasing them if white employers sponsored them to work.

In her decision, Wall sided with the City of Tulsa. In earlier filings, the City argued that "simply being connected to a historical event does not provide a person with unlimited rights to seek compensation from any project in any way related to that historical event.

Vernon: An Historic Oklahoma All-Black Town

By LARRY O’DELL, THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF OKLAHOMA HISTORY AND CULTURE

An All-Black town located in southwestern McIntosh County ten miles southeast of Dustin, Vernon was established in 1911 on the Tankard Ranch in the Creek Nation.



Vernon is one of more than fifty All-Black towns of Oklahoma and is one of thirteen still existing. Thomas Haynes secured much of the land for the townsite and played a large part organizing the community. Its name honored Bishop W. T. Vernon of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. The town received a postal designation in 1912, with Ella Woods as the postmaster. Edward Woodard served as the town’s first president, but he did not long remain

in office. Louise Wesley established the first school and church. The congregation conducted church under a tree; Wesley taught school in her home. In 1917 the community built the New Hope Baptist Church. When the Julius Rosenwald Fund provided money to help build a public school, Vernon became one of the first communities in Oklahoma to receive assistance from that philanthropic source. The Vernon Rock Front Post Office is listed in the

National Register of Historic Places (NR 84003152). Rock Hill School is listed in the Oklahoma Landmarks Inventory as a resource related to African American history. Like many rural towns of Oklahoma, Vernon suffered economic distress during the Great Depression. The exodus of many residents to urban centers after World War II added to the loss of residents. No population statistics are available.

THE OKLAHOMA HISTORICAL SOCIETY is an agency of the government of Oklahoma dedicated to promotion and preservation of Oklahoma’s history and its people by collecting, interpreting, and disseminating knowledge and artifacts of Oklahoma.

VERNON’S US POST OFFICE 1980
(2012.201.B1329.0529, photo by P. Howell, Oklahoma Publishing Company Photography Collection, OHS)

Featured Last Week



Man In Mental Health Crisis Killed By Passing Truck



Walters, State School Superintendent Drawn To Hotseat



ARPA Program Providing Tribal Small Businesses ‘Access To Capital’

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THE EDMUND PETTUS BRIDGE carries U.S. Route 80 Business (US 80 Bus.) across the Alabama River in Selma, Alabama. The Edmund Pettus Bridge was the site of the conflict of Bloody Sunday on March 7, 1965, when police attacked Civil Rights Movement demonstrators with horses, billy clubs, and tear gas as they were attempting to march to the state capital, Montgomery. PHOTO ADOBE IMAGES

WALTERS WROTE TO TEXTBOOK PUBLISHERS to ask them to *remove all references* to the race and gender concepts banned by *House Bill 1775*

By JENNIFER PALMER, OKLAHOMA WATCH
TEXTBOOK COMMITTEE

The State Textbook Committee is undertaking its first evaluation of textbooks for use by Oklahoma public schools since Ryan Walters was elected superintendent of public instruction.

Textbook publishers were invited to present their materials to committee members over three days this week. The committee is tasked with evaluating each submission based on the quality of the materials and how well it aligns to state standards.

The committee’s work is protected by the state constitution, adopted by voters in 1946 by initiative petition. It’s comprised of 13 members, each appointed by the governor. State law requires a majority to be active classroom teachers but reserves two seats for non teachers who are parents of a public school student.

Walters designated Board of Education Member Kendra Wesson to chair the textbook committee.

The committee typically reviews one subject each year on a six-year cycle; this year’s focus is math and some early childhood materials. Approved titles are placed on a centralized list for districts to choose from.

While the process shouldn’t be political, the committee’s work could be influenced by Walters, who has advocated for schools to

The committee’s work is protected by the state constitution, adopted by voters in 1946.



PHOTO ADOBE IMAGES

return to the basics and even teach the Bible. His administration in February cut the words diverse, bias and equity from the state’s computer science standards because he said the concepts are too “woke.”

In May 2022, while he was secretary of education, Walters wrote to textbook publishers to ask them to remove all references to the race and gender concepts banned by House Bill 1775 in order to sell their books to Oklahoma schools. “Critical race theory is not welcome in Oklahoma,” Walters wrote.

While those issues are more likely to surface in 2025 when social studies textbooks are up for review, this year’s evaluation could still ignite controversy if the committee tries rooting out references to DEI, CRT, or social-emotional learning.

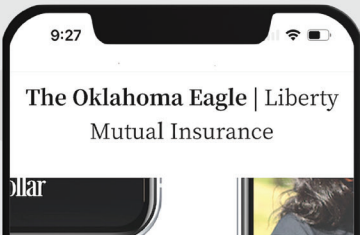
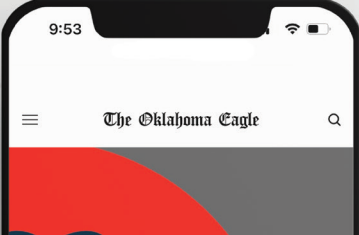
That’s what happened in Florida last year, when the state rejected 41% of math materials submitted either because they did not align with Florida academic standards or they included prohibited topics and unsolicited strategies, or both, according to the Florida Department of Education.

As I continue reporting on the state Textbook Committee, what questions, comments or story ideas do you have? Reach out via email or direct message.

The Oklahoma Eagle

Our Mission

To amplify our core value of equity, through journalism and editorial” is the cornerstone of our continued success.



Viola
Ford
Fletcher
SURVIVOR



Hughes
Van
Ellis, Sr.
SURVIVOR



A WHISTLE BLEW from AI

The survivors, descendants, and communities of Tulsa, Oklahoma that continue to struggle in the wake of the state-sanctioned, institutional and societal racism that culminated in the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre, followed by more than 100 years of legislative cowardice intended to protect the interests of those who benefited from the deaths of the innocent, will find no immediate respite in the halls of Tulsa district courts, reveals by Tulsa County Judge Caroline Wall’s final ruling late Friday, Jul.7.

We learned, on Aug. 3, after reading Wall’s order regarding Randle v. City of Tulsa, that although survivors may have legal standing to pursue injury claims, Tulsa communities must rely upon state legislators for ‘remedy’. The same republican-led, politically conservative cast of legislators that legalized the suppression of teaching a comprehensive national history and the protection of public-school student’s comfort when discussing racial bias, must now be trusted to right their wrongs.

Simply stated, justice for Tulsa communities will not be achieved via Oklahoma’s courts.

“Separation of powers”, the Oklahoma court’s safe word, a state constitutional statute akin to “well, I don’t believe that our history of violence against Black Tulsans was that bad,” affords descendants of the Race Massacre and Tulsa communities today, nothing more than shrugged shoulders and stoic countenances from Oklahoma justices. How such a well-forged shield against reasonable calls for accountability impacted the efforts of the Justice for Greenwood legal team was a question finally answered, and no sign of relief remains visible for the descendants of the Historic Greenwood District.

THE HISTORY

The 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre descendants’ claims reveal the deeply rooted depravity of the city of Tulsa’s governing, law enforcement, state agency and neighboring white residents’ long-survived hatred of the Historic Greenwood District’s Black citizens.

Known, are the facts that are accurately represented as the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre, a days-long siege against the Black residents the District, leaving behind the slain bodies of as many as 300 innocent men, women and children upon the open ground, beneath the summer sun.

By days end, on June 1, upwards of 10,000 Greenwood residents were reft of their homes, businesses, churches and livelihoods of what once comprised the nation’s most prominent and successful Black community. White Tulsans, in the wake of these atrocities, left fires that burned throughout the night, filling the darkened sky with the ashes of those who once regarded the streets of Greenwood safe.

With only 18 graduates, Tulsa’s renowned Booker T. Washington High School’s 1921 graduating class would mark the moment and their accomplishments as the same point in time when their neighbors, friends and family members potentially fled their homes, only to be murdered upon entering the street.

As the siege began, many Black Tulsans were forced to risk their lives in protection of older family members. Carrie Kinlaw, a woman who lived near the Section Line, ran toward the fighting in order to help her siblings retrieve their “invalid” mother. The “rain of bullets,” described by Kinlaw, were fired by approximately six squads of rioters who overtook the family. Kinlaw recalled, with great clarity, that her eventual captors with not merely adults, but children “from about 10 years upward, all armed.”

“Is the whole world on fire?” asked a young playmate of eight-year-old Kinney Booker, who was fleeing with his family from their home on North Frank fort.

The ongoing horrors appeared without limit. “One Negro was dragged behind an automobile, with a rope around his neck, through the business district,” reported the Tulsa World in its “Second Extra” edition on the morning of June 1.

Many white Tulsans met the prospect of murdering innocent Black residents without pause, as detailed by Guy Ashby, a young white employee at Cooper’s Grocery. The fourteenth street proprietor informed Ashby, after arriving for work, that “there

would be no work that day, declaring it ‘Nigger Day,’ and that he “was going hunting niggers.”

NAACP civil rights investigator Walter Francis White, who traveled to Tulsa after the riot, recounted in an article published by The Nation magazine:

One story was told to me by an eyewitness of five colored men trapped in a burning house. Four burned to death. A fifth attempted to flee, was shot to death as he emerged from the burning structure, and his body was thrown back into the flames. – The Eruption of Tulsa, White, F., The Nation, 1921

State agency officials actively “participated in the mass arrests of all or nearly all of Greenwood’s residents, removed them to other parts of the city, and detained them in holding centers”, according to the commission’s report. Forcibly detained, thousands of Black Tulsans would only gain their release “upon the application of a white person, and then only if that white person agreed to accept responsibility for that detainee’s subsequent behavior.”

Further detailed in the Final Report of Findings and Recommendations of the 1921 Tulsa Race Riot Commission, civil officials, deputized citizens, public officials, units of the Oklahoma National Guard, agents of the government and private citizens, all white, committed “overt acts” of violence against Black Tulsans. To date, more than 100 years later, “Not one of these criminal acts was then or ever has been prosecuted or punished by government at any level, municipal, county, state, or federal.

Originating in 1997 with Oklahoma House Joint Resolution No. 1035, and twice amended, the Commission was charged with undertaking a study to develop a historical record of the 1921 Tulsa Race Riot. The commission’s final report reflected insights gathered from testimony, extensive research, established records and included contextual summaries by Drs. John Hope Franklin and Scott Ellsworth.

The later authors’ work, in part, included an account of the significant destruction of Greenwood’s commercial district. “The Stradford Hotel, a modern fifty-four room brick establishment which housed a drug store, barber shop, restaurant and banquet hall, had been burned to the ground. So had the Gurley Hotel, the Red Wing Hotel, and the Midway Hotel. Literally dozens of family-run businesses—from cafes and mom-and-pop grocery stores to the Dreamland Theater, the Y.M.C.A. Cleaners, the East End Feed Store, and Osborne Monroe’s roller-skating rink — had also gone up in flames, taking with them the livelihoods, and in many cases the life savings, of literally hundreds of people. The offices of two newspapers — the Tulsa Star and the Oklahoma Sun — had also been destroyed, as were the offices of more than a dozen doctors, dentists, lawyers, realtors, and other professionals. A United States Post Office sub-station was burned, as was the all-black Frissell Memorial Hospital. The brand-new Booker T. Washington High School building escaped the torches of the rioters, but Dunbar Elementary School did not. Neither did more than a half-dozen African American churches, including the newly constructed Mount Zion Baptist Church, an impressive brick tabernacle which had been dedicated only seven weeks earlier.”

Tulsa’s culpability has long been a subject of consistently nuanced truths, its sharp edges blunted, faces made indistinguishable, records ‘lost’, official capacities now undeterminable and voices muted... whitewashed.

The ‘least biased’ accounts, noted within the Oklahoma Commission to Study the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921, reveal a chronology of events and culpability that fully align with the context articulated by Damarion Solomon-Simmons, the Tulsa-based attorney representing Lessie Benningfield Randle, Viola Fletcher, and Hughes Van Ellis, Sr., survivors of the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre.

The 1926 opinion of the Oklahoma Supreme Court, written by Commissioner Ray, in Redfearn v. American Central Insurance Company, provided a foundational account of the events that

A WHISTLE BLEW cont. A7

Lessie
Benningfield
Randle
SURVIVOR



“With joy, we once
did greet you, but
with sadness, we
depart.”

— 1921 Class Poem Excerpt, Booker T. Washington
High School, Tulsa, Oklahoma

A WHISTLE BLEW from A6
transpired prior to siege upon Black Tulsans.
William Redfearn, a white man who owned and
subsequently lost two buildings in Greenwood
during The Massacre, the Dixie Theatre and
the Red Wing Hotel, sued the American Central
Insurance Company after his claim was rejected,
citing a riot exclusion clause in the policies.
The court’s opinion, after two years of
litigation, established the following record:

The deputy marshal in the case before us
had no more authority to set the house on
fire than the sheriff in the case cited... The
loss of the house was not due, directly or
indirectly, to the riot carried on by the men
within the house. It was due directly to the
wrongful act of the marshal in setting fire to
the house without authority.
While the evidence shows that a great
number of men engaged in arresting the
negroes found in the negro section wore
police badges, or badges indicating they
were deputy sheriffs, and in some instances
were dressed in soldier’s clothes and
represented to the negroes that they were
soldiers, there is no evidence that any negro
ever resisted arrest, or that any fire was
started in order to make such arrest.

Redfearn v. American Central Ins. Co., 116
Okla. 137, 139 (Okla. 1926)

Commissioner Ray, yielding to a pro-police
bias, concluded that although the white men who

participated in the act of arson against Redfearn’s
property were “wearing police badges or sheriff’s
badges” there was no evidence that they were
acting in an official capacity.
The court’s opinion, however, was contradicted
by the account of Major General Charles F.
Barrett, of the Oklahoma National Guard during
the riot, who authored Oklahoma After Fifty
Years, recounting that the police chief deputized
perhaps 500 men to help put down the riot.

He did not realize that in a race war a
large part if not a majority, of those special
deputies were imbued with the same spirit
of destruction that animated the mob.
They became as deputies the most dangerous
part of the mob and after the arrival of the
adjutant general and the declaration of
martial law the first arrests ordered were
those of special officers who had hindered
the fire men in their abortive efforts to put
out the incendiary fires that many of these
special officers were accused of setting.

Such leaps beyond base reasoning and
desperate parsing are now far too common
amongst Oklahoma officials. In early July,
former high school history teacher and current
Oklahoma Superintendent of Public Instruction,
Ryan Walters, attempted the same poorly
executed mental gymnastics. Walters, a staunch
opponent of fully contextualized public school
history curriculum, attempted to divorce race
from The 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre.

**RANDLE V.
CITY OF
TULSA**

**CASE
PLAINTIFFS**

Lessie
Benningfield
Randle, Viola
Fletcher and
Hugh Van Ellis,
Sr., Historic
Vernon A.M.E.
Church, Inc.,
Laurel Stradford,
Ellouise
Cochrane-Price,
Tedra Williams,
Don M. Adams,
Don W. Adams,
Stephen Williams,
and The Tulsa
African Ancestral
Society.

**CASE
DEFENDANTS**

City of Tulsa,
Tulsa Regional
Chamber, Tulsa
Metropolitan
Area Planning
Commission,
Tulsa
Development
Authority,
Tulsa County,
Oklahoma
Military
Department & Vic
Regalado

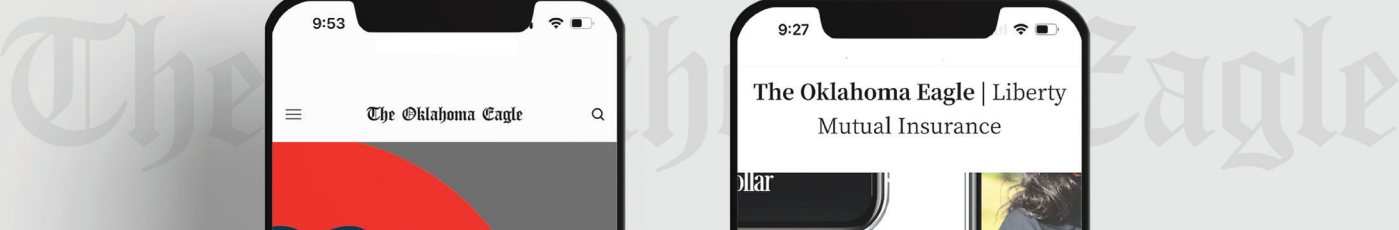
THE CASE

*No children have we to
lament, no wives to wail
our fall; The traitor’s
and the spoiler’s hand
have reft our hearths of
all.*

— Aytoun, W. E., *The Island Of The
Scots*

In the fall of 2020, Randle, Fletcher, Van Ellis, Sr. and
The Massacre descendants would commit to achieving the
accountability long avoided by the City of Tulsa for almost
a century.
Randle v. City of Tulsa would represent the voices of
The Massacre survivors, descendants, Black Tulsans, Black
Americans and all advocates of social justice.
The lawsuit, with significant detail, framed the plaintiffs’
core arguments, that the survivors and descendants of The
Massacre are the ensouled human foundation upon which the
City of Tulsa liberated white fear, denied just accountability,
failed to invest in restorative measures and enriched itself
via tourism and funding received by appropriating, then
misrepresenting, its sordid history, for which plaintiffs have
“reaped no significant direct benefits.”
The statutory means employed and legal precedents cited
were well-considered. Solomon-Simmons structured the
plaintiff’s claims as a demand for remedy of the “public
nuisance” created by the defendants and a recovery for
“unjust enrichment” for the defendants’ exploitation of The
Massacre.
Solomon-Simmons argued that the Massacre “had and
continues to have a severe impact on the comfort, repose,
health and safety” of the Greenwood neighborhood and
Greenwood community of Tulsa.
Personal recounts and formal testimonies, a fraction of
which were previously highlighted, reflect the economic and
psychological torment endured by Black Tulsans in 1921. The
loss of family, homes, businesses and community continue
to strain the hearts and minds of the once prosperous Black
Wall Street.
The years-long litigation was marked by a series of motions
advanced by defendants to dismiss the case on the basis of
‘legal standing’, challenges to claims of tribal bloodlines, and
withdrawals of counsel. By Aug. 2022, Tulsa County Judge
Caroline Wall would issue an order that served as a turning
point for the case.
During the post-ruling press conference, Aug. 4, Solomon-
Simmons’ optimism was unwavering as he responded to
Wall’s ruling.
The mid-day video conference was framed by Solomon-
Simmons’ expression of gratitude for the support of the
Greenwood community through prayer rallies, townhall
meetings, donations, and inspiring words. Tulsans, and many
Americans, remained well-invested in the outcome of a case
that represented one of country’s longest standing pursuits
for legal redress.
Joined by Justice for Greenwood legal team members
Michael Swartz, Kymberli Heckenkemper, Randall Adams,
Ekenedilichukwu “Keni” Ukabiala, and Eric J. Miller,
Solomon-Simmons recounted the legal journey thus far, and
provided some insight about the pathway forward for the
survivors and descendants.
Judge Wall’s ruling was a formal response to the defendant’s
latest motion to dismiss claims made by an historic Tulsa
church, a member-based association and 1921 Tulsa Race
Massacre survivors and descendants.
The court’s order affirmed the legal standing of the survivors
of the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre, Lessie Benningfield
Randle, Viola Fletcher and Hugh Van Ellis, Sr. in pursuit
of their public nuisance claim, however, Wall established a
clear delineation of claims regarding the “ongoing” nuisance
for events subsequent to the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre. The
distinction was significant, as Wall dismissed the specific
claim with prejudice, noting that “these claims request
relief that violates the separation of powers provided by the
Constitution of the State of Oklahoma.” The narrowed scope
of the lawsuit was then limited to claims for remedy for past
events.
The “landmark ruling”, as described by Swartz, was not
the preferred outcome of most plaintiffs, as 8 of 11 claims
were dismissed with prejudice.
Historic Vernon A.M.E. Church, Inc., a faith-home for
Black Tulsans for more than one-hundred years, alleged
property damage and the loss of prominent members,
including its pastor C.R. Tucker, according to the initial
brief filed. The City of Tulsa, and defendants, successfully
challenged Historic Vernon A.M.E. Church, Inc’s standing by
noting that the entity was not a legally recognized institution
as of The Massacre, thus unincorporated, evidenced by the
institution’s Incorporation Documents, referenced as exhibit
1. Prior to 2019, Wall recounted, the property owner of the
church was also an unincorporated entity in 1962. A technical
rejection, certainly, but it was sufficient enough for Wall to
reject the church’s standing.
The legal standing of other Defendant-Plaintiffs, Laurel
Stradford, Ellouise Cochrane-Price, Tedra Williams, Don M.
Adams, Don W. Adams, Stephen Williams, and The Tulsa
African Ancestral Society was similarly challenged and
denied.
In retrospect, Wall’s position regarding the “separation of
powers,” appears to have foreshadowed her final ruling on
Jul. 7.

A WHISTLE BLEW cont. A8





NEGRO SLAIN IN TULSA
RIOT, June-1-1921. Source
DeGolyer Library.
PHOTO SOUTHERN METHODIST
UNIVERSITY, WIKIPEDIA

THE RULING

A ruling offering fewer words than the number of Black Tulsans killed in 1921.

A WHISTLE BLEW from A7

Survivors and descendants of the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre, residents of the City of Tulsa and all who followed the century-long fight for accountability, were forced to speculate about the justification for Tulsa County Judge Caroline Wall’s final ruling of Randle v. City of Tulsa late Friday, Jul. 7.

Wall’s ruling, with fewer more than one hundred words, offered none of the context appropriate for the matter recently considered by the court, reflected by sentiments shared by local Tulsa residents since the ruling.

Tulsans must now parse Wall’s references to a “review of the record” and “the defendants’ briefs filed of record” in search of an explanation for the single paragraph ruling.

‘The record’, Tulsans must assume, are the City of Tulsa and defendant’s motions to dismiss Randle v. City of Tulsa, most specifically, the basis for which dismissal was ultimately accomplished.

Oklahoma State Courts Network (OSCN) reveals an exhaustive archive of no less than fifty attempts to invalidate the legal standing of and complaints by plaintiffs in Randle v. City of Tulsa. The Aug. 4 ruling, however, addressed all challenges against plaintiffs Randle, Fletcher and Van Ellis, Sr., with The Massacre survivors meeting the ‘statutory criteria to withstand a motion to dismiss’, only as it applied to the public nuisance claim.

The earlier ruling was unfortunately contingent upon Solomon-Simmons’ response to ‘cure’ his petition, a leave granted to clearly articulate a legally ‘cognizable abatement remedy the court’ could act upon, without a conflict with

the ‘separation of powers’ statute in the state of Oklahoma constitution.

The substance of Wall’s argument rest shallow. The Tulsa judge sat in-witness of well-stated historic atrocities and the sheer destruction caused, yet offered a narrow course for remedy, upon which no substantive resolution could be granted.

Yes, the raising of a community and the violent death of innocent men, women and children did occur.

Yes, the decades that followed The Massacre were fraught with public acts of oppression by the City of Tulsa.

Yes, the Historic Greenwood District was denied the right to peacefully exist and thrive.

But today, the injury sustained, and the lasting effect of such evil, will not be resolved.

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ALANA HOWARD, a nurse technician at Stillwater Medical - Perry, wheels out a breast cancer patient, Marjorie Miccuci, 62, who arrived at the emergency room with high blood sugar the night before, July 11, 2023. On the right is Elaine Bubb, 70, Miccuci's sister and primary caretaker. When her sister's blood sugar rose to 502, Bubb drove her five minutes from their house to the Perry hospital and said if they had to drive 30 minutes to Stillwater for emergency services the situation could have been far more dire and stressful.
PHOTO **LIONEL RAMOS/ OKLAHOMA WATCH**

WHY MOST OKLAHOMA RURAL HOSPITALS HAVEN'T ACCEPTED CONGRESS' OFFER TO SAVE THEM

RURAL HOSPITALS *from AI*

PERRY — When her sister's blood sugar rose to a dangerous level, Elaine Bubb found comfort five minutes from home. "If we had to go to Stillwater to take care of her blood sugar, it could've gone up, it would've been risky," Bubb said last week while waiting for Marjorie Miccuci, a 62-year-old breast cancer patient, to be released from a Perry emergency room. "At the end of last month, I brought her in because she was running a 104-degree fever. We were transferred to Stillwater and by the time we got there, she was up to 106."

With Miccuci's blood sugar lowered and stabilized, the sisters were out by noon the next day, a 24-hour protocol Stillwater Medical-Perry must follow under a new arrangement aimed at saving rural hospitals.

Thirty-three hospitals in Oklahoma have shuttered because of financial strain since 2007. A dozen were in rural communities such as Frederick, Pauls Valley and Clinton, according to state Department of Health data. Since 2021, two Oklahoma facilities have chosen the federal safety net known as a Rural Emergency Hospital license in hopes of staying open.

The designation can be applied to licensed critical access hospitals, defined as rural hospitals with fewer than 26 beds that are located more than 35 miles from an acute care facility. Also qualifying are rural hospitals with general medical-surgical licenses and 50 beds or fewer. The Rural Emergency Hospital designation offers these facilities \$3.2 million annually in federal funds adjustable with inflation and a 5% boost to Medicare reimbursements.

Those benefits, however, come at a cost. Hospitals accepted must give up inpatient care and — for facilities considered critical access — a slew of other revenue streams and savings provided by the federal government.

Limiting healthcare access to an emergency room and varying degrees of outpatient services, coupled with lower federal reimbursements, means a reduced capacity to care for critically ill patients long-term and less revenue. State healthcare experts say for most Oklahoma rural hospitals, voters' 2020 decision to expand Medicaid provides a better lifeline.

The Problems With Transitioning

Transitioning to rural emergency hospitals was worth the trade-offs for Stillwater Medical facilities in Perry and Blackwell, said Courtney Kozikuzki, the system's chief financial officer.

"Before we applied, we had independent third-party auditors do a deep dive," Kozikuski said. "They took our cost report and carved out what inpatient services were providing financially to the facility and then added in the payments we would get for becoming a (Rural Emergency Hospital) to see what it would look like for us."

She said the hospitals in Perry and Blackwell lost \$400,000 to \$2 million annually in 2021 and 2022 on patient services. The audit, Kozikuski said, determined the new license designation would put the two hospitals just above breaking even, which was enough to stay open and provide emergency and outpatient care.

The two facilities, previously licensed as general hospitals under a fixed-rate payment system with the federal government, averaged a daily inpatient census of no more than three people, she said, justifying eliminating that service and accepting the new payments.

"Each facility needs to do its own deep dive of what their financial situation is," Kozikuski said. "For critical access hospitals, it may not make any sense at all because they're getting paid costs, plus 1%."

That means that for every \$100 a critical access hospital spends on a patient, it gets \$101 back from the federal government.

Janice Walters is an executive with The Rural Health Redesign Center, which assists hospitals considering the new designation. She said the financial feasibility is based on how a hospital's reimbursement would change under the new designation.

Walters identified three other concerns hospital administrators have about transitioning: whether they can ever change back to critical access, their exclusion from a federal discounted drug program and having to give up swing beds.

She focused on the importance of rural communities having access to swing beds, an option primarily for older patients needing to stay admitted more than three days after they've received acute care. With services such as physical, occupational and speech therapy, wound care and vital sign monitoring, they are often temporary solutions to a lack of nearby nursing homes.

"A lot of our rural hospitals are the therapy provider in their community. There's no other skilled nursing facilities, so swing beds are a big issue," Walters said. "This is going to be a solution for the smallest of rural hospitals. Anybody that is dealing with any significant size of inpatient care, they're not going to be able to make this transition."

Medicaid Expansion as a 'Lifeline'

The Center for Healthcare Quality and Payment Reform studies factors that put rural hospitals at risk of closure. Those factors include losses of patient services, losing money on private insurance and low financial reserves.

Many rural hospitals were losing money on patient services even during the pandemic, but were temporarily kept afloat with pandemic aid, said Harold Miller, president and CEO of the Center for Healthcare Quality and Payment Reform. Without that aid, these losses are hitting hospitals harder.

"Many small rural hospitals received fairly large grants that made them look temporarily profitable," Miller said.

While hospitals at risk are now considering changing to the rural emergency hospital designation, Miller said it's not a sound solution. In the switch from cost-based to prospective-payment reimbursement, some rural hospitals might see a decrease in revenue.

"It may only be delaying a problem, rather than solving a problem," Miller said.

Oklahoma is among the 41 states that have voted to expand Medicaid eligibility. The best option for rural hospitals is to maintain their critical access licenses and rely on more people enrolling in state-provided health insurance to achieve operational profit margins, said Rich Rasmussen, CEO of the Oklahoma Hospital Association.

Rasmussen pointed out that the biggest source of revenue for most rural hospitals is the federal government. Without reimbursements for Medicare and Medicaid, many hospitals would not be sustainable, he said.

"As demographics began changing and states started pulling back on their support for Medicaid, critical access hospitals came under financial pressure," Rasmussen said. "States that expanded Medicaid have found that the failure rate in those rural hospitals abated. States that didn't expand will continue to have closures."

Rasmussen said some hospitals are reluctant to switch to the rural emergency license because Congress overlooked some important details that only Congress can change.

"If Congress can address the issues, then I think you'll see more conversions and those conversions will probably take place in non-Medicaid expansion states," Rasmussen said. "The people of Oklahoma, in passing Medicaid expansion, they really have thrown out a lifeline to all of these rural communities."

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Education Watch: Textbook Committee Begins Annual Review, Focus on Math

JENNIFER PALMER,
Oklahoma Watch

TEXTBOOK COMMITTEE *from AI*

The State Textbook Committee is undertaking its first evaluation of textbooks for use by Oklahoma public schools since Ryan Walters was elected superintendent of public instruction. Textbook publishers were invited to present their materials to committee members over three days this week. The committee is tasked with evaluating each submission based on the quality of the materials and how well it aligns to state standards. The committee’s work is protected by the state constitution, adopted by voters in 1946 by initiative petition. It’s comprised of 13 members, each appointed by the governor. State law requires a majority to be active classroom teachers but reserves two seats for non-teachers who are parents of a public school student. Walters designated Board of Education Member Kendra Wesson to chair the textbook committee. The committee typically reviews one subject each year on a six-year cycle; this year’s focus is math and some early childhood materials. Approved titles are placed on a centralized list for districts to choose from. While the process shouldn’t be political, the committee’s work could be influenced by Walters, who has advocated

for schools to return to the basics and even teach the Bible. His administration in February cut the words diverse, bias and equity from the state’s computer science standards because he said the concepts are too “woke.” In May 2022, while he was secretary of education, Walters wrote to textbook publishers to ask them to remove all references to the race and gender concepts banned by House Bill 1775 in order to sell their books to Oklahoma schools. “Critical race theory is not welcome in Oklahoma,” Walters wrote. While those issues are more likely to surface in 2025 when social studies textbooks are up for review, this year’s evaluation could still ignite controversy if the committee tries rooting out references to DEI, CRT, or social-emotional learning. That’s what happened in Florida last year, when the state rejected 41% of math materials submitted either because they did not align with Florida academic standards or they included prohibited topics and unsolicited strategies, or both, according to the Florida Department of Education. As I continue reporting on the state Textbook Committee, what questions, comments or story ideas do you have? Reach out via email or direct message.

Edibles Are Main Cause of Oklahoma Marijuana Overdoses, Accidental Consumption

By JAZZ WOLFE, OKLAHOMA WATCH
EDIBLES OVERDOSES



In 2022, 583 cases of accidental marijuana consumption were reported to the Oklahoma Poison Center. Almost half involved a child under 6 and most involved edibles. Accidental consumption and overdoses rose dramatically in Oklahoma after the state legalized the drug for medicinal use in 2018. According to data from the Oklahoma State Department of Health, there was a 253% increase in discharges from Oklahoma hospitals for marijuana overdose between 2017 and 2021. Packaging for edible products tends to be appealing to children, particularly because it often looks like candy, said Annette Jacobi, the executive director of the Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth, in an interview with Oklahoma Watch. Edibles also tend to lack the same child-proof packaging other medical products have. National organizations are taking some steps to address packaging. In early July, the Federal Trade Commission and the Food and Drug Administration jointly sent cease and desist letters to six companies selling marijuana edible products labeled to mimic common snacks like Doritos and gummy bears. Marijuana overdoses can trigger changes in heart rate and visual, muscular and mental difficulties, making people slow to react and confused by their surroundings. In young children, consumption of marijuana can also cause temporary a lack of muscle coordination, lethargy and seizures. Accidental marijuana consumption has steadily risen nationally since 2016, according to a 2021 report by America’s Poison Centers. However, aspects of Oklahoma’s medical marijuana market differ from other states. For instance, the supply-to-demand ratio of marijuana in the state is 64 to 1, according to a June report by the Oklahoma Medical Marijuana Authority, despite demand for marijuana products being on par with other states. The Oklahoma Medical Marijuana Authority’s response to the report included a multi-pronged approach to the problem, including a goal to improve the monitoring and regulation of purchases of medical marijuana products through increased use of technological tracking systems. Despite rising medical concerns, many Americans continue to use and promote marijuana’s medical and recreational use. National Center for Drug Abuse data shows that 72% claim regular alcohol use is worse than regular cannabis use. Three-fourths believe marijuana is not as harmful as tobacco and 67% said it is safer than prescription painkillers. Alcohol use does pose medical dangers. The Center for Drug Abuse Statistics reported Oklahoma has an average of 12.6 annual deaths due to alcohol poisonings per 1 million citizens. As of 2023, marijuana overdose has never been listed as the cause of death in Oklahoma. Marijuana and alcohol use has become increasingly similar in the air of “connoisseurship” in the two cultures, said Sarah Tracy, a professor at the University of Oklahoma. While some people may prefer scotch over whiskey, others may recommend an Indica variety of marijuana over Sativa. Additionally, potencies of alcohol and marijuana have increased significantly over the decades, Tracy said. “The marijuana today is not the same marijuana as in the 1960s,” Tracy said. While marijuana potency has increased overall, Oklahoma’s average potency is on par with other states with medical marijuana, which usually fall around 20%, said Lee Rhoades, the chief science officer of the Oklahoma Medical Marijuana Authority. Rhoades said agencies in other states report steady growth in

potency. The rise in potency makes it even more important that limits on consumer purchasing of marijuana products are being enforced appropriately, said Adria Berry, the executive director of the Oklahoma Medical Marijuana Authority. Licensed Oklahoma patients can have up to 3 ounces of marijuana on their person. In their residence, they can have 6 mature marijuana plants and the harvested marijuana, 6 seedling plants, 1 ounce of concentrated marijuana, 8 ounces of marijuana, 72 ounces of edible marijuana and 72 ounces of topical marijuana. Oklahoma law also states that medical marijuana products should be treated like any other prescription drug and should be kept away from pets and children in secure packaging. Berry said one of the goals of her agency’s new strategic response plan will be to improve monitoring patient sales and enforcing the current legal limits as well as storage safety. Rhoades said the Oklahoma Commission for Children and Youth group is studying effective approaches to regulating medical marijuana safely and effectively. The group is working on putting together educational materials as well as preparing information for the Oklahoma state legislature. The group is also looking into ways to improve safety for patients under 18 years old. While there is evidence small doses of marijuana are effective in treating anxiety and depression, there is medical concern that larger doses can actually worsen the conditions in teenagers. “This is a topic, in my opinion, (that) it’s time it gets addressed,” Rhoades said.

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Treat Formally Requests Drummond Intervention In Tribal Gaming Lawsuit

TRIBAL GAMING LAWSUIT *from AI*

Senate President Pro Tempore Greg Treat, who says Gov. Kevin Stitt “refuses to respect Oklahoma law and the constitutional restraints on his power,” is formally asking Attorney General Gentner Drummond to intervene in a gaming compact suit filed against the governor that has lingered the past three years. “I have no other option but to request that you intervene in the lawsuit, through whatever means you deem necessary, to defend the interests of the state,” Treat (R-OKC) wrote Drummond in a July 18 letter that is strongly critical of Stitt. Treat and House Speaker Charles McCall filed two lawsuits against the governor in 2020, claiming the revised gaming compacts he signed with four tribes were illegal because he failed first to receive legislative approval. The Oklahoma Supreme Court ruled in favor of the legislative leaders in both cases. But Stitt and those four tribes — the Comanche Nation, the Otoe-Missouria, the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians and the Kialegee Tribal Town — had submitted the new compacts to the U.S. Department of Interior, and they were deemed approved. When the Oklahoma Supreme Court said their new compacts violated the State-Tribal Gaming Act for authorizing gaming types such as sportsbook, leaders of the Otoe-Missouria and Comanche Nation said they would continue operating under the compacts because they were legal under federal law and contained severability clauses, meaning their

“It has thus become clear that the governor has a conflict”

Greg Treat (R-OKC), Oklahoma, Senate President Pro Tempore

casinos simply would not offer the types of games in question. In response, four other tribal nations filed a federal lawsuit against the secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior, Stitt and the four tribes who had signed the new compacts. That case is pending in U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, and Drummond sent legislative leaders a letter in June about the prospect of intervening on behalf of the state. “It has thus become clear that the governor has a conflict,” Treat wrote — and bolded — Tuesday in response to Drummond. “He can either choose to represent the interests of the state or his own personal interests, and I believe he has made his decision clear.” In writing to Treat and McCall (R-Atoka), Drummond sought formal direction for his office to assume the defense of Oklahoma’s interests in the lawsuit filed by the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw and Citizen Potawatomi nations. (The compacts signed by Stitt with the four smaller tribes specified new casino opportunities near those tribes’ existing casino interests.)

TRIBAL GAMING LAWSUIT *cont. A11*

“Stitt Refuses To Respect OKLAHOMA LAW”



WINSTAR WORLD CASINO. PHOTO ADOBE IMAGES

TRIBAL GAMING LAWSUIT *from AI O*

Drummond said state law gives him the discretion “to take and assume control of the prosecution or defense of the state’s interest” in any litigation involving the state. But he asked Treat and McCall to make a formal request that his office assume the defense of the federal lawsuit, in accordance with Title 74, Section 18b(A)(3).

Treat wrote to Drummond that he believes the attorney general has the authority and doesn’t need legislative approval to intervene in the case.

“But please consider this my formal request (...) on behalf of the Oklahoma State Senate to assume control of the defense of the state’s interest in Cherokee Nation, et al. v. DOI, et al. with all required speed and diligence,” Treat said.

In McCall’s June 26 response to Drummond, he also said he believes the attorney general has “unilateral authority to take over the litigation.”

But McCall’s letter did not include the “formal” request specified in Title 74, Section 18b(A)(3), which Drummond referenced in his letter and that Treat provided Tuesday.

Daniel Seitz, communications director for the House GOP Caucus, said Thursday night that McCall’s position had not changed.

Meanwhile, Abigail Cave, Stitt’s communications director, said the governor stands by the July 11 letter that his general counsel, Trevor Pemberton, sent McCall and Treat arguing that Drummond lacks the authority to take over the state’s representation in the case.

In his letter, Pemberton said a different section of that statute, Title 74, Section 18c (A)(4), gives the governor authority to employ special counsel to protect the rights or interests of the state. He said Title 74, Section 6 also grants the governor the power to employ counsel and that an Oklahoma Supreme Court ruling made it clear that when the governor and attorney general are at odds over a litigation objective, the governor’s decision prevails under the state’s constitutional framework.

On Thursday, after the publication of this article, Cave sent a statement from

“I have no other option but to request that you intervene in the lawsuit, through whatever means you deem necessary, to defend the interests of the state.”

GREG TREAT (R-OKC), Oklahoma, Senate President Pro Tempore

Stitt. “Pro Tem Treat is entitled to his opinion about a lawsuit brought by four large tribes against me and four smaller tribes, but I can assure you, there is nothing political about this for me,” Stitt said. “I’m fighting for the 4 million Oklahomans that I am constitutionally obligated to defend.”

Phil Bacharach, Drummond’s communications director, has said the AG is not interested in representing the governor personally, but was seeking authority to represent the state in this matter. On Thursday, he added that Drummond is reviewing Treat’s letter and “evaluating the best course of action to uphold and defend Oklahoma law.”

Lots of lawyers

Drummond’s correspondence with legislative leaders comes amid renewed tension between Stitt and the state’s largest tribes regarding jurisdictional matters in eastern Oklahoma.

On Wednesday, the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals denied the City of Tulsa’s request to stay a decision in Hooper v. City of Tulsa pending an appeal. That case involves whether municipal courts in eastern Oklahoma have the authority to enforce traffic tickets and other citations within the boundaries of the reservations affirmed following the July 2020 U.S. Supreme Court decision in *McGirt v. Oklahoma*. Meanwhile, Treat is expected to make a second attempt at a veto override Monday on a bill that would extend existing state-tribal tobacco compacts one year. Stitt has attempted to negotiate his own extensions that would modify geographical definitions, which he says is necessary to avoid expanded impact in a post-McGirt landscape.

In the federal gaming compact lawsuit filed in August 2020, the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw and Citizen Potawatomie nations argue that the U.S. Department of the Interior should have invalidated Stitt’s new compacts with the Comanche Nation, the Otoe-Missouria, the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians and the Kialegee Tribal Town.

The case’s most recent filing, however, was a “notice of recent authority” submitted on July 12 regarding a June 30 decision from the D.C. Court of Appeals about a Seminole Tribe of Florida compact that the Department of the Interior deemed approved in 2021 that included operation of online sports betting. The appellate court overturned a district court ruling and determined the compact is valid, noting that it complied with the federal Indian Gaming Regulatory Act.

Department of Interior attorneys submitted notice of the ruling in the Cherokee Nation case against the federal agency and Stitt because the parties had “cited the now-overruled District Court opinion in briefing plaintiffs’ pending motion to compel.”

“Among other things, the D.C. Circuit held that ‘whether or not that gaming is authorized or permissible as a matter of Florida state law falls outside the scope of the Secretary [of the Interior’s] review,’” the Department of the Interior’s attorneys wrote July 12.

In his June letter to Treat and McCall, Drummond asked the Legislature to request his office defend the Cherokee Nation lawsuit instead of the outside legal counsel hired by the governor. Those attorneys and Stitt have argued that federal approval of gaming compacts is not overturned by state court rulings in

general or in the specific case at hand.

The Oklahoma Supreme Court ruled on Jan. 26, 2021, that the governor went outside the bounds of his authority and invalidated compacts made with the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians and the Kialegee Tribal Town. The state’s high court ruled July 21, 2020, that Stitt didn’t have the power to renegotiate the Comanche and Otoe-Missouria gambling compacts to allow sports betting and certain other games.

Treat said in his letter that the governor has used the federal lawsuit to argue that Oklahoma law can be ignored “because he believes federal law endows him with the singular authority to unilaterally bind the state to illegal gaming compacts.”

“He clearly is in no position to represent the state’s interest in this matter,” Treat wrote. “I can no longer stand by and watch Oklahoma taxpayer dollars be spent on high-dollar East Coast law firms in pursuit of Gov. Stitt’s personal agenda at the expense of the state’s interests.”

Pemberton’s letter noted that Sullivan and Cromwell, a firm with an office in Washington, D.C., serves as primary litigation counsel in place of a different firm that previously served as counsel. The Oklahoma City firm Ryan Whaley provides logistical support. Meanwhile, Comanche Nation citizens recently voted to switch law firms from Dorsey & Whitney to Crowe & Dunlevy.

Treat, in his letter, said the governor may choose to retain his own counsel “to push his personal agenda, but I do not believe such counsel can or should represent the state’s interest in the litigation.”

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Sr., Pastor
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9:30 a.m.

Sunday Morning Worship 11 a.m.

Bible Study
Wednesday 7 p.m.

Rev. Emanuel L. Collier, Sr. Pastor

Gethsemane Baptist Church

727 East 56th St. North
(918) 425-6613

Dr. W. T. Lauderdale

Sunday School
9:00 a.m.

Church Services
11:00 a.m.

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Zoe' Life Church of Tulsa

Rudisill Regional Library
1520 N Hartford Ave.
Tulsa OK 74106
(918) 409-4899

Pastor Richard and Cher Lyons

Sunday Worship: 1pm
Wed- Healing School: 6:30p - 8p
"The Righteous Are As Bold As A Lion." - Prov.28:1a

SOLID ROCK 7th DAY BAPTIST CHURCH

123 E. 59th St. North
Ph: (918) 425-2077

Pastor Rick Bruner

Sabbath School (Saturday)
9:30-10:45 a.m.
Praise & Worship 11:00 a.m.
Choir Rehearsal
Wednesday 6:00 p.m.

"The Seventh Day Is Still God's Sabbath"

Northside Christ Gospel Church

3101 N. M.L King Jr. Blvd.
Tulsa OK
(918) 625-2374

Sunday School - 10 am

Sunday Morning Worship - 10:45

Sunday Evening Prayer - 7 pm
Sunday Worship - 7:30 pm
Wednesday Prayer - 7:30 pm
Wednesday worship - 8pm

Rev. John W. Anderson

VERNON AME CHURCH

307-311 N. Greenwood Ave.
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F: 918-587-0642

vernonamechurch@sbcglobal.net

Sunday Church School 8:30 am

Worship Service 10:00 am

Wednesday Bible Study 6:00 pm

Rev. Dr. Robert R. Allen Turner

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1301 S. Boston
(918) 583-5181

Rev. David Wiggs
Senior Minister

Sunday Worship
8:30 and 11:00 a.m.

Sunday School
9:40 a.m.

Sunday TV
Worship
11:00 a.m.

KTUL Channel 8

TIMOTHY BAPTIST CHURCH

821 E. 46th St. N. • 425-8021

REV. TWAN T. JONES

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Sunday Morning Worship
11:00 a.m.

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(918) 425-1071

Warren Blakney, Minister

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Sunday Morning Worship.....10:00 a.m.
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Phone: (918) 366-8870

Rev. Robert Givens

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Morning Worship 11:00 a.m.

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Tulsa, OK 74106 - (918) 835-1525

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Church Ministries: Children's Church, CIP Praise Dancers, and CIP Praise Tem.

For Further Information call (918) 835-1525.

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Pastor Bukky and Wunmi Alabi

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419 N Elgin Tulsa, Oklahoma

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Fax: 918-584-1958

Prayer Line: 918-584-PRAY

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Morning Worship 10:45

Wednesday Bible Study Noon and 7:00

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Fax: (918) 836-6833

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5:30 p.m. Support Groups
6:30 p.m. Community Dinner
7:00 p.m. Bible Study

Sunday Worship
Church School
9:45 a.m.
Worship
11:00 a.m.

Ministries: Administration, Children's Church, Children's Choir, Spirited Kids, Guest Services, Intercessors, Men's Fellowship, Outreach and much more...

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**OBAMA LETTER
TO LIBRARIANS**
In an open letter published on Jul. 17, former U.S. President Barack Obama thanked librarians. **A15**

**CUT EMPOWERS
THROUGH MUSIC**
The free after-school arts and leadership program has become a beacon of hope. **A15**



FLORIDA *Decides to Teach That Our Ancestors Benefitted From Being Enslaved*



The state’s
Education plans to
not only whitewash
Black history but
also blatantly lie to
students

By AZIAH SIID, WORD IN BLACK
FLORIDA SCHOOL CURRICULUM

Florida has taken yet another stride against teaching the full scope of Black history in statewide public schools — and it’s sparking criticism from advocates and families both state and nationwide.

The new standards, posted on July 19 to the Florida Department of Education website, approved require public schools to teach that enslaved people “developed skills that could be applied for their personal benefit” and more.

“The notion that enslaved people benefitted from being enslaved is inaccurate and a scary standard for us to establish in our education system,” Florida State Rep. Anna Eskamani said.

“I am very concerned by these standards,” Eskamani said. “Especially some of the notions that you know, enslaved people benefitted from being enslaved is inaccurate and a scary standard for us to establish in our educational curriculum.”

As Harvard Law School professor Cornell William Brooks wrote on Twitter, “Florida’s new educational standards will assault the emotional health of Black children. If the Supreme Court found segregated education hurt Black children in 1954, THIS segregated white supremacist version of Black history will do the same in 2023.”

Indeed, the new standards come with clarifications — for middle school students, teachers must educate students on “how slaves developed skills which, in some instances, could be applied for their personal benefit.”

High school students will learn about events such as

the 1920 Ocoee Massacre, the Tulsa Race Massacre, and the Rosewood Race Massacre, all egregious acts against Black bodies in history.

However, the new rules require that instruction of the Ocoee massacre include “acts of violence perpetrated against and by African Americans.” The massacre is considered the deadliest Election Day violence in the nation’s history, and, according to several historical accounts of the incident, it began when Moses Norman, a prominent Black landowner in the Ocoee, Florida, community, attempted to cast his ballot and was turned away by white poll workers.

The decision is just the latest move by Florida politicians — led by Republican governor Ron DeSantis to prevent the accurate teaching of Black history. In January, Florida’s education officials department rejected a proposed pilot version of an Advanced Placement African American Studies course for high school students after it claimed the course lacked educational value. In addition, the DeSantis-led “Stop WOKE” movement has sparked numerous book bans nationwide.

“Today’s actions by the Florida state government are an attempt to bring our country back to a 19th century America where Black life was not valued, nor our rights protected,” Derrick Johnson, president and CEO of the NAACP, said in a statement. “It is imperative that we understand that the horrors of slavery and Jim Crow were a violation of human rights and represent the darkest period in American history. We refuse to go back.”

“THE OLD PLANTATION”, c. 1780s anonymous folk painting. Depicts African-American slaves dancing to banjo and percussion. ARTIST JOHN ROSE



With Love Letter to Librarians, Obama Strikes Back Against Book Bans

By AZIAH SIID, WORD IN BLACK

OBAMA, LIBRARIANS from AI

Who would have thought that in 2023, librarians in the United States would be threatened with incarceration simply for doing their jobs? For providing families with books, and giving students a safe space to read. But unfortunately, it's true. At least 19 states have passed legislation that would lock up librarians for providing "harmful" books to minors. But now former President Barack Obama is standing up for librarians — and democracy.

In an open letter published on July 17, Obama thanked librarians —who are on the front lines of anti-truth and censorship efforts — for promoting and protecting the right to read freely read books.

The former president explained that book bans challenge the foundational principles of American democracy, like freedom of speech and expression.

"Nobody understands that more than you, our nation's librarians," Obama wrote. "In a very real sense, you're on the front lines—fighting every day to make the widest possible range of viewpoints, opinions, and ideas available to everyone... That's why I want to take a moment to thank all of you for the work you do every day—work that is helping us understand each other and embrace our shared humanity."

Obama also shared the direct impact banned or challenged books and authors had on him.

"Books have always shaped how I experience the world. Writers like Mark Twain and Toni Morrison, Walt Whitman, and James Baldwin taught me something essential about our country's character," Obama wrote. "Reading about people whose lives were very different from mine showed me how to step into someone else's shoes. And the simple act of

writing helped me develop my identity—all of which would prove vital as a citizen, as a community organizer, and as a president."

The nation's students might not have that same opportunity. Both politicians and prejudiced parents continue to crack down on books written by queer writers, as well as books by Black writers, that address the Black experience or that tell the truth about the history of racism in this country.

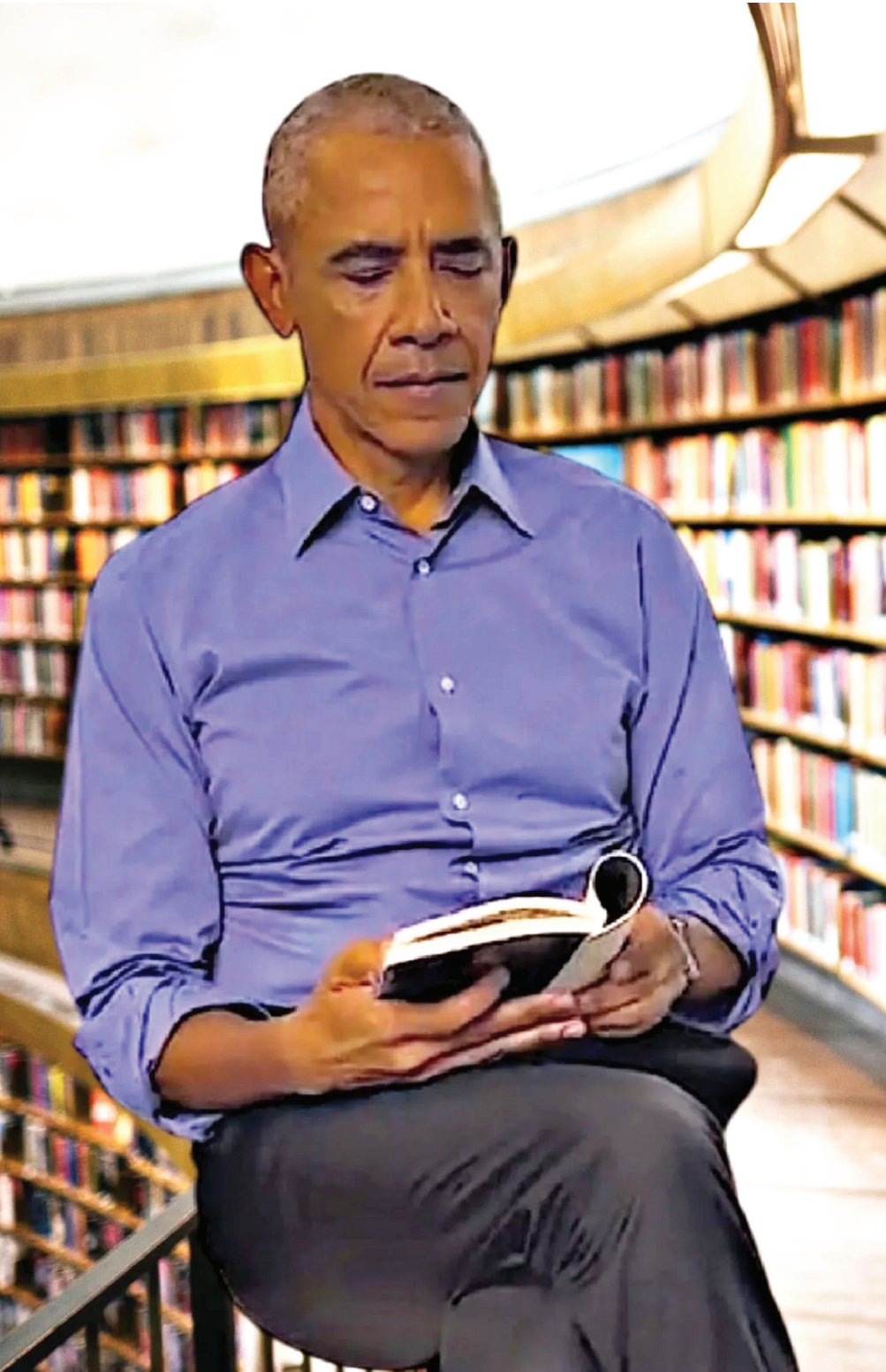
"It's no coincidence that these 'banned books' are often written by or feature people of color, indigenous people, and members of the LGBTQ+ community," Obama wrote. "Though there have also been unfortunate instances in which books by conservative authors or books containing 'triggering' words or scenes have been targets for removal. Either way, the impulse seems to be to silence, rather than engage, rebut, learn from, or seek to understand views that don't fit our own."

Efforts — like the Unbanned Book Club and Obama's appearances in Tik Tok videos to promote book access — continue to be crucial in the fight against these bans and challenges.

A suggestion offered in May during Teacher Appreciation Week was to help a teacher by supporting local librarians. With this open letter, Obama certainly seems to be doing just that.

He ended his letter by pointing out that we owe librarians "a debt of gratitude for making sure readers across the country have access to a wide range of books, and all the ideas they contain."

Obama also asked the rest of us to tell "anyone who will listen — and even some people you think might not — that the free, robust exchange of ideas has always been at the heart of American democracy."



FORMER U.S. PRESIDENT, BARACK OBAMA. PHOTO LIZ COURQUET-LESAULNIER/SCREENSHOT VIA TIKTOK/KANKAKEE PUBLIC LIBRARY

Center for Urban Transformation Camp Empowers Through Music

The free after-school arts and leadership program has become a beacon of hope

By LAURA ONYENHO , WORD IN BLACK

URBAN TRANSFORMATION from AI4

Music is the universal language of the soul and an extraordinary power to ignite positivity and evoke deep emotions. Music is a conduit for self-expression, healing, and connection.

This is the environment the Houston-based non-profit Center for Urban Transformation has created for Black youth in Fifth Ward through its CUT Camp summer program at Wheatley High School.

CUT Camp is a free after-school arts and leadership program that has become a beacon of hope and inspiration for inner city youth looking for a way to stay productive while keeping off the streets.

The camp is recognized for its programs to disrupt and end the school-to-prison pipeline.

"We provide an empathy initiative here in Fifth Ward. The idea is that when you increase empathy and communication, you can de-escalate any kind of infraction or altercation with individuals," said Dominique Montgomery, program director of CUT. "It's helping them communicate in an effective manner without resulting through violence and in a healthy format."

Youth between the ages of 12-24 participated in a music initiative called "Dear Artist" created by local music artist and author, Edward Marshaun Preston. Participants explored different areas of artistry including audio engineering, drawing, and song and poetry writing.

"It's a program I wrote based upon my theory

of 'Dear Artist: Everyone is your Friend,' my first book," Preston said. "The philosophy is through teamwork, community, through building a group of friends, creatives, and bringing people together, you can accomplish things that would traditionally or financially be inaccessible."

Joshua Shields is a CUT Camp participant whose dream is to one day become a music artist. One of the program expectations is to write a song inspired by participants' life stories, a challenge that helped them focus on their true purpose.

"I titled my song 'No Days Off' because my mother is raising three kids on her own. That's the motivation I need to keep going at the pace like my mama," he said. "She is trying to help me get out the hood."

Malik Edwards is also a CUT Camp participant. He is an aspiring professional football player, and uses songwriting as a means to self-reflect on the changes he's experiencing as a young Black man in the community.

"My mama calls me a lot any time I'm out of the house. I'm growing up, but she wants me to stay young, I guess. But lately I've been at work a lot," he said. "I'm just trying to get some money. I put these experiences in my songs."

The program is in its second year and accepts about 15 students between mid-June to August 4. For more information on the program visit the Center for Urban Planning Transformation website.

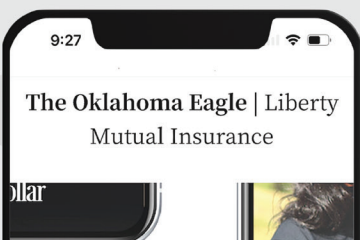
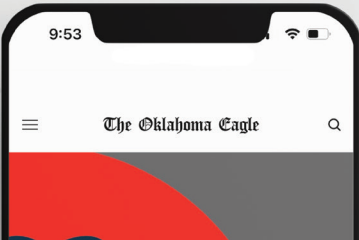


PARTICIPANTS exploring different areas of artistry including audio engineering, drawing, and song and poetry writing. PHOTO JIMMIE AGGISON/HOUSTON DEFENDER

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