



# The Oklahoma Eagle

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SERVING GREATER TULSA SINCE 1921

**LEGACY**  
**5,353**  
Weeks, since the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre and a denial of justice.

**NATION**  
**Black Women Aren't Asked To Be In Clinical Trials | A14**  
*By ANISSA DURHAM, WORD IN BLACK*

**NATION**  
**No, Black Women Don't Have to 'Ride-or-Die' | A13**  
*By NADIRA JAMERSON, WORD IN BLACK*

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\$1.00

VOL. 102 NO. 46

NOVEMBER 17, 2023 - NOVEMBER 23, 2023

## Tulsa HONORS TWO SURVIVORS

A Ceremony of Life for Hughes Van Ellis. A Birthday Party for Lessie Benningfield Randle. Both are survivors of the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre.

**GARY LEE**, The Oklahoma Eagle

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MUSCOGEE NATION SUES CITY OF TULSA IN  
LATEST JURISDICTIONAL FIGHT

Questions about state-tribal jurisdiction continue to be the subject of public policy discussions. A7

\$5M OF MICHELIN PAYROLL TAXES CAN  
HELP AVOID ‘DOMINO EFFECT’ OF JOB LOSS

Plan: Improve and market the building being vacated, and provide investments to support expansion of state-based suppliers. A9

(RIGHT) LESSIE BENNINGFIELD RANDLE, 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre Survivor. PHOTO SAM LEVRAULT MEDIA



(RIGHT) EVENT ATTENDEE, during the 1921 Tulsa Race Survivor tribute on Friday, Nov. 10. PHOTO SAM LEVRAULT MEDIA



(BELOW) VIOLA FORD FLETCHER, 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre Survivor. PHOTO SAM LEVRAULT MEDIA



(ABOVE) EVENT ATTENDEES, during the 1921 Tulsa Race Survivor tribute on Friday, Nov. 10. PHOTO SAM LEVRAULT MEDIA

LEGACIES  
REMEMBERED

*A Ceremony of Life for Hughes Van Ellis. A Birthday Party for Lessie Benningfield Randle*

The cause was great, making it an occasion not to be missed. So, an inspired crowd showed up for the memorable event: Tulsans and out-of-town guests, Blacks, whites, Native Americans, seniors, teenagers and toddlers, some in families, others solo, celebrities, and just plain folk. The requested dress code was white attire, and the guests gladly followed suit.

Women wore Sunday go to meeting cream-colored dresses, milk-colored pantsuits, or other white outfits. Men donned white suits. Wherever they came from and however they showed up, the crowd at the Greenwood Cultural Center on Friday evening, Nov. 10, was singular and heartfelt in rising to the cause: to celebrate the life of Tulsa Race Massacre survivor Hughes Van Ellis. Widely known as Uncle Red, Van Ellis died on Oct. 9 in Denver, Colo., at 102.

A big birthday

The following night, Nov. 10, dozens of well-wishers packed into the Ben E. Hill Community Center, 210 E. Latimer, to raise a glass and say uplifting words for Lessie Benningfield Randle on the occasion of her 109th birthday. It was an upbeat celebration. Live music highlighted by Old School tunes, a catered dinner of barbecue, birthday cake and other treats, and a rush of accolades for Randle made it all the more festive. Purple and pink were the theme colors of the evening, making for a room full of brightly dressed guests.

Goodwin, whose position as a state representative representing much of north Tulsa and oratory skills have pivoted her into the role of community impresario, was toastmaster of the evening.

With the back-to-back events, Tulsans and visitors celebrated the extraordinary lives of two north Tulsans. Both Van Ellis and Randle were locals whose distinction as survivors of the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre, the bloodiest event recorded in the city’s history, pirouetted them into national and international renown. Beyond marking unique life passages for both of them, the twin events were a way for Tulsans and others to raise up and remember that critical, impactful episode in Tulsa’s history.

We will always remember

“Although we lost one important community member, there are generations of others who have followed. And we will always remember the legacy of Uncle Red,” said Goodwin.

(RIGHT) REGINA GOODWIN, Okla. State Representative (D-73) PHOTO SAM LEVRAULT MEDIA





# Clearview: Historic Oklahoma All-Black Town

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



Located in Okfuskee County eight miles southeast of Okemah, Clearview is one of more than fifty All-Black towns of Oklahoma and one of only thirteen still existing. The town was founded in 1903 along the tracks of the Fort Smith and Western Railroad. J. A. Roper, Lemuel Jackson, and John Grayson platted the town site and formed the Lincoln Townsite Company to attract settlers and advertise the settlement. The post office was originally designated Lincoln, but in 1904 a postal service order changed it to Abelincoln. This, however, was rescinded a month later. From its beginning the

community supported a newspaper, the Lincoln Tribune, which evolved into the Clearview Patriarch. Grayson and Roper also organized the Abe Lincoln Trading Company to operate a general store, deal in farm produce, and buy and sell real estate. Grayson also became the town’s first postmaster, and Roper owned a sawmill and lumberyard. By 1904 the town boasted a two-story hotel and a print shop. Very early in its existence Clearview residents enjoyed a brick school building and two churches. Around 1911 Roper and Jackson departed, and J. E. Thompson moved to Clearview.

In 1914 at a Negro Business League meeting he announced to Booker T. Washington that he owned or managed a total of 5,800 acres of land in Okfuskee County. From 1916 to 1920 J. C. Leftwich operated Creek and Seminole Agricultural College northeast of town. The 1907 population figure of 618 declined to 420 by the late 1930s. The Great Depression and the falling price of cotton had severely crippled the town. The 1990 census recorded only 47 inhabitants of Clearview. At the turn of the twenty-first century the community still hosted an annual rodeo and supported 56 residents. The 2010 U.S. Census counted 48 living there.

**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.

**A CHURCH** said to have been located in Clearview, I.T. (20699.02.197.329, State Museum Collection, Currie Ballard Collection, OHS).

## Featured Last Week



A Tribute To The  
GAP Band’s Ronnie Wilson



Tulsa Man Recounts Serving 31  
Years After Wrongful Conviction



N. Tulsans, Among Millions Losing  
Health Insurance Nationwide

## The Oklahoma Eagle

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Publisher 1972-1980
- Edward L. Goodwin, Jr.**  
Co-Publisher 1980-2014
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The Oklahoma Eagle | Founded in 1921 | Vol. CII No. 46

THE OKLAHOMA EAGLE is published weekly on Fridays by The Oklahoma Eagle, LLC, P.O. Box 3267, Tulsa, OK 74101. General office is 624 E. Archer St., Tulsa, OK 74120. Periodical Postage (WSPS 406-580) is paid at Tulsa, OK. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the above address. Delivery subscription rates (Continental United States, Hawaii, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands). All subscriptions may include Premium Edition issues throughout the year.

Mail Subscriber Rates: Single copy \$1 | Yearly \$52 | 2 Years \$100

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# A BLACK PERSPECTIVE

## On Artificial Intelligence (AI)

AI, Black Perspective  
Sonny Messiah Jiles  
Word In Black

AS ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TECHNOLOGIES SPREAD, THEY BRING BOTH OPPORTUNITIES AND WORRIES ABOUT ACCURACY, ACCESS, AND EQUITY.

As a new user of AI — artificial intelligence — the Houston Defender Network is undergoing a phenomenal awakening. Earlier in the year, I had real concerns about the new technology as it relates to my business and was very vocal about my concerns.

Although the concerns are still valid, the advantages AI offers are cutting edge, with vendors like Tansa providing a text editing tool for publishers and Hey Nota taking the pain points out of publishing.

Don't get it twisted. AI is not writing our stories, but it is changing the way we do business. I'm embracing this technology with caution, curiosity, admiration, and fear.

Artificial Intelligence has been described as natural language processing, machine learning, robotics, reinforcement learning, computer vision, and speech recognition rolled into one. According to a HubSpot study, "62% of business leaders say their company has already invested in AI and automation tools for their employees to leverage: Of those, 71% report positive ROI, and 72% say AI and automation make their employees more productive."

Many industries are using AI to advance their products and services. Recently, I attended a University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center board meeting unveiling the Institute for Data Science in Oncology, uniting data science approaches with the institution's clinical and scientific expertise to address the most urgent needs of cancer patients. This transformative effort is just one example of how AI can assist in finding answers to overcoming cancer.

The opportunities and challenges AI presents cover the gamut.

**THE GOOD:** AI makes life easier, helps with operational efficiency, cuts costs, and allows a company to be more competitive.

**THE BAD:** AI could replace the human worker, cause inaccuracies or misinformation, and become a crutch for those not verifying the information.

**THE UGLY:** AI could perpetuate historical biases and prejudice based on the source, and in the wrong hands, AI could be weaponized destroying reputations and lives.

AI can open the door to valuable insight, harnessing the power of data. We are talking about reshaping industries and our daily lives. But we need to remember to balance human creativity and AI's capabilities in accomplishing tasks that would be difficult for either alone.

For these reasons, the trusted, respected, and reputable businesses of service and longevity in the Black community, Black legacy media, should explore the opportunities and challenges of AI and look closer at the benefits of full participation in this next evolution of digital media. This may be the new battlefield to confront the digital gap or the new frontier for leveling the playing field.

For those looking for a good investment in the future and sustainability of the new Digital Black Press, AI is the way to go, and Word In Black — which is a collaboration of 10 Black media companies across the country — is a good start.

Don't wait, because the train has left the station. As we continue the fight to close the digital divide, this is one step in the right direction. No one has covered Black America like the Black Press, who continues to preserve the past, record the present, and advocate for the future.

The reality is AI consists of the good, the bad, and the ugly. It is our responsibility as a society to maintain the balance between AI and humanity and work for accuracy, access, and equity for Black America.

Sonny Messiah Jiles is CEO of the Houston Defender Network.

PHOTO GETTY/PEOPLEIMAGES







(LEFT) DAMARIO SOLOMON-SIMMONS (L) AND TIFFANY CRUTCHER (R), founder, Executive Director of Justice for Greenwood and the Terence Crutcher Foundation respectively. PHOTO SAM LEVRAULT MEDIA

# FLOWERS, GIFTS, MUSIC, ARTISTRY ABOUND

“  
*Although we lost one important community member, there are generations of others who have followed. And we will always remember the legacy of Uncle Red*

Regina Goodwin,  
State Representative (D-73)

“  
*Mother Randle is the epitome of a good woman*

Muriel Watson,  
daughter, Hughes Van Ellis



## Tulsa Honors Two Survivors *from A3*

With Van Ellis’ passing, only two of the known race massacre victims are still living: Randle and Viola Fletcher. Van Ellis’ sister, 109-year-old Viola, known as Mother Fletcher, also attended Uncle Red’s celebration of his life.

The Greenwood Cultural Center, the setting for the Van Ellis event, could not have been more appropriate. The popular north Tulsa community gathering spot is located on the hallowed ground where the bloody massacre of 1921, which Van Ellis survived, occurred.

During the Friday evening gathering, several local officials voiced warm accolades for Van Ellis. Besides Goodwin, Tulsa City Councilwoman Vanessa Hall Harper, School Board Member Jennettie Marshall, St. Rep. Monroe Nichols all rose to offer remarks. Tiffany Crutcher, executive director of the Terence Crutcher Foundation, read a statement honoring Van Ellis from Pres. Joe Biden.

Malee Craft and Muriel Watson, Van Ellis’ daughters, also offered words of praise for their father. Van Ellis “worked hard to support us,” Watson told The Oklahoma Eagle in an interview. “And he worked to make sure the descendants of the race massacre will not be forgotten. I am sure that, knowing that this work will be continued, he is now resting in peace.”

Ed and Lisa Mitzen, heads of a New York-based philanthropic organization, Business for Good, also rose to the podium to remember Van Ellis’ role as a veteran and recall how he faced enormous obstacles with good humor.

Business For Good donated \$1 million to Van Ellis and to the other two race massacre survivors in 2022. They were among the dozens of guests who traveled from out of state to attend the ceremony.

Besides the tributes, the evening’s program included some artistic performances. Malinda Craft staged an interpretative dance to the tune of “Never Give Up.” And Valarie Harding closed off the evening with a touching rendition of Bill Withers’ song “Lovely Day.”

## Epitome of a good woman

The next night, the crowd carried forth the celebratory spirit at Randle’s birthday party. The evening started with a song tribute in Randle’s honor. From there, a line-up of speakers stood by Mother Randle and serenaded included

Randle’s eldest son, Warren Randle Jr., and Hughes Van Ellis’ daughter, Muriel Watson.

“Mother Randle is the epitome of a good woman,” Watson told the crowd. “She taught me everything and helped make me the man I am today,” Warren Randle said.

The public was invited, so the crowd of well-wishers filled the center, chatting, eating barbecue and cake, and lifting Randle and her rich life.

Many guests brought flowers and gifts for Randle. Joyce Smith Williams, a north Tulsa community advocate, offered a Citrine necklace and earrings, which she custom-made for the birthday celebrant. The stones are said to increase mental and physical strength. Williams presented a similar set to race massacre survivor Mother Fletcher at her 109th birthday party earlier this year.





PHOTOS ADOBE IMAGES

# JURISDICTION To Adjudicate

## Muscogee Nation Lawsuit from A1

In the latest development on the question of whether cities and towns in eastern Oklahoma have jurisdiction to adjudicate local infractions by tribal citizens in municipal court, the Muscogee (Creek) Nation filed a lawsuit against the City of Tulsa in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Oklahoma today, arguing the city’s continued assertion of criminal jurisdiction over tribal citizens violates federal law.

“Tulsa’s ongoing criminal prosecutions of Indians for conduct within the Creek Reservation are causing irreparable injury to the nation by interfering with its sovereignty and undermining the authority of its own criminal justice system, including the authority of its attorney general, Lighthorse Police, and courts to prosecute under the nation’s own laws criminal offenses committed by Indians within its Reservation,” the petition filed Wednesday states. “Tulsa has made plain, by word and deed, that absent judicial intervention it will persist with its unlawful prosecutions.”

Wednesday’s lawsuit comes as other questions about state-tribal jurisdiction continue to be the subject of public policy discussions, including a dispute over motor vehicle license plates issued by some tribes. In the three years since the U.S. Supreme Court’s ruling in *McGirt v. Oklahoma* affirmed the continued existence of the Muscogee Nation Reservation — and, subsequently, other reservations in eastern Oklahoma — a series of civil law questions have arisen.

Now, the latest lawsuit comes three months after the U.S. Supreme Court denied the city’s application for a stay in the *Hooper v. City of Tulsa* case, which was remanded back to the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Oklahoma after a federal appellate court said the lower court erred in applying the Curtis Act to claim the city has jurisdiction to adjudicate municipal offenses against tribal citizens.

While a cross-deputization agreement between the Muscogee Nation and the City of Tulsa authorizes Tulsa police officers to write tickets and make arrests, Muscogee leaders have argued that those offenses must be handled in tribal court instead of the city’s

Questions about state-tribal jurisdiction continue to be the subject of public policy discussions.



court system.

In a statement Wednesday, Muscogee Nation Chief David Hill said Tulsa is adjudicating cases involving tribal citizens owing to “make-believe legal theories.”

“Our nation has always been a leader in the fight to defend tribal sovereignty. We continue to welcome government-to-government cooperation with the City of Tulsa,” Hill said. “But we will not stand by and watch the city disregard our sovereignty and our own laws by requiring Muscogee and other tribal citizens to respond to citations in Tulsa city court because of the city’s make-believe legal theories.”

Geri Wisner, the Muscogee Nation attorney general, said the city is “knowingly violating federal law.”

“We filed this suit today because the City of Tulsa is willingly and knowingly violating federal law,” Wisner said. “There is no legal basis for current city policies dealing with citizens of tribal nations and we are asking the court to require the city to follow the law.”

Michelle Brooks, director of communications for the City of Tulsa, provided a statement in response to the lawsuit.

“As Mayor Bynum stated two weeks ago in his State of the City address, he is eager to work with tribal partners to resolve these issues and render litigation unnecessary,” Brooks said. “This latest lawsuit is a duplication of several lawsuits that are already pending in state and federal courts to decide these issues. As such, the City of Tulsa has no further comment at this time.”

In 2018, Justin Hooper, a Choctaw Nation citizen, received a \$150 speeding ticket within Tulsa’s city limits and the boundaries of the Muscogee Nation. In July 2020, the U.S. Supreme Court affirmed the Muscogee Nation as an Indian Country reservation. Five months after the SCOTUS ruling, Hooper filed an application for post-conviction relief, arguing that Tulsa lacked jurisdiction to prosecute him for the offense.

After the federal district court initially dismissed the case in Tulsa’s favor, Hooper appealed to the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals. The appellate court reversed the district court’s ruling in June, arguing that Section 14 of the Curtis Act — a law predating Oklahoma statehood — no longer applies and, therefore, could not be cited to

claim Tulsa retains jurisdiction to adjudicate city rules and regulations.

The City of Tulsa requested a formal stay of the appellate ruling, which was briefly granted in August before ultimately being rejected by U.S. Supreme Court Justices Brett Kavanaugh and Samuel Alito, who essentially deemed the stay unnecessary.

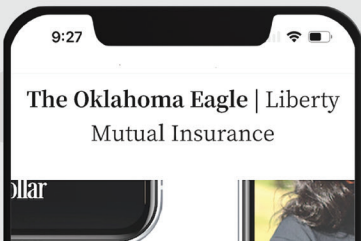
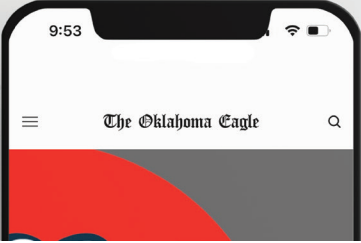
In the lawsuit filed Wednesday, attorneys for the Muscogee Nation argued that the city has continued to prosecute crimes committed by Native Americans within reservation boundaries, despite the 10th Circuit’s mandate in June.

“The Tenth Circuit’s mandate in *Hooper* notwithstanding, Tulsa has continued to assert criminal jurisdiction over Indians for conduct within the exterior boundaries of the Creek Reservation,” the brief states.

The nation’s attorneys also argued that the City of Tulsa has adhered with the *McGirt* decision’s jurisdictional requirements for other offenses, just not traffic violations.

“After *McGirt*, the City of Tulsa began referring felony and criminal misdemeanor offenses by Indians within the Creek Reservation to the Creek Nation for prosecution. From Jan. 1, 2023, to Oct. 31, 2023, for example, the Creek Nation received 2,618 such referrals from the City of Tulsa Police Department,” the complaint states. “Tulsa has generally declined to refer just one category of offenses: traffic offenses.”

JOSEPH TOMLINSON is a staff reporter who leads NonDoc’s Edmond Civic Reporting Project. A Report for America corps member, his coverage pertains to civics, politics and actions of the Edmond City Council, the Edmond Public Schools Board and other government bodies that affect area residents. Tomlinson graduated from the University of Oklahoma with a journalism degree in 2021. After covering Congress as a Gaylord News fellow, he completed an internship with NonDoc Media and became a staff reporter in 2022. Send tips and story ideas to [joe@nondoc.com](mailto:joe@nondoc.com).





MIXED  
ACADEMIC  
RESULTS &  
INCREASED  
CONCERNS  
ABOUT  
ABSENTEEISM

Student Report Card from A1

In Oklahoma public schools, academic achievement declined slightly in English and science but improved slightly in math in 2023, compared to 2022.

Absenteeism remained stubbornly high, with 1 out of 5 students missing too much school, according to the state’s data, a lingering symptom of the coronavirus pandemic.

That’s according to an Oklahoma Watch analysis of the 2023 state test scores, released Wednesday by the state Department of Education at oklaschools.com. The website also contains district and school site letter grades.

There were no big swings in proficiency rates in any of the three tested subjects: reading, math and science. Proficient means a student has mastered grade-level content, while a score of basic means a student demonstrated foundational knowledge and skills.

Overall, 26% of students tested proficient or higher in math and English language arts. That’s a 1% increase in math, compared to 2022, but a 1% decrease in English.

In science, 31% of students scored proficient or higher, a 1% decline compared to 2022.

Oklahoma tests students in math and language arts once per year in grades three through eight, plus 11th. Science is assessed once in 5th, 8th and 11th grades.

Coronavirus-related disruptions to student learning continue to negatively impact proficiency rates across all subjects.



PHOTO ADOBE IMAGES

Three takeaways from the data.

- **Math, reading and science scores didn’t change much.**
- **Academics have not yet recovered from the pandemic.**
- **Students are missing too much school.**

Compared to pre-pandemic test scores from 2019, proficiency rates are eight percentage points lower in English language arts, six percentage points in math, and four percentage points in science.

However, more students last year met their performance goal: 47%, compared to 39% in 2019.

Annual performance goals are set by the state and vary by student group (such as white, Black, Hispanic or low-income) but move toward proficiency for all groups.

Students were not tested in 2020 or 2021 due to the pandemic.

In addition to academics, Oklahoma schools are graded on

student attendance using chronic absenteeism, defined as missing 10% or more of class time during a school year. The state counts all absences, excused or unexcused, unless a student misses class for a school-related activity or disability services.

Across the state, 20% of students were chronically absent last year, a half a percent increase over 2022. Some student groups were even higher: 24% of Hispanic students, 25% of economically disadvantaged and 31% of Black students were chronically absent, the data showed.

Excessive absences are more prevalent now than before the pandemic. In 2019, 14% of

Oklahoma students were chronically absent.

Schools nationwide experienced excessive absences post-pandemic, but Oklahoma’s student absenteeism is not as severe. About 30% of public school students missed 10% or more of the 2021-22 school year. Research shows regular attendance is predictive of school success, and irregular attendance is linked to dropping out.

JENNIFER PALMER has been a reporter with Oklahoma Watch since 2016 and covers education. Contact her at (405) 761-0093 or jpalmer@oklahomawatch.org. Follow her on Twitter @jpalmerOKC.



PHOTO ADOBE IMAGES



# MICHELIN'S DECISION TO SHUTTER ITS ARDMORE FACTORY

Michelin Ardmore Closure from A1

Three weeks after Michelin announced plans to close an Ardmore tire manufacturing plant at some point in 2025, the Oklahoma Development Finance Authority approved a Department of Commerce plan today to use the next two years of the company's payroll taxes in an attempt to avoid subsequent job loss among suppliers and to improve the chances of landing another manufacturer for the facility.

The state agencies have estimated that Michelin will pay about \$5 million in payroll taxes to the Oklahoma Tax Commission as its workforce is gradually reduced. Under existing statutory authority, the ODFA will capture those funds and create an application-based process by which the money can be used to:

- Improve and market the building being vacated by Michelin at some point in 2025 and spur entrepreneurial efforts in the Ardmore area; and
- Provide investments to support expansion of businesses that are state-based suppliers to the current Michelin plant.

The Rapid Community Response Program concept is similar to the agencies' jointly operated Oklahoma Innovation Expansion Program, which leverages payroll taxes in the bond market to finance loans supporting expansion projects for Oklahoma businesses, with one key difference.

"These are technically direct placements, if you will," said ODFA director Mike Davis. "We're not going to the market. We're not selling public debt. We're moving these dollars directly from the state to projects that Commerce has determined to have a net-positive benefit."

While Michelin's decision to shutter its Ardmore factory is expected to reduce local employment by about 1,400 people, state leaders have been concerned that a potential "domino effect" that could be felt in the Carter County area and in other parts of the state where other companies will experience business loss when they can no longer supply services and goods to Michelin.

"We're using existing tools to mitigate the negative effects of a very significant job loss," Davis said. "There are known Oklahoma suppliers, and they're not just in that region. They're all across the state. All of those will be eligible if they can identify a project that is a net-positive benefit, creates jobs and gives them new capabilities or helps them service new customers so that we don't have the domino effect."

John Chiappe, director of research and economic analysis for the Department of Commerce, made a brief presentation to ODFA members Thursday.

"We will work with the Ardmore Development Authority on being part of their task force so we can be part of their strategic planning," Chiappe said. "[We want] to ensure that any asset that is currently owned by Michelin remains a marketable asset. We don't want it to fall into disrepair and become an albatross for the community."

## 'Demonstrate to the community a state investment'

Members of the Oklahoma State Senate discussed the unexpected decision by Michelin, which has made tires in Carter County since 1970, during an Oct. 31 meeting of the Senate Select Committee on Business Retention and Economic Development. Although the company is concluding its tire manufacturing at the property it owns on the northwest edge of Ardmore, a mixing plant inside the 1.5 million-square-foot building is set to remain operative.

"This is not a million-plus square feet facility that is available tomorrow," Lt. Gov. Matt Pinnell told ODFA board members Thursday. "This is a facility that will not be available for a while. And there is a mixing plant that is not going away. (...) So that's why this program is going to be so effective where we're going to be able to pool up to \$5 million so we can reach out to businesses looking to expand."

In a press release distributed by the Department of Commerce, Gov. Kevin Stitt said the Micheline news was "tough" to learn in October.

"I am optimistic about the creation of the Rapid Community Response Program and I'm proud of the work the Department of Commerce is doing to make sure the people of Ardmore land on their feet," Stitt said. "It was tough to lose a key economic contributor that brought commercial activity to Ardmore for over 50 years, but we're looking to the future and ensuring that Oklahoma doesn't miss a beat. We will continue to work to make our state the best place to do business."

Pinnell said after Thursday's meeting that it was important for the state to take action after Michelin announced its decision to close the plant, which the company said was "not equipped to deliver tires at competitive costs" owing to shifting market forces.

"This program certainly was needed because we wanted to demonstrate to the community a state investment, but also to begin moving as rapidly as possible to start having conversations with those 1,400 employees," Pinnell said. "Ardmore is the front door to Dallas, and there are not a lot of communities that can say that. Ardmore can. I'm excited for the future in Ardmore because of where it is located, because of the relationship we have with the sovereign nation in the area as



PHOTO ADOBE IMAGES

well."

Noting that he anticipates to return to ODFA in the spring with positive reports on the use of the \$5 million authorized Thursday, Pinnell said he remains extremely confident in Ardmore's economic development prospects, something he said he has touted during his five years in office.

"Before this Michelin announcement, when people would ask me, 'Hey, over the next 10 years, what communities do you think are going to grow a lot?' Ardmore was always at the top of my list — Ardmore and Durant, in particular, because they're so close to Dallas and north Texas and Oklahoma (are) just growing into each other. So, I think there are going to be many opportunities in Ardmore for the million-plus square foot facility, and I think there are going to be many opportunities for the 1,400 employees to find other very good job prospects in the area."

## Proposed hydrogen plant discussions continue in Ardmore

During their tenures, Pinnell and Stitt have been pushing for growing companies and international businesses to locate plants and

factories in Oklahoma. The largest economic development deal discussed publicly for the Ardmore area involves a hydrogen energy facility proposed by Woodside Energy, an Australian company that announced in December 2021 it had secured a lease option to buy 94 acres from the Ardmore Development Authority and build a liquid hydrogen production facility in the Westport Industrial Park.

Economic development agents and company officials requested about \$50 million of incentives to close a financing gap during this year's regular session, but legislators did not approve the appropriation amid a contentious budget process that included hundreds of millions of dollars for other economic development and housing efforts.

"We're still working on that project," Pinnell said. "There may be a future ask next legislative session. We still see a lot of upside with hydrogen projects in Oklahoma, but Woodside is certainly one that we are still having active conversations with."

Although a joint application between Oklahoma, Arkansas and Louisiana to establish a federally funded hydrogen hub was not approved, Pinnell said he had a conversation with Woodside officials a few weeks ago.

"There could be future legislative

action on that," Pinnell said.

Gooden Group, the public relations firm representing Woodside, provided NonDoc a proposal overview and a statement in September that said Woodside officials are aiming to be ready for a final investment decision this year. Construction would follow the decision to proceed with the project, with first production anticipated for 2026. Referred to as H2OK, the proposed plant would be expected to produce up to 60 tons per day of liquid hydrogen through electrolysis and liquefaction.

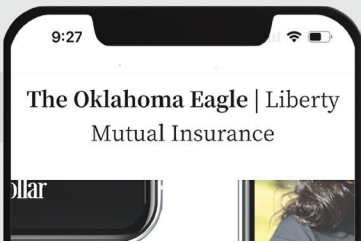
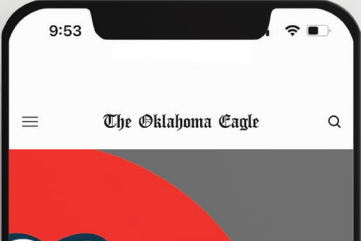
The plant could create about 600 jobs during construction and about 30 high-paying jobs in Oklahoma once the facility became operational, the company said.

**WILLIAM W. SAVAGE (TRES)** has served as the editor in chief of NonDoc since the publication launched in September 2015. He holds a journalism degree from the University of Oklahoma and covered two sessions of the Oklahoma Legislature for eCapitol.net before working in health care for six years. He is a nationally certified Mental Health First Aid instructor.

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# Oklahoma death row prisoner Phillip Hancock's fate rests with Gov. Kevin Stitt



GOV. KEVIN STITT visited the Oklahoma Watch offices on Oct. 13 to talk about promises he made to Oklahomans and his record as he seeks re-election on Nov. 8. PHOTO WHITNEY BRYEN/OKLAHOMA WATCH

## Stitt, Clemency Recommendation from A1

Oklahoma death row prisoner Phillip Hancock's fate rests with Gov. Kevin Stitt.

The Oklahoma Pardon and Parole voted 3-2 Wednesday to recommend clemency for Hancock, who has spent nearly two decades on death row and is scheduled to die at 10 a.m. on Thursday, Nov. 30. An Oklahoma County jury sentenced Hancock to death for the double murder of two men at a southwest Oklahoma City home in April 2001.

At Wednesday's hearing, Hancock's attorneys argued their client was defending himself from a vicious attack and was justified in killing Robert Jett and James Lynch. They also presented a letter from former corrections department Justin Jones, who wrote that Hancock has maintained a clean prison disciplinary record and would

likely maintain good behavior if granted clemency.

The state rebuffed the self-defense claims, saying Hancock told investigators conflicting accounts of the events over several years and had an extensive violent history. Family members of Jett and Lynch also spoke in favor of keeping the Nov. 30 execution date.

Without explanation, the board narrowly voted in favor of granting Hancock mercy. Stitt has less than three weeks to weigh the evidence and approve or reject the recommendation.

Stitt has granted clemency just once since January 2019, modifying Julius Jones' death sentence to life without the possibility of parole on Nov. 18, 2021. He faced some backlash for making the decision just four hours before the scheduled execution.

Two other death row prisoners, Bigler Stouffer and James Coddington, have received favorable clemency recommendations since Stitt took office. The governor did not accept those recommendations.

The outcome of Hancock's case could influence policy proposals in the 2024 legislative session, as a small but vocal group of Republican lawmakers pushes for death penalty reforms.

Reps. Kevin McDugle, R-Broken Arrow, and Justin Humphrey, R-Lane, spoke at the hearing supporting clemency for Hancock. During a press conference at the Capitol last month, the duo said Hancock's death sentence highlights a need for more independent review of capital cases.

Have questions, story tips or ideas? Let me know at [Kross@Oklahomawatch.org](mailto:Kross@Oklahomawatch.org).

KEATON ROSS is a Report for America corps member who covers democracy for Oklahoma Watch. Contact him at (405) 831-9753 or [Kross@Oklahomawatch.org](mailto:Kross@Oklahomawatch.org). Follow him on Twitter at @\_KeatonRoss.

# Inmates confined in three-by-two and a half-foot stalls



GREAT PLAINS CORRECTIONAL FACILITY PHOTO LIONEL RAMOS/ OKLAHOMA WATCH

## Investigation, Hinton Confinement Keaton Ross, Oklahoma Watch

Conditions are improving at a state prison where staff locked inmates in three-by-two and a half-foot shower stalls for days in mid-August, but one lawmaker who specializes in criminal justice issues said the incident warrants further accountability efforts.

State Rep. Justin Humphrey, a Republican from Lane who chairs the House Criminal Justice and Corrections Committee, said he plans to introduce a bill in the upcoming legislative session that would allow state elected officials to visit any state prison unannounced. Pennsylvania has a similar law that allows official visitors to enter any correctional institution during normal business hours. The deadline for lawmakers to introduce legislation ahead of the 2024 legislative session is Jan. 18 at 4 p.m.

Humphrey said he is also pushing state officials to launch an independent investigation into working and living conditions at the Great Plains Correctional Center, a former federal private prison in Hinton that the state opened in mid-May.

In late September, the Department of Corrections' Office of the Inspector General finalized a report on allegations that prisoners were being confined in small shower stalls for up to nine days at a time with limited access to water, bedding and restroom breaks. The internal investigators confirmed that one prisoner was held for three days in a small shower stall while ruling over claims, including that prison supervisors reprimanded staff for working to improve conditions in the shower stall area, as inconclusive. Investigators noted

in their report that cameras in the shower stall area were inoperable and record-keeping was spotty, making it difficult to determine how long some prisoners were held there.

"A real, independent investigation would show how these showers have been used and if it's still going on," Humphrey said.

Department of Corrections spokesperson Kay Thompson confirmed some Great Plains staff have been reprimanded but said the agency could not comment on the terms of the disciplinary action.

Great Plains staff told corrections department investigators in September they had stopped confining prisoners in shower stalls. They said they intended to hold prisoners in the shower stalls for no more than 30 minutes as they worked to find a more permanent cell placement, but widespread refusal among inmates to live in eight-man cells caused a logjam in the restricted housing unit.

Emily Shelton, founder of the Oklahoma prisoner advocacy group Hooked on Justice, said conditions at the prison have improved since the state began transitioning the facility to house more sex offenders several weeks ago. She said she supports the move because sex offenders are often targeted in general population units.

"The guys aren't coming to me complaining nearly as much as they were," said Shelton, whose husband and son are incarcerated in Oklahoma prisons.

U.S. prisoners face several hurdles to protesting their conditions in court, prison conditions expert Michela Bowman told Oklahoma Watch last month. To file a claim in federal court that their Eighth Amendment rights

have been violated, incarcerated people must first exhaust all available administrative appeals.

"Forms of abuse are not so uncommon in a system that incarcerates so many people and where there is so little protection for the people inside who have lost all their rights," said Bowman, who works as senior project advisor and vice president at Impact Justice, a California-based nonprofit that advocates for criminal justice reform.

"There's such a huge gap in the civil rights of the people who work in the facility and those who are incarcerated there."

KEATON ROSS is a Report for America corps member who covers democracy for Oklahoma Watch. Contact him at (405) 831-9753 or [Kross@Oklahomawatch.org](mailto:Kross@Oklahomawatch.org). Follow him on Twitter at @\_KeatonRoss.



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## Church Of The Living God

1559 E Reading St. Tulsa OK  
(918) 584-3206

Minister RJ Smith

Sunday school - 9:30am  
Sunday Worship - 10:45am  
Monday Worship - 6:00pm  
Wednesday Bible Study - 5:00pm

## CAPERNAUM MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

1962 N. Sheridan Rd.  
(918) 834-4747

Pastor Ruthie I. Howard



Sunday School  
10:00 a.m.  
Morning Worship  
11:00 a.m.  
Bible Study & Prayer Wednesday 7:00 p.m.  
For Transportation (918) 402-6027

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918-810-3882

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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.

## 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

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## 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.

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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.

P: 918-587-1428

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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8:30 and 11:00 a.m.

Sunday School  
9:40 a.m.

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Worship  
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Warren Blakney, Minister

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Sunday Morning Worship.....10:00 a.m.

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Morning Worship 11:00 a.m.

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Fax:

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Prayer Line:

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Morning

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Wednesday

Bible Study

Noon and 7:00



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# No, Black Women Don't Have to 'Ride-or-Die'

Nadira Jamerson  
Word In Black

An initiative from intersectional feminist and author Shanita Hubbard breaks down the "ride-or-die" trope and helps incarcerated Black women regain their power.

When Beyonce and Jay-Z dropped "'03 Bonnie & Clyde," Black women across the country could be heard in the club and driving to work belting out, "Down to ride 'til the very end, is me and my boyfriend." The Carters weren't the first or the last artists to glorify the image of a "ride-or-die" Black woman. From Baby Gangsta's "Ride or Die" to The Game's "Ryda," Black artists, and especially those in hip-hop, have hailed the ideal Black woman as one who is willing to stick beside her man through it all.

But when "through it all" means enduring infidelity and abuse that require self-sacrifice on the part of Black women, the ride-or-die label is nothing to celebrate, says intersectional feminist and author Shanita Hubbard.

"A lot of us have been conditioned to think that we have to earn our love and prove our worth by going above and beyond and doing anything for our significant others. It is absolutely a harmful trope, but it's kind of been phrased as 'Oh, that's a good woman,'" Hubbard says.

Hubbard has been studying the impacts of the ride-or-die trope on Black women for years. As the author of "Ride or Die: A Feminist Manifesto for the Well-Being of Black Women," she found that this harmful ideal has been part of the Black community for generations. It impacts so many aspects of Black women's lives — from their personal relationships to their jobs, and even their health.

"You'll hear some younger men say, 'Well, we don't have relationships like our grandparents anymore because our women are leaving,' not realizing that our grandmothers probably went through and put up with a lot of abuse, but they didn't have the resources to leave like we have now," she says.

Professionally, the ride-or-die mentality can creep up in the form of Black women pushing themselves to work harder and longer hours to prove their value. As a result, across industries, Black women report feeling major burnout, which takes a toll on both their mental and physical health.

"The concept of a ride-or-die chick is a woman who goes above and beyond to prove her worth in different aspects of her life. We see this professionally when Black women are exhausted and tired, but we want to do everything with excellence, so we keep pushing ourselves," Hubbard explains.

## Empowering Incarcerated Black Women

Through a partnership with Urban Reads, a Baltimore-based bookstore focused on connecting incarcerated Black folks with affirming and inspiring reads, Hubbard is bringing the lessons of her "Ride or Die" manifesto to incarcerated Black women with the Ride Beyond program.

While writing "Ride or Die," Hubbard had to become introspective and think about where she saw these harmful tropes of the ride-or-die — which she had unconsciously adopted herself — show up in her family, in her community, and in the music she listened to. The 7-week-long Ride Beyond program will similarly aid incarcerated Black women in looking within so that they can identify how self-sacrificing practices are holding them back.

"I had to hold up a mirror to myself. Women who are incarcerated in the Ride Beyond program can expect the



SHANITA HUBBARD, intersectional feminist and author of "Ride or Die." PHOTO COURTESY

same. They can expect dialogue that's going to push them to be introspective. It's a safe space where they're going to be self-reflective, they're going to be candid, and they're going to be honest," she says.

Women are the fastest-growing segment of the prison population. From 1980 to 2021, The Sentencing Project documented a 525% increase in women's imprisonment in the United States, with the vast majority being Black women. Hubbard chose to focus on incarcerated Black women with the Ride Beyond program because, though they feel the effects, Black women are often left out of conversations about incarceration and prison reform.

Throughout her life, Hubbard has supported an ex-partner and family members through incarceration. However, she found that while the visiting rooms at men's prisons were usually full of supportive women, the visiting rooms in women's prisons were much emptier.

"There was also a time I remember visiting my female cousin who was locked up, and it came as no surprise that the visiting rooms were not nearly as crowded. They were not getting nearly as much support, and there certainly were not a lot of men there to show up for them. A lot of times, we forget about incarcerated women who are locked up and that they need these conversations we are having," Hubbard says. "I'm not suggesting that we take the lens off of our incarcerated brothers. I'm suggesting that we expand the lens so that we are also centering Black women who are incarcerated."

Through Black-women-led and centered teachings, Hubbard says the Ride Beyond program will leave incarcerated Black women feeling "more empowered over their lives. Even while they are incarcerated, I want them to have a sense of empowerment. I want them to feel seen. I want them to feel loved through my words. I want them to feel loved and supported through this community initiative."

After completing the program, the women will be invited to participate in a graduation ceremony to celebrate their efforts and receive \$125 on their commissary. A valedictorian, an incarcerated Black woman who has shown specific leadership skills and helped to facilitate conversation throughout the program, will also be chosen to speak at the graduation and receive \$250 on her commissary.

Folks are invited to support Ride Beyond by purchasing Hubbard's "Ride or Die" book from Urban Reads. Hubbard and Urban Reads are starting the initiative at a women's prison in Maryland, with hopes to expand and reach more incarcerated Black women across the country.

"It's such a pleasure to center Black women in my work. Even before I wrote this book, all of my work has centered Black women because we deserve it," Hubbard says. "Intersectional feminism is only powerful when we're centering the most marginalized among us, so that's always the framework that I lean into."

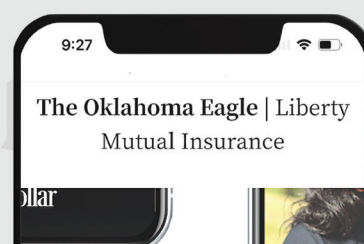
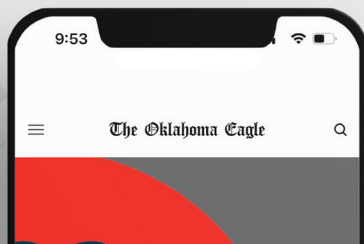
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# College Does Not Have to Be a Debt Sentence

Aya Waller-Bey, Word In Black



PHOTO ADOBE IMAGES

Last winter, I gave a college admissions workshop at a popular local charter school. After a series of questions asking about students’ motivations for attending college, I administered a quiz to check their knowledge about the college application process. One of the final prompts was a true-or-false question that asked students whether student loans were unavoidable to attend college. The responses were a mixed bag. Some students enthusiastically proclaimed that loans were a part of the college-funding process, and others believed full-ride scholarships were bountiful.

With the Nov. 1 early action and early decision application deadlines behind us, parents, college counselors, and students alike look toward the financial aid process and the upcoming Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) application opening in December this year. Questions swarm about affordability and the return on investment for a four-year college degree. After having participated in hundreds of conversations about college admissions, I’ve learned that many people mistakenly believe that pursuing a college degree undoubtedly means they will be saddled with six-figure college debt.

College does not have to be a debt sentence. Take me, for example. When I applied to college some 13 years ago, I prioritized one key school feature: colleges that met 100 percent of demonstrated financial need. Colleges and universities that make this promise will offer financial aid to admitted students that covers the difference between the institution’s price tag and the family’s ability to pay. This especially was important since FAFSA determined that my estimated family contribution was \$0.

When I received college decision letters from Georgetown, Wesleyan, Northwestern, and a few other highly selective institutions, I reviewed admissions letters, looking for the best financial aid packages, which included no student loans, deposit waivers, and little-to-no student contribution. My two top choices, Georgetown and Northwestern, met the task. In four short years, I graduated debt free from Georgetown University, one of the nation’s top colleges.

For those who intend to stay in the state, 10 public universities in Michigan offer guaranteed acceptance for students who earn a 3.0 or higher. Particularly, Michigan State University provides the Spartan Tuition Advantage, which is a program that covers the cost of

full tuition for Michigan high school graduates who have a family income of \$65,000 or less and qualify for federal Pell Grants. The University of Michigan has a similar policy with its Go Blue Guarantee. There’s also the last dollar scholarship, Detroit Promise, aimed to ensure Detroit residents have tuition-free post-secondary education. Together, these programs work to make a four-year degree more affordable and to reduce debt burdens.

It may surprise you that one-third of student debt holders have balances under \$10,000, and another 20 percent owe between \$10,000-\$20,000. In fact, just seven percent of borrowers owe six figures, according to data published by The Washington Post. However, I would be remiss if I did not address racial disparities and the debt gap between Black and white borrowers. According to the Brookings Institute, Black graduates, on average, owe six percent more than they have borrowed, while white graduates owe 10 percent less than they have borrowed. One of the reasons for this is that proportionately Black students are enrolling in graduate programs higher than their white counterparts, and debt from graduate programs accounts for nearly half of the debt gap between Black and white borrowers, according to the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans.

There are ways to mitigate student loan debt. For starters, the Biden-Harris administration should cancel student loan debt, and public universities and community colleges should be free. But, while we wait for those fantastical acts, families should explore institutions that meet 100 percent of demonstrated financial need. There are also a handful of (primarily selective) colleges and universities with no loan policies. I also encourage families with college-bound students to, by grade 10, have a college list of 10-12 schools and the GPA and/or test scores required to be eligible for merit-based aid (grants and scholarships awarded by institutions because of academic performance) and institutional scholarships. These considerations are particularly helpful for low-income families and first-generation college students where saving for college isn’t always feasible.

Miseducation about college admissions, financial aid, and student loan debt has the potential to discourage talented young people from seeking out degrees and credentials that positively impact their life outcomes. Student loan debt is real, but so are opportunities to limit it.

## Black Women Aren’t Asked To Be In Clinical Trials

A new report dispels medical assumptions that Black women are afraid to participate in clinical trials. Instead, they aren’t being asked.

Anissa Durham Word In Black

Black people in clinical trials.” That’s not a phrase you hear very often. In fact, the media has often said Black folks are afraid to participate in clinical trials because of historical medical mistreatment.

But a new survey by health communications company GCI Health of 500 Black women in 38 states says something different.

It’s not that Black women are unwilling to participate in clinical trials; it’s that no one ever asks.

Kianta Key, group senior vice president and author of the GCI health report, tells Word In Black that researching this started with a conversation she had with her mother. Key asked if she had ever participated in a clinical trial — her mother said no one had ever asked. But, if anyone did, she would consider it.

“We’ve been making assumptions about Black women and allowing that to guide what we do. And it’s been wrong. The data shows that it’s not correct,” Key says.

Typically, physicians will ask a patient who lives with a chronic illness if they’d like to participate in clinical trials. Some physicians choose not to ask because they know their patient lives far from the trial site, Key says.

It also depends on who is asking. And there’s a generational difference.

Black women who are 39 or younger are more likely to be influenced to participate in a clinical trial if the messaging comes from a celebrity, media outlet, or someone they follow on social media. 40 to 60-year-olds tend to be influenced by a hair stylist, nail tech, media outlet, or family and friends.

### A More Positive Perception

The survey results paint a different picture than the longstanding narrative that has existed. Black women’s perception of clinical trials leaned positive and neutral — with only 10% having a negative perception.

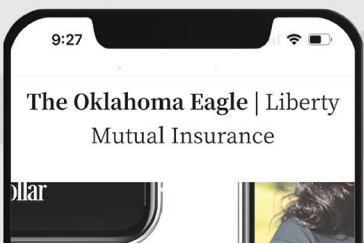
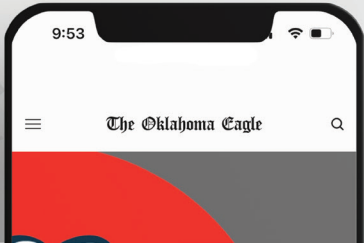
Of the Black women surveyed, the top three concerns are the fear of side effects, the trial site being too far, and the historical mistreatment of Black people. As a result, Black women — like everyone else — naturally want to make sure that participating in a clinical trial is safe. This highlights why it’s important that the safety of a clinical trial is properly explained.

“The current and historical mistreatment of Black people in medicine is linked to safety. ‘I felt unsafe because the doctor did this,’” Key says. “I think it’s all kind of linked to ... Are you here to help, or are you here to harm?”

Black women are overburdened with diseases and chronic illnesses. Keys says the healthcare system needs to make more effort to reach Black women and not lean on assumptions.

One surprising result of the survey, Key says, is the fact that 80% of Black women are open to participating in a clinical trial. With new medications rolling out for diseases that disproportionately impact Black women, like diabetes, heart disease, and high cholesterol, it’s important that Black women are in the room to test the efficacy of these drugs.

“That 80% of (Black women) being willing to be a part of a clinical trial will change medicine for the better,” Key says.

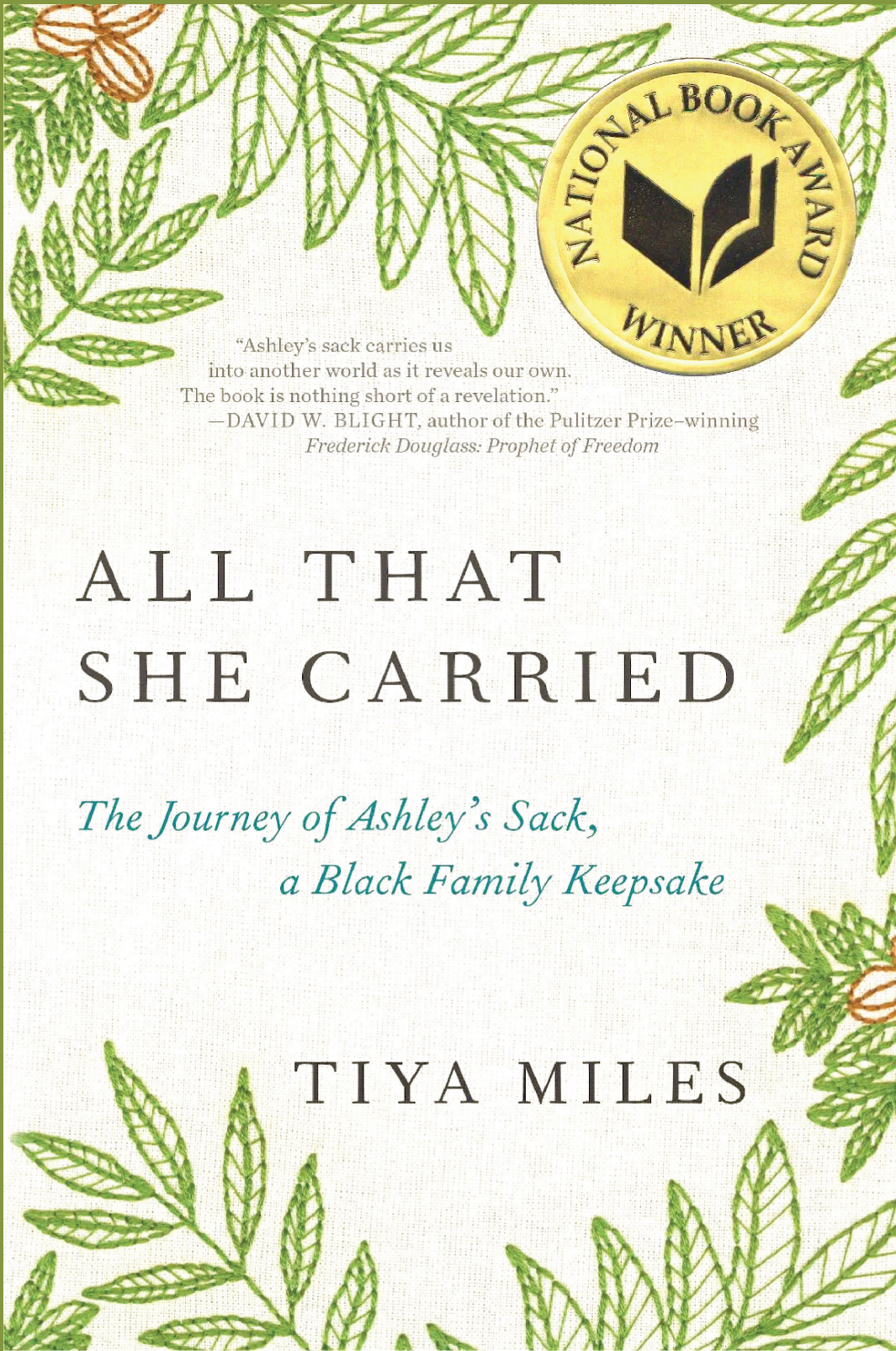




# All That She Carried

## The Journey of Ashley’s Sack, A Black Family Keepsake

John Neal The Oklahoma Eagle



ALL THAT SHE CARRIED THE JOURNEY OF ASHLEY’S SACK, A BLACK FAMILY KEEPSAKE book cover. PHOTO PROVIDED

In this powerful book, Tiya Miles tells the stunningly eloquent and powerful story of a simple artifact passed down through successive generations of Black women.

Seldom does one encounter non-fiction filled with such rich and descriptive prose. Her mother gave a nine-year-old girl a sack of belongings before the girl’s sale at Charleston’s slavery auction block in 1852. This is all she will take with her as she is separated from her mother. The cloth sack and embroidered inscription will ultimately end up in the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture.

Robert Martin and other plantation owners in South Carolina had more than one “Rose” who toiled for them and could have been this young girl’s mother. But because it was uncommon to record enslaved peoples’ surnames in documents at that time, the author searched for the girl’s mother to find a Rose-Ashley link by the first name. Ashely was the girl resold into slavery. Miles finds that likely link in the Robert Martin plantation and estate being sold off after his death in 1851.

Charleston had remained a slave trading hub from its origins in the last half of the 17th century, past the prohibition of further importation of enslaved people in 1808, until the conclusion of the Civil War. In the 1670s, brutally treated slaves migrated to this area to replicate the economic success of the Caribbean. But by the early 19th century,

slaveholders had come to see their role as “paternalism” to rationalize the slaves’ conduct, although it often devolved into brutal physical punishment.

While much is known about the general conditions of enslaved people in the area at the time, only a few first-hand narratives have escaped into history. They did not include those of Rose and her daughter Ashley. Rose was likely born in the early decades of the 1800s. Rose and Ashley were unlikely to be kept together into Ashley’s early adolescence. Enslavers were not interested in keeping family members together in bondage, even on the same plantation. Instead, Rose and Ashley performed different tasks suitable for their age and skills wherever needed.

Tiya Miles masterfully uses the few first-hand narratives of the period, and the sack of belongings conveyed to Ashley to inform what their lives were likely to have been. Miles describes her technique as “stretching historical documents, bending time, and imagining alternative realities.” The author explores and uncovers the meaning and significance of the items included in the sack: a tattered dress, three handfuls of pecans, a locThe dress was tattered not just because of the abject poverty of enslaved people. If Rose had the means to provide a better dress, it did not matter. Those held in bondage were denied access to quality cloth to sew clothes, which they toiled on in their sparse free hours at night. Legal restrictions also limited them to low-grade fiber cloth, commonly referred

to as “Negro cloth.”

The pecan seeds enclosed in the sack were a regional delicacy Rose likely acquired from the master’s cupboard. They would stay fresh for up to a year. Moreover, Ashley could barter them for other things she might need because of their rarity among enslaved people.

The braid of hair and note of love are almost inseparable in meaning. They conveyed spiritual power, a memory of her mother, and a reminder of familial lineage. At that time, a lock of hair held near-mystical power and was commonly used in the religious practices of enslaved people.

While these events themselves are stark and grim beyond imagination, the tale Miles weaves is one of hope and inspiration. It salvages from the wreckage of slavery how enslaved people fought to maintain their dignity and express their love.

This is beautifully expressed in a concluding visual essay titled “Carrying Capacity” by Michelle May-Curry and author Miles that “draws on contemporary art by Black artists to read Ashley’s sack not only as a historical object but also as a textile, a poem and a work of art.” This is what is embroidered on the sack: ➤

ALL THAT SHE CARRIED THE JOURNEY OF ASHLEY’S SACK, A BLACK FAMILY KEEPSAKE  
The book is available at Random House, 416 pp., for \$28.00. The ISBN number is 978 198 485 4995.

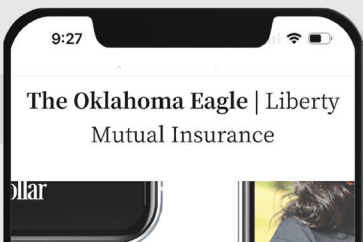
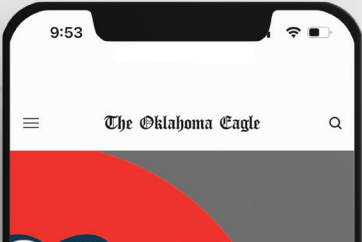
*My great grandmother Rose mother of Ashley gave her this sack when she was sold at age 9 in South Carolina it held a tattered dress 3 handfuls of pecans a braid of Roses hair. Told her It be filled with my Love always she never saw her again Ashley is my grandmother*

Ruth Middleton  
1921

The Oklahoma Eagle

### Our Mission

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







VICTOR LUCKERSON (c), author, and Jazz Hall of Fame honoree Washington Rucker (l) are interviewed by KOTV Channel 6 Reporter MaKayla Glenn. PHOTO PROVIDED

## Luckerson hosts community read series

Dr. Jerry Goodwin The Oklahoma Eagle

“Deep Greenwood – A Community Read” was held at the Big 10 Ballroom, 1624 E. Apache St., recently. Author Victor Luckerson delved into the world of Greenwood in the ‘30s, ‘40s, and ‘50s from the perspective of the entertainment – nightlight and music scene – of the era. His recently released book was the backdrop to the occasion.

Luckerson and his book, “Built from the Fire: The Epic Story of Tulsa’s Greenwood District, America’s Black Wall Street,” have been on a national tour. During a recent stop back in Tulsa, the author sat down with noted local musician Washington Rucker. Rucker, a native of Greenwood, performed in the famed Big 10 Ballroom as a teenager in the 1950s, and is featured in the book. As an Oklahoma Jazz Hall of Fame inductee, Rucker is an incredible storyteller about the heyday of a gone-by period in local and national history. He has worked with esteemed artists in the lexicon of American gospel, jazz, pop, and R&B, such as Ray Charles, Rev. James Cleveland, Dizzy Gillespie, Nancy Wilson, and Stevie Wonder among others.

Luckerson, recently receiving recognition as the Best in Business Book Award from the Society for

Advancing Business Editing and Writing, relived a time in the city’s history when Ray Charles, Etta James, and B. B. King among other recognized artists entertained hundreds of people at the Big 10 Ballroom.

The Society for Advancing Business Editing and Writing is a national organization for business journalists. The comments on the book from the organization said, “Built from the Fire, the tale of Tulsa’s Black Wall Street, is a well-researched gem... In Luckerson’s capable hands, the book becomes a family saga as well as a business lesson in vision and fortitude.” Luckerson began his professional career as a business reporter at TIME magazine.

MaKayla Glenn, multimedia journalist and reporter with KOTV Channel 6, served as the program moderator. The program opened with a history of the Big 10 Ballroom by Dr. Lester Shaw, owner of the historic site, and poetry by Phetote Mshairi; and the program closed with music performed by the Moffett Music band.

Sponsors for the evening were Oklahoma State University-Tulsa Library, Tulsa City- County Library, University of Tulsa, and the Big 10 Ballroom.



GREENWOOD CHAMBER OF COMMERCE and other sponsors are welcoming the holiday season with a marketplace, lighting, and entertainment event on Greenwood, Nov. 25. PHOTO PROVIDED

## Shine on Greenwood brings the joy of the season to the historic district, Nov. 25

Greenwood Chamber of Commerce celebrates the upcoming holidays

Dr. Jerry Goodwin The Oklahoma Eagle

The Greenwood Chamber of Commerce in partnership with several other sponsors is hosting the lighting of Black Wall Street with activities throughout the day. On Nov. 25, the holiday market will be open from 12 p.m. – 5 p.m., and the Christmas lighting and concert will begin from 6 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

According to a press release, during the day, the community is encouraged to support and to shop with the area businesses in addition to patronizing a

diverse array of vendors offering unique and quality goods. Families are invited to indulge in a day of shopping, discovering local businesses, and supporting the community.

In the evening, the block will be lighted “with a dazzling display,” and the sounds of Christmas, “fostering community spirit,” will be shared. An outdoor concert is planned with talented artists. Featured artists to perform are Tony Mason and Valarie Harding who will be “bringing warmth and cheer to

the heart of Greenwood.”

Additionally, a toy giveaway will be sponsored for the children in attendance.

Additional sponsors of the program are Original Black Wall Street Merchant Marketplace, The Ambassador Project International / Mastone Productions, and Greenwood Main Street.

For more information, contact Meghan Scott at [hello@tulsacountyliving.com](mailto:hello@tulsacountyliving.com)

## ‘Rock the Block Health Fair’ offers free screenings and immunizations, Nov. 18

Dr. Jerry Goodwin The Oklahoma Eagle

A number of vendors will be participating at the “North Tulsa Rock the Block Health Fair” on Nov. 18, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m., at Lacy Park, 2134 N. Madison Ave. The free event is open to the public.

Activities for the day include the following: health screenings, immunizations, a kids’ zone, and giveaways. Also, assistance with health insurance involving consultation and enrollment will be provided. Food trucks, entertainment, and a variety of vendors will be present. Free turkeys (while supplies last) will be offered to individuals in attendance.

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Oklahoma is sponsoring the event.

Oklahoma

NORTH TULSA

ROCK THE BLOCK

HEALTH FAIR

JOIN US FOR THIS FREE EVENT!

SATURDAY  
NOV. 18

LACY PARK

10 A.M. - 3 P.M.

ACTIVITIES

-FREE TURKEYS\*

-FREE IMMUNIZATIONS

-FREE HEALTH SCREENINGS

-FREE FOOD TRUCKS\*

-HELP WITH HEALTH INSURANCE

-40+ VENDORS

-KIDS ZONE

-GIVEAWAYS

-DJ

-LIVE DEMOS

+ SO MUCH MORE!

\*WHILE SUPPLIES LAST

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Oklahoma, a Division of Health Care Service Corporation, a Mutual Legal Reserve Company, an Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association

## Events

### Dec. 7

American Red Cross to host Disaster Preparation class at Greenwood Women’s Business Center, 102 N. Greenwood Ave., Suite 201 (Second floor) on Dec. 7 at 11 a.m. For more information, contact (539) 867-4127 or [info@greenwoodwbc.com](mailto:info@greenwoodwbc.com).

### Dec. 8 and 9

National Association of Black Journalists – Tulsa Chapter Salute to Excellence Awards Gala (Dec. 8) and Professional and Community Workshops (Dec. 9), Tulsa Community College – Center for Creativity, 910 S. Boston Ave. For more information, contact [nabjtulsagala23@gmail.com](mailto:nabjtulsagala23@gmail.com).

### Dec. 9

Greenwood Chamber of Commerce Third Annual World Class Winter Gala, Doubletree Hotel by Hilton – Warren Place, 6110 S. Yale Ave. on Dec. 9 at 5 p.m. For more information, visit <https://historictulsagreenwoodchamber.com/>.

## 2024

### Feb. 17, 18, and 24

Theatre North’s “Topdog/Underdog” performance at Tulsa Performing Arts Center, 110 E. 2nd St. For ticket information, call (918) 596-7111.

### Apr. 12-13

National Association of Black Journalists Region III conference, Tulsa, Okla. Eleven states, including Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas, will be represented. For more information, contact Eva Coleman, Region III director, at [evacolemannabj@gmail.com](mailto:evacolemannabj@gmail.com). call (918) 596-7111.

## Events

### 2023

#### Nov. 21-26

“Beetlejuice,” at Tulsa Performing Arts Center – Chapman Music Hall, 110 E. 2nd St. For tickets, call (918) 596-7111.

#### Nov. 25

Shine on Greenwood Merchant Marketplace and Lighting and Concert on Nov. 25, 12 p.m. – 5 p.m. and 6 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. For more information, contact Meghan Scott at [hello@tulsacountyliving.com](mailto:hello@tulsacountyliving.com) and visit [shineongreenwood.org](http://shineongreenwood.org).

#### Nov. 27

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) is hosting its monthly support group for family members, significant others, and friends of people with mental health conditions at St. Augustine Catholic Church, Education Center, 1720 E. Apache St., 6 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. The meetings are held on the fourth Monday of each month. For more information, call (918) 587-2965 or contact [staugustineparishtulsaok@yahoo.com](mailto:staugustineparishtulsaok@yahoo.com).