

LEGACY
5,359
Weeks, since the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre and a denial of justice.

NATION
Want to Buy Black? Here Are 5 Black-Owned Business Directories | A9
By BRIA OVERS, WORD IN BLACK

NATION
Leave No Veteran Behind Celebrates 75 Years Of Military Desegregation | A10
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Education

TPS Shakes Up Leadership In Some Troubled Schools

State Board Imposes New Demands

TPS A3

John Neal
The Oklahoma Eagle



/23

Martin Luther King, Jr., Maroon Tiger (January-February 1947): 10.

It seems to me that education has a two-fold function to perform in the life of man and in society:

The one is utility and the other is culture. Education must enable a man to become more efficient, to achieve with increasing facility the legitimate goals of his life.

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'Sad State Of Affairs': After Altercation, Muskogee Nation Charges Okmulgee County Jailer
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Thompson Recognized As Breakout Artist By ‘BEATS’ Magazine

Former band member with Wayman Tisdale

Dr. Jerry Goodwin The Oklahoma Eagle

“BEATS” magazine has recognized former Tulsan Arthur Thompson as Breakout Artist of 2023 for jazz. A multi-talented musician, Thompson is a drummer, percussionist, singer, songwriter, and music producer.

“This is a tremendous honor to be named the Breakout Artist of 2023. It’s a reminder to never give up on your dream and stay consistent and true to yourself,” said Thompson.

Earlier in his career in Tulsa, he performed as a drummer for Dominic Factor Band and with renowned NBA star and jazz talent Wayman Tisdale. Since then, he has performed with countless entertainers, including Toby Keith, Dave Koz, and Marcus Miller. A song, “Crying for Me,” recorded and performed by Keith, Koz, and Miller with Thompson as a tribute to the late Tisdale, was nominated for a Grammy in 2011.

Thompson grew up with Tisdale. Beginning in the eighth grade, Thompson and Tisdale played at their father’s respective churches together. Throughout high school, Thompson played with the former Booker T. Washington High School basketball standout. As shared in “BEATS” magazine, Thompson was invited to join

the former University of Oklahoma Sooners basketball phenom’s band when Tisdale was playing for the Phoenix Suns.

Now a resident of Los Angeles, his recent single releases have been “Smile” and “We Can Beat Cancer.” “Smile” is his first single that was inspired by a friend. The friend, saxophonist Mindi Abair, is featured on it. The song is listed as number 83 on the Top 100 songs of 2023 in “BEATS.”

“We Can Beat Cancer,” featuring Dav Koz and Erin Stevenson, is a tribute to his sister, his daughter’s mother, and others close to him that are breast cancer survivors.

The author, teacher, and entrepreneur’s goals in 2024 are to produce more music and perform live performances with his band Authorized. (See related article in “Talk of Greenwood” in the Dec. 15 edition.)

“(The Breakout Artist of 2023) honor gives me more fuel to take my music even higher and deeper! I really appreciate all of my family, friends, and fans for voting,” said Thompson.

For more information, see <https://arthurthompsondrums.com/>



ARTHUR THOMPSON has been named Breakout Artist of 2023 by “BEATS” magazine. PHOTO PROVIDED

NABJ Holds Annual Gala And Awards Banquet

Dr. Jerry Goodwin The Oklahoma Eagle



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BLACK JOURNALISTS-TULSA MEMBERS celebrate at its annual awards gala. PHOTO PROVIDED

The National Association of Black Journalists – Tulsa Chapter held its annual Salute to Excellence Awards Gala earlier this month. Several awards were given to individuals who contributed to the local journalism community. The sold-out program was held at the Center for Creativity at Tulsa Community College.

MaKayla Glenn, multimedia journalist with KOTV Channel 6 (CBS), was dinner chair for this year’s event. Nearly dozen awards were presented. The occasion was made even more special this year because four individuals were inducted into the Oklahoma Black Journalists Hall of Fame.

Prior to the awards segment of the evening, greetings were extended in person by NABJ Region III Director Eva Coleman, and from a recorded message from on-air political analyst and cable newsroom veteran Tiffany Cross. NABJ-Tulsa members to be recognized included Aaron Bernard, Lifetime Achievement; Nehemiah D. Frank, Best Practices; Mia Fleming, Community Service; and MaKayla Glenn, Outstanding Member.

Hall of Fame members installed were Carla Hinton, Leon Rollerson (posthumously), Ted Terry (posthumously), and Martha Vaughan.

Student scholarship honorees were Gerard Lewis (Langston University) and Devin Banks and Monica Long (both of Tulsa Community College).

On the second day, three workshops were presented – “Media Literacy: Crafting Your Digital Narrative in the Age of Information,” “Diverse Voices in the Paint: BIPOC communities collaborating to better tell our stories,” and “How to Get Your News in the News.” Leading journalists and media professionals nationally and from across the state shared insight about leading topics in communications.

Members of the NABJ-Tulsa chapter attending the affair were (pictured, l-r) Gary Lee, Quraysh Ali Lansana, Russell LaCour, MaKayla Glenn, Eva Coleman, Autumn Bracey, Bianca Harris, Mary Williams, Mia Fleming, Ashley Jones, Paris Rain, Dr. Jerry Goodwin, and Victor Luckerson. Other members attending and participating were Charity Barton, Victor Grimes, Ross Johnson, Sadiqa LaNear, and Princetta Newman.

NABJ-Tulsa will be hosting the Region III conference, April 12-13, 2024. The region includes 10 states in addition to Oklahoma: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas. Journalism professionals and students will be participating in continuing education workshops and networking programming during the two-day program. For more information, contact evacolemannabj@gmail.com.

Bamboo Financial Partners Celebrates Second anniversary

Sets sights for future company growth

Dr. Jerry Goodwin The Oklahoma Eagle

Bamboo Financial Partners observed its second anniversary of opening its doors with a festive and holiday event at the Junior League of Tulsa. The attendance at this year’s program was double the size from last year’s program.

Attendees were offered wine and hors d’oeuvres, a plated dinner, photobooth upon entering the event, raffle prizes, and swag bags.

Jasmine Renae Ball, founder and financial planner at Bamboo, said she is excited about the relationships that she has developed with her partners (clients), her ability to reinvest in the community that has given so much to her, and the growth

her company has experienced over the past two years.

Major accomplishments for the business this year include the following: Acquiring over 30 new partners, scheduling and hosting more than 300 appointments and 30 presentations, having clients in 20 states, and donating over \$30,000 to local nonprofits ranging from clothing, groceries, hygiene kits, pet care to school supplies.

For more information, contact (918) 324-2625 or jasmine@bamboofinancialpartners.com or bella@bamboofinancialpartners.com.



JASMINE RENAE BALL (l) recognizes the second anniversary of Bamboo Financial Partners with Autumn Campbell (c) and Kristin Afetumo. PHOTO PROVIDED

Events

2023

DEC

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. (Because the fourth Monday is Christmas Day, call (918) 587-2965 or contact staugustineparishtulsaok@yahoo.com for more information.)

2024

JAN 13

Annual Speak Eyes Vision for All Cocktails for a Cause at the Greenwood Cultural Center, 322 N. Greenwood Ave., 3 p.m. – 7 p.m. The event is sponsored by Da Shade Room Eyewear and MzRene Thatme. For more information, see social media or contact info@dashadroom.com.

JAN 15

Martin Luther King Holiday

FEB

Black History Month

FEB 16

20th Anniversary of the Alzheimer’s Diversity Outreach Services “Out of Africa Healthy Brain Strategies Gala at Hyatt Regency Tulsa Downtown, 100 E. 2nd St., VIP Experience: 6 p.m.-7p.m., Dinner: 7:30 p.m. For more information, contact beverly-baul@alzoutreach.org.

FEB 17, 18 & 24

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

MAR 13

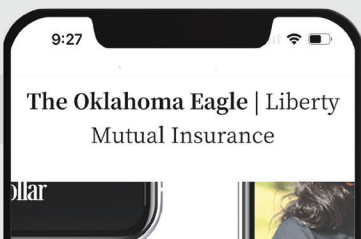
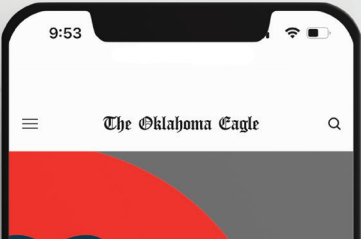
2024 Women’s Summit at the Doubletree Warren Place, 6110 S. Yale Ave. The program is sponsored by the Greenwood Women’s Business Center, 102 N. Greenwood Ave., Suite 201. For more information, contact info@greenwoodwbc.com or gbcwomensummit.com.

MAR 27

Women’s History Month – “And So I Stayed” will be shown at Tulsa Community College at its VanTrease Performing Arts Center for Education (PACE), 103000 E. 81st St., on March 27 from 6 p.m. – 8 p.m. bars. For more information, contact ramona.curtis@tulsacc.edu.

Our Mission

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



**HOOPER V. TULSA DISMISSED, JUDGE
POINTS TO MUSCOGEE LAWSUIT**

The Muscogee Nation Attorney General's Office has charged an Okmulgee County Jail officer for felony battery. **A6**

**TRANSGENDER STUDENT SUES TO STOP STATE
DEPT. OF EDUCATION GENDER-CHANGE RULE**

Cited Violations of the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment. **A7**

OSDE Board Orders



Oklahoma State Department of Education

TPS from A1

TULSA — **Tulsa Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Ebony Johnson** has stepped up her bid to address widespread learning deficiencies and other pressing issues in the district by shaking up the leadership at some of the lowest-performing schools in the city. The shake-ups appear targeted at schools where student performance is lowest. The most challenged have heavy majority Black and brown student populations. Johnson has also discussed the possible closing of some schools. **TPS** cont. **A5**

Dawes Commission: & Federal Allotment Policy

By KENT CARTER, THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF OKLAHOMA HISTORY AND CULTURE



The Dawes Severalty Act (the General Allotment Act) of 1887 ushered in the allotment era. Drafted by U.S. Sen. Henry L. Dawes of Massachusetts, the act did not pertain to the Five Tribes. Therefore, on November 1, 1893, Dawes, then retired, was appointed to head a three-member commission to the Five Tribes to negotiate agreements with the leaders of the Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw, Creek, and Seminole that would end tribal land ownership and give each member individual possession of a portion of the tribal lands. The Dawes Commission established its headquarters in Muskogee, Indian Territory, and its membership was expanded to five in 1895. Dawes died in 1903, and Tams Bixby replaced him as chairman, but the commission has always been called the Dawes Commission.

From 1894 to 1896 Dawes and his fellow commissioners, Meredith Helm Kidd of Indiana and Archibald S. McKennon of Arkansas, had no success convincing tribal leaders to accept the federal government’s allotment policy. By 1896 congressional frustration led to passage of the first

in a series of acts that increased the commission’s powers and changed its character from a diplomatic mission to a judicial tribunal that decided who was eligible for tribal membership and what land they received.

Under powers granted to it by the Curtis Act of 1898, the commission processed enrollment applications of more than 250,000 people and approved more than 101,000 whose names were put on what are commonly called the “final rolls of the Five Civilized Tribes.” The enrollment process was closed as of March 4, 1907, and the final rolls remained the definitive source on eligibility for each tribe’s membership. In order to allot the land, the commission surveyed and appraised the 19,525,966 acres of tribal land. The persons enrolled by the commission were allotted 15,794,000 acres, with individual allotment sizes based on the appraised value. Some persons eligible for allotment received cash rather than land. The rules governing both enrollment and allotment were unique to each tribe and were contained in agreements negotiated between 1897 and 1902 and were ratified by both

Congress and the tribes. Many enrollees wanted the same land, and the commission ruled on 10,952 contested allotments.

The commission reserved 125,497 acres for railroad rights-of-way, townsites, churches, schools, and cemeteries and segregated 431,080 acres of Choctaw and Chickasaw land holding coal and asphalt deposits and 1,278,753 acres containing timber. These segregated lands were leased under government supervision and eventually auctioned. After allotment was completed, 3,174,988 acres of unallotted land were sold. The commission surveyed 308 townsites and platted them into lots and blocks that were auctioned. The commission received and maintained accounts for the revenue from all these transactions and prepared, approved, and recorded patents for each tract of land. The Dawes Commission to the Five Civilized Tribes was abolished by act of Congress on August 1, 1914, and its unfinished business was transferred to the Five Civilized Tribes Agency in Muskogee, Oklahoma.

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.

DAWES COMMISSION CAMP AT ARDMORE, Chickasaw Nation, circa 1900 (8470.27, Grant Foreman Collection, OHS).

Featured Last Week



2023 Year In Review, The Oklahoma Eagle



Parole Board Seeks Stiffer Commutation Requirements



‘Failed Policies Of The Past’: Streamlining Tribal Funding

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DR. EBONY JOHNSON, Tulsa Public Schools
Superintendent. PHOTO TULSA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Acting on a new set of “**OSDE Recommended Goals**,” the state board, at the urging of **Superintendent Walters**, passed a series of “**Board Orders**” that Walters had prepared.

TPS from A3

JOHNSON’S moves come on the heels of the Oklahoma State Board of Education (OSBE) placing a new round of requirements on TPS to meet performance goals. Oklahoma State Superintendent of Public Instruction Ryan Walters, who has been sharply critical of TPS, spearheaded the tighter demands.

Johnson, who was promoted from interim to the permanent position of superintendent in mid-December, announced last week that Mollie Miller will shift from her current position of principal at Kerr Elementary School to become the dean of students at John Hope Franklin Elementary School. Miller, a veteran educator, will join a faculty where most of the teachers are relatively new to the teaching profession, by the account of leaders at Franklin.

TPS also announced that Alexa Markarian would become acting principal at McClure. She has been the assistant principal at McClure for the past three years.

TPS officials told The Oklahoma Eagle that Memorial High School and Kerr Elementary will also get new principals. The appointments are still pending. Located in south Tulsa, Memorial’s student body is 31.5 percent LatinX, 31 percent Black and 20.5 percent white.

According to OSDE statistics, Memorial placed in the bottom 50% of all schools in Oklahoma for overall test scores.

The percentage of students achieving proficiency in math was 6-9, compared to the state average of 24 percent.

The U.S. Department of Education designated North Tulsa-based Franklin Elementary and South Tulsa-based Kerr Elementary and Memorial High School for the Comprehensive Support and Improvement list.

The CSI citing is given to schools that score in the bottom five percent of all Oklahoma schools in at least one of the measures pinpointed by the state report card.

Franklin’s student body is 41.4 percent Black and 19.2 percent Latin. Kerr’s students are 51.9 percent Black and 12 percent Latinx.

McClure is on the OSDE’s tally of schools needing “more rigorous intervention” or MRI. The designation was given to schools that scored in the lowest five percent of all indicators. By OSDE’s account, 65 percent of schools in the Tulsa district received an F on state report cards and considered needing MRI. McClure’s student body is 44.9 percent Black and 20.3 percent Latinx.

The mid-term changes in school leadership, rare in TPS, reflect Johnson’s position, expressed in various public settings, that TPS’s issues must be addressed urgently.

State Superintendent Walters continues to seek to assert authority over the direction of TPS. In a Nov. 30 meeting of OSBE, Walters told members they lacked the power to impose “academic standards” on Oklahoma schools without additional rule-making. The board proceeded to set new academic standards for Tulsa Public Schools in the meeting. The action caught local school officials off guard.

The move by the state board followed TPS’s third consecutive update to the board as a condition of the Tulsa school district’s accreditation renewal in August. Walters announced the new “board order that you all have in your packets there” without informing the TPS delegation or the public before the board approved the order.

In response, TPS Superintendent Johnson said that the progress TPS had made in 2023 on the Oklahoma State Report Card amounted to more than what was needed to prevent the OSBE from burdening the Tulsa district with additional requirements.

Todd Lofton, deputy superintendent of Special Education Services at OSBE, criticized TPS for not developing a restructuring plan for school closings.

Superintendent’s report

Superintendent Johnson used the meeting to provide the state board with an update on “academic corrective action and financial transparency” measures the school district is undertaking. Johnson cited information from the recently released State Report Card documenting that nine schools in TPS increased a letter grade in State testing, and seven of 22 schools scored above the “F” grade designation from the previous year. The superintendent’s presentation addressed board concerns about “failing schools” in the Tulsa school district. Tulsa Schools’ Chief Financial Officer, Jorge Robles, followed Johnson with additional information the state board had sought on changes to increase TPS financial transparency and accountability.

Johnson’s one-hour presentation included “action steps, new initiatives, metrics, and researched-based strategies and monitoring implementation” that the district uses to increase student and school performance. She also shared personnel changes being made at district offices “to bring about necessary changes in district and school culture and performance.”

Johnson also discussed the possibility of school closures or consolidations to address low-performing school sites. The OSDE staff had asked the superintendent to begin this process and develop a school “restructuring plan.”

New requirements

In general, the state board initially reacted favorably to the TPS report. But the OSDE staff immediately followed Johnson’s appearance with its report, which was sharply critical of TPS’s performance.

Lofton told the board that TPS had not been sufficiently “ambitious” in its goal setting to address student learning and teacher training. Lofton also complained that TPS was slow

to identify “which schools should be closed” and needed to “move from consideration to action.”

OSDE attorney Brian Cleveland followed Lofton, criticizing TPS’s lack of transparency in financial reporting, notably its recording of “miscellaneous services and expenses.” Cleveland said his finance team had been frustrated with TPS accounting personnel.

Acting on a new set of “OSDE Recommended Goals,” the state board, at the urging of Superintendent Walters, passed a series of “Board Orders” that Walters had prepared. They are the following:

- 1. Fifty percent of TPS students must score “basic” or above on state reading tests or increase progress toward that benchmark by 5 percent.
- 2. All teachers and school administrators will complete an OSDE-approved “science of reading” course.
- 3. At least 12 of the 18 schools who scored “F” on a previous state evaluation must improve their grade.
- 4. TPS finance staff will be required to meet with OSDE on or before Dec. 8, 2023, to review concerns the department has with TPS financial reports.

Tulsa Public Schools must accomplish these new requirements as “accreditation standards” for the 2022-23 school year and provide monthly updates to the board on its progress.

Board authority

Earlier in the meeting, under a non-action agenda item titled “information from the State Superintendent,” Walters informed the board that they needed to adopt “new administrative rules” to require Oklahoma schools to have “academic standards” as accreditation requirements. Walters told the board the following:

“Currently, for the State of Oklahoma, we do not have anything academic by our standards. So, to meet that requirement...we will be preparing a new rule that would require districts to meet a certain threshold of academic performance. And if they

don’t meet that threshold, they would get a deficiency, and we would start penalizing them through the accreditation process.”

Walters described the process that requires public input [and hearings] and “would be a few months down the road” before it could be brought to a board vote. The state superintendent described the proposed draft of one rule similar to one they would later in the meeting impose on TPS without any administrative rule changes.

All executive state agencies are required by state law to go through this process of adopting new administrative rules in order, in part, to prevent the agency or its board from acting arbitrarily or beyond the scope of its authority. Neither Walters nor anyone in his department explained how the agency’s board could impose these “orders” on TPS’s accreditation without a change in administrative rules.

Additionally, on April 4, 2023, the Oklahoma State Attorney General Gentner Drummond invalidated new rules the OSBE had “adopted” using the authority and process the state superintendent described the board should use to impose academic standards on Oklahoma schools. In a formal opinion, Drummond said Oklahoma law precluded the OSBE from making new administrative rules without the “specific grant of authority” from the legislature.

Drummond wrote, “It is well settled that an agency may only exercise the powers expressly given by statute. An agency cannot expand those powers by its own authority.”

TPS accepts changes

Superintendent Johnson told the OSBE at their Dec. 21 meeting that TPS would accept the new goals. Johnson said the district’s “current progress toward goals” and “implementation of improvement efforts at targeted schools” made the new goals achievable. Johnson reported that the new academic standard would necessitate moving approximately 700 of 6,200 students from “below basic into a higher-performance band.”

Johnson also told state board members that reducing the number of failing schools has become achievable because “we saw strong evidence of growth across report card indicators.” This included nine schools increasing a letter grade on the state report card in 2022-23 and four moving out of chronic failure status as of Dec. 19.

In a prepared presentation to the state board, Johnson agreed to increase the “science of reading” training to 100 percent of school faculty and to be more responsive to OSDE concerns regarding financial reporting. Further, the superintendent added that TPS would realign “district goals to match OSDE goals.”

The day following Johnson’s presentation, before the board agreed to the changes, Walters posted a video on X, formerly Twitter, saying, “Dr. Ebony Johnson laid out a tremendous plan for the future of Tulsa. It’s all the things I have been asking for.”

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JUSTIN HOOPER *Versus* THE CITY OF TULSA

Plaintiff-appellant Justin Hooper and the City of Tulsa disputed whether the Curtis Act, 30 Stat. 495 (1898), granted Tulsa jurisdiction over municipal violations committed by all Tulsa’s inhabitants, including Indians, in Indian country. Tulsa issued a traffic citation to Hooper, an Indian and member of the Choctaw Nation, and he paid a \$150 fine for the ticket in Tulsa’s Municipal Criminal Court. Following the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision in *McGirt v. Oklahoma*, Hooper filed an application for post-conviction relief, arguing the municipal court lacked jurisdiction over his offense because it was a crime committed by an Indian in Indian country. Tulsa countered that it had jurisdiction over municipal violations committed by its Indian inhabitants stemming from Section 14 of the Curtis Act. The municipal court agreed with Tulsa and denied Hooper’s application. Hooper then sought relief in federal court—filing a complaint: (1) appealing the denial of his application for post-conviction relief; and (2) seeking a declaratory judgment that Section 14 was inapplicable to Tulsa today. Tulsa moved to dismiss. The district court granted the motion to dismiss Hooper’s declaratory judgment claim, agreeing with Tulsa that Congress granted the city jurisdiction over municipal violations by all its inhabitants, including Indians, through Section 14. Based on this determination, the district court dismissed Hooper’s appeal of the municipal court’s denial of his petition for post-conviction relief as moot. **Hooper appealed. The Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals reversed, finding that the federal district court erred in dismissing Hooper’s declaratory judgment claim because even if the Curtis Act was never repealed, it was no longer applicable to Tulsa. The Court also agreed with Hooper that the district court erred in dismissing his appeal of the municipal court decision as moot based on its analysis of Section 14, but the Court determined the district court lacked jurisdiction over Hooper’s appeal from the municipal court.**

A federal judge dismissed **Hooper v. Tulsa** without prejudice today, following the mandate of an appellate court that ruled the **Curtis Act of 1898 does not grant the City of Tulsa jurisdiction** to adjudicate local infractions made by tribal citizens.

Hooper v. Tulsa Dismissed from A1

THE DECISION MEANS DISAGREEMENT over whether cities in eastern Oklahoma can hear traffic cases in municipal court within Indian Country reservation boundaries will play out in a separate federal lawsuit filed in November.

“As a matter of Tenth Circuit law, Section 14 of the Curtis Act no longer applies to Tulsa and therefore Tulsa no longer has jurisdiction over municipal violations committed by its Indian inhabitants,” U.S. District Judge William P. Johnson wrote in his order.

Johnson stopped short of entering a declaratory judgement regarding applicability of the Curtis Act — a law predating Oklahoma statehood that legislated land allotment — to other cities in eastern Oklahoma.

“Plaintiff has suggested the court should enter a declaratory judgment regarding non-applicability of the Curtis Act to other Oklahoma municipalities. However, the court lacks jurisdiction to render declaratory relief on issues and matters unrelated to plaintiff and involving entities that are not parties to this proceeding,” Johnson stated in his order.

Jason Salsman, the Muscogee Nation’s communications director, said the tribe appreciated Friday’s decision, which comes more than three years after the U.S. Supreme Court affirmed the Muscogee Reservation’s continued existence in eastern Oklahoma. In their *McGirt v. Oklahoma* decision, justices noted that only tribes and the federal government have jurisdiction to prosecute tribal citizens within Indian Country reservations.

“The parties behind these politically driven cases are working to make Oklahoma less safe by overturning the *McGirt* decision. The *McGirt* decision has meant more police, courts, and prosecutors working to keep our communities safer. Every Oklahoman deserves to be safe in their community,” Salsman said. “That is why we have been asking Congress to pass legislation to fully empower tribes to prosecute anyone who violates the law on our reservations.”

Michelle Brooks, director of communications for the City of Tulsa, said city leaders had no comment Friday on the dispute, which has significant financial implications for city governments and tribal governments, depending where cases are adjudicated.

“This is one of several cases currently pending in state and federal courts to

“As a matter of Tenth Circuit law, Section 14 of the Curtis Act no longer applies to Tulsa and therefore Tulsa no longer has jurisdiction over municipal violations committed by its Indian inhabitants.”

JUDGE WILLIAM P. JOHNSON
U.S. DISTRICT JUDGE

address the same issues, so the city has no further comment,” Brooks said.

City files for dismissal in related lawsuit

In a separate federal case filed by the Muscogee (Creek) Nation against the City of Tulsa last month, the tribe is arguing that the city’s continued assertion of criminal jurisdiction over tribal citizens violates federal law. The city, meanwhile, is arguing that authority beyond the Curtis Act exists to grant municipalities jurisdiction within the Muscogee Nation.

“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,” Geri Wisner, Muscogee Nation attorney general, said the day the lawsuit was filed.

Attorneys for the City of Tulsa filed a motion seeking dismissal of that lawsuit Dec. 8. In their brief, attorneys for the city argue that the U.S. Supreme Court’s ruling in *Oklahoma v. Castro-Huerta* showed that the state has a strong presumption in favor of their ability to prosecute tribal citizens. Therefore, Tulsa’s attorneys argue, the city should have jurisdiction over adjudicating municipal citations — such as traffic tickets — against Indigenous citizens.

In a footnote at the bottom of Johnson’s order Friday, he wrote that the federal court could address the implications of *Castro-Huerta* in the Muscogee Nation v. City of Tulsa lawsuit.

“That case is the proper venue for the city to raise their other matters, not here,” wrote Johnson, a judge in the U.S. District Court of New Mexico who has been assigned the case. “The Tenth Circuit chose not to address *Castro-Huerta* in its decision and this court similarly declines to address it.”

So far, courts have read the *Castro-Huerta* decision more narrowly, finding that the case held the state has jurisdiction over non-Indians who commit crimes against Indians within Indian Country, a term of legal art that describes territory over which states generally do not have jurisdiction over tribal citizens. Any ruling that the state of Oklahoma or its subdivisions do have jurisdiction over crimes committed by Native Americans in Indian Country would be a new development of the law.

Attorneys for the City of Tulsa also argue that other pending cases can resolve the municipal citation jurisdiction issue without

new litigation. The city points to *Stitt v. City of Tulsa* and *City of Tulsa v. O’Brien*, two cases pending before the Oklahoma Court of Criminal Appeals, that involve similar legal facts. Notably, the Muscogee Nation’s lawsuit against Tulsa was filed in federal court, meaning its outcome could make the state cases moot.

Background on Tulsa v. Hooper

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 in municipal court.

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, saying that Section 14 of the Curtis Act 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.

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.

TRISTAN LOVELESS is a NonDoc Media reporter covering legal matters and other civic issues in the Tulsa area. A citizen of the Cherokee Nation who grew up in Turley and Skiatook, he graduated from the University of Tulsa College of Law in 2023. Before that, he taught for the Tulsa Debate League in Tulsa Public Schools.



RYAN WALTERS, Oklahoma Superintendent of Public Instruction, leads a state Board of Education meeting on Jan. 26, 2023. PHOTO WHITNEY BRYEN/OKLAHOMA WATCH

Cited Violations of the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment

Gender-Change Rule from A1

ATTORNEYS FOR A MOORE PUBLIC SCHOOLS transgender student on Thursday asked a Cleveland County judge to stop the Oklahoma State Department of Education from making a rule prohibiting gender changes in school records permanent. The rule proposal was on Thursday’s board meeting agenda, but board members pushed the item to the January 25 meeting.

A ruling on the injunction is also expected in January.

The student, referred to in the lawsuit as J. Doe, received a court order to change the student’s name and gender on government records, including school records. But on September 28, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Ryan Walters proposed an emergency rule prohibiting school districts and local school sites from altering any sex or gender designations in any prior year student records without authorization from the State Board of Education.

The board unanimously adopted the rule that day and in October denied two students’ requests for gender changes in school records, one of which was the Moore student’s.

The State Board of Education could make that rule permanent next month, barring a judge’s order stopping them.

“Administrative overreach and interference from the state as it relates to raising children in Oklahoma must stop,” Colleen McCarty, an attorney representing the plaintiff who is the executive director of Oklahoma Appleseed Center for Law and Justice, said in a written statement. “This lawsuit sends a strong message that Oklahomans will not tolerate the government interfering with their private family affairs. Parents know what’s best for their kids, and we are willing to stand up for that bedrock principle.”

The lawsuit cites violations of the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment as well as procedural missteps, violations of the Oklahoma Parents’ Bill of Rights, due process violation of parents’ fundamental right to control the upbringing and education of their child under the 14th Amendment, violation of the Oklahoma State Constitution due process clause, and violation of Title IX.

The child’s name-change proceedings have since been sealed to protect the student’s identity.

In the petition, the student argues that the rule is

discriminatory and was drafted maliciously.

“Defendant Walters’ motivations for the Rule and subsequent denial are well known as a result of his many media appearances during which he reliably denigrates transgender children,” the plaintiff claimed.

The petition then recounts multiple public statements made by Walters and board members assailing changes in gender identity.

“This is an absolute assault on our classrooms, on our kids’ minds, on Christianity,” the lawsuit quoted Walters as saying during a September media appearance. “This is an assault on faith. What they want is for kids to go home and tell their moms and dads, ‘We should be able to change our gender, we should be able to talk about transgenderism,’ ... so this is a war on parents, kids, and faith.”

In addition to an injunction preventing the state Board of Education from adopting the rule permanently, the plaintiff asked the court to declare the rule invalid on multiple grounds and award compensatory and punitive damages and attorneys’ fees.

Walters issued a press release in response calling the lawsuit frivolous.

“Our pronoun policy aligns with common sense, truth, and reality and protects schools and teachers from unfounded accusations of discrimination,” the press release said.

Joshua Payton, founder of the Oklahoma Equality Law Center and one of the plaintiff’s attorneys, argued that the rule jeopardized the rights of all Oklahoma parents.

“This should concern all parents and all Oklahomans,” Payton said in a press release. “If Ryan Walters can succeed in removing the rights of parents in this family, there will be no safeguards against doing so against any Oklahoma parent.”

Ed. Note: This story was updated on Dec. 21, 2023 at 4:46 p.m. to reflect action taken at the Board of Education meeting and to add information from a press release issued by Superintendent of Public Instruction Ryan Walters.



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Monday Worship - 6:00pm
Wednesday Bible Study - 5:00pm

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1962 N. Sheridan Rd.
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Wednesday
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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
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Ph: (918) 425-2077

Pastor Rick Bruner

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Wednesday 6:00 p.m.

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Northside Christ Gospel Church

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

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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

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307-311 N. Greenwood Ave.

P: 918-587-1428
F: 918-587-0642

vernonamechurch@sbcglobal.net

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Worship Service
10:00 am

Wednesday
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6:00 pm



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918-584-0510

Fax:

918-584-1958

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**2023 YEAR IN REVIEW:
THE BEST AND WORST OF TIMES**
Some of the biggest stories for Black people in the past year include issues much closer to home and our daily lives. **A10**

**LEAVE NO VETERAN BEHIND
CELEBRATES 75 YEARS**
Maryland non-profit Leave No Veteran Behind invited soldiers to discuss the impact of military desegregation. **A10**

Want to Buy Black? Here Are 5 Black-Owned Business Directories

There’s something for everyone, and that includes Black-owned businesses. Look To Shop Small and Buy Black for every occasion.

Bria Overs, Word In Black



PHOTO **ADOBE IMAGES**

Buy Black Shop Black

14-CARAT GOLD EARRINGS, personalized Nikes, or the hottest new purse brand. If there’s a product you’re looking for, you’ll likely find a Black-owned business making or selling it. Of nearly 33.2 million small businesses in the United States, 3 million are owned and led by Black people.

Whether you are looking to buy a gift for a birthday or Christmas or want to add a new art piece to your gallery wall, there are multiple places to look. Word In Black put together five places to turn to to find a Black-owned business to support.

Fifteen Percent Pledge

If Black people make up nearly 15% of the United States, store shelves should mirror that number. That is the idea behind the non-profit launched by Aurora James in 2020. So far, 28 companies have taken the pledge, and the organization has shifted “almost \$14 billion of revenue to Black-owned businesses.”

As part of this effort, they built a directory

of Black-owned brands from which retailers and consumers can shop. For business owners, they advertise grant and funding opportunities.

Black Women Owned

The number of Black women-owned businesses with employees rose to more than 52,300 from 2017 to 2020, according to a report from the Brookings Institute. Black Women Owned is a directory featuring brands in entertainment, home and living, food and beverage, beauty, and professional services — all led by Black women.

Buy From A Black Woman

This non-profit is all about educating, empowering, and inspiring Black women. They partner with H&M each year to bring the “Buy From A Black Woman ” tour, business awards, and holiday market to life.

It’s worth looking through their online directory if you can’t attend their events. Black women business owners should consider adding their brand to their directory

to get discovered by customers.

Black Owned Association

With over 1,200 businesses, the Black Owned Association’s directory can help you find verified national and local Black-owned companies offering products and services both online and in person.

ByBlack

ByBlack partners with the United States Black Chambers and financial institutions to support Black-owned businesses. Its “City Guides” showcase Black businesses in America’s most popular cities and travel destinations, like Atlanta, New Orleans, Oakland, and the Greenwood District, home of the historic Black Wall Street.

They also direct business owners to grants and funding opportunities and offer a certification establishing Black businesses as a trusted vendor.

Happy shopping!



LOCAL NON-PROFIT LEAVE NO VETERAN BEHIND invited soldiers from the front lines to high-ranking White House officials to discuss the impact of Truman's decision over seven decades later. PHOTO LEAVE NO VETERAN BEHIND

Leave No Veteran Behind Celebrates 75 Years Of Military Desegregation

Ashleigh Fields Word In Black

Approximately 75 years ago, President Harry S. Truman desegregated the United States military, forever changing the landscape of defense by blurring racial lines and unblocking life-changing opportunities to service members of color.

This year, local non-profit Leave No Veteran Behind, invited soldiers from the front lines to high-ranking White House officials to discuss the impact of Truman's decision over seven decades later. Anthony Woods, secretary of Maryland Department of Veteran Affairs, Dr. James Dula, USAF Retired and Mieia Edmonds, a representative, Navy Federal Credit Union in addition to several others served as impact panelists. The topic of discussion was "Creating Veteran Pipelines Into Civic Solutions" with a heavy focus on veteran employment.

Featured speakers included Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX-18), Edna W. Cummings, U.S. Army Retired, advocate of the championed Six Triple Eight Congressional Gold Medal Act of 2021 and Dr. William Rowe, Chairman of the 75th EO9981 Ad Hoc Committee EO9981 which was established as the President's Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Services.



TENNESSEE STATE REPRESENTATIVES JUSTIN JONES AND JUSTIN J. PEARSON are seen during a demonstration of linking arms in support of gun control laws sponsored by Voices for a Safer Tennessee at Legislative Plaza on April 18, 2023 in Nashville, Tennessee. The event was in response to the mass shooting on March 27 at The Covenant School in Nashville where three 9-year-old students and three adults were killed by a 28-year-old former student. PHOTO JASON KEMPIN/GETTY IMAGES

2023 Year In Review: The Best And Worst of Times

Some of the biggest stories for Black people in the past year include issues much closer to home and our daily lives

Hiram Jackson Word In Black

Retrospectives of the preceding year are not simply a recap. They are, in many ways, a forecast for what's to come. If we don't take the time to reflect on what's gone before, we're more likely to make the same mistakes and less able to apply what we've learned going forward — case in point, the strange case(s) of Donald Trump.

Trump is the story that keeps giving. The former president, the only president in the nation's history to be indicted on federal charges, faces a litany of criminal charges after being impeached twice. The fact that he remains a frontrunner in the 2024 election and is still a Republican party favorite is a national tragedy.

But the upside: three Black women law officials — New York Attorney General Letitia James, Atlanta-based District Attorney Fani Willis, and U.S. District Judge Tanya Chutkan — continue to hold his feet to the fire for crimes ranging from fraud and sexual harassment to election tampering and inciting a riot.

That these three Black women are in a position to hold and preside over such high-profile cases underscores this nation's progress on the judicial front and moves the jurisprudence system closer to the promise: "No one is above the law."

Some of the biggest stories for Black people in the past year include issues much closer to home and our daily lives. Battles for racial justice and equity continue with greater and greater zeal.

Two Black quarterbacks, Patrick Mahomes and Jalen Hurts, faced off against each other in the Super Bowl, while 14 Black quarterbacks started for NFL teams during the 2023 season. Brittney Griner returned to the U.S. after 10 months of imprisonment in Russia, and Damar Hamlin returned from a near-death experience on the gridiron.

Black entrepreneurs are emerging in spaces once considered the domain of the ethnically privileged, and initiatives to increase access to quality education for underserved communities are working. Arian Simone, co-founder and CEO of Atlanta-based Fearless Fund, made major waves in the venture capital space where only 3% of investors are Black. Morgan DeBaun, the founder, chairman, and CEO of Blavity, continues to expand the the media company's reach, popularity, and size.

The Bruce family's descendants sold oceanfront property that was stolen through a Jim Crow application of eminent domain in 1912. They won the property back in 2002, and in 2023, they sold it back to Los Angeles County for \$20 million.

And although local and national calls for reparations have yet to produce a national policy to compensate for slavery, a Black woman in Denver, Colorado, who worked seven days a week, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year for \$30,000, sued her employer for underpayment and was awarded a judgment of \$830,737.68, plus attorney's fees that are estimated to be

about \$250,000.

Hakeem Jeffries became the U.S. House of Representatives Minority leader and made history as the first Black lawmaker to lead a party in Congress, and two Black lawmakers, Justin Jones and Justin Pearson of Tennessee, were reinstated to the state legislature after expulsion when they called for gun reform in the wake of the Nashville school shooting.

Cherelle Parker became the first woman mayor of Philadelphia, and artificial intelligence caused a Hollywood shutdown.

A lot happened this year, and many of the key actors in the events that made history in the past 12 months will bring much of what they started in 2023 into 2024. But the best way to close out this year and every year is to take what we learned over the preceding months, including the impact that the year's events have had on our individual lives and communities, and be vigilant but hopeful about our futures.

Although we don't expect the 2024 presidential election to be as fraught with false claims of fraud, we know that at least one candidate for the office will continue to disrupt the political process with lies and insidious inventions. But since past behavior is a predictor of future behavior, expect an eventful ride in 2024.

HIRAM JACKSON is the CEO & Publisher of Real Times Media, which includes The Michigan Chronicle, a partner in the Word In Black collaborative.



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COMMUNITY

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FEB 9
Walsh Visits
Greenwood

By Sam Levrault
U.S. Secretary of Labor Marty Walsh was in Tulsa to tour the historic Greenwood district on Feb. 9. Walsh toured the district with Dr. Freeman Culver III, president of Greenwood Business Chamber and descendants of the Tulsa Race Massacre (upper-mid).



Area college students were invited to meet with Sec. Walsh during his visit (lower-mid). Local high school drumline performed for the secretary and fellow visitors (bottom).

FEB 16
Black Gold Series
at 36 Degrees
North

By Sam Levrault
Entrepreneurship took center stage in Tulsa throughout much of the year. Including, Tara Payne (left) and the Black Gold Series hosted at 36 Degrees North.



THEATER

TULSANS SHINE ON STAGE AS LOCAL ACTING
COMMUNITY USES THE ARTS FOR STORYTELLING



FEB 18 - 19
Paradise Blue

By Sam Levrault
Theatre North presented “Paradise Blue,” a production, part of the Detroit Trilogy by contemporary American playwright Dominique Morisseau, at the Tulsa Performing Arts Center.

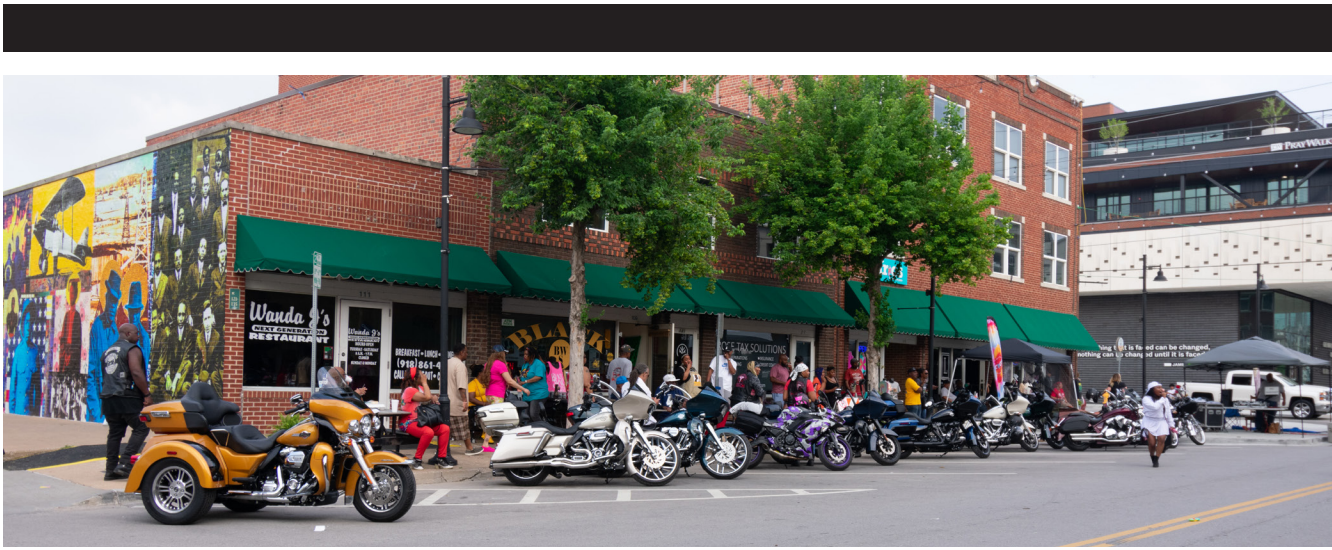
Obum Ukabum (below) features as “Blue” from the production set in 1949 Detroit.



OCT 20 - 29
Reflections

By Sam Levrault
Obum Ukabum and the World Stage Theatre Company returned to Tulsa Performing Arts Center with local production, “Reflections.” Written by Ukabum and Bailey James, the play focuses on the stories of citizens during the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre and their descendents.

Local cast portray two characters, one set in 1921 (top) as well as a role present day (bottom).



MAY 12 - 13
Black Wall Street Rally

By Sam Levrault
The second annual Black Wall Street Rally invited motorcyclecyclists and motorcycle enthusiasts from across the nation to the Historic Greenwood District. Live entertainment, vendors, food trucks, and local businesses welcomed guests to Black Wall Street.



MAY 31
Fixins’ opens in
Greenwood

By Sam Levrault
Kevin Johnson (left), owner of Fixins Soul Kitchen, celebrates during the Black Wall Street location’s ribbon ceremony. Community members, including survivors of the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre attended the opening in late May.



FESTIVALS

TULSA CELEBRATES
ALL YEAR LONG



MAY 12 - 14
Mayfest celebrates 50 years

By Sam Levrault

Mayfest celebrated it's 50th anniversary and the first under the management of The University of Tulsa. The three-day event featured regional artists in the free, family-friendly outdoor festival.



JUNE 23 - 25
Tulsa Pride

By Sam Levrault

Love reigned in Tulsa during the annual pride festival, presented by Oklahomans for Equality. Events included the Rainbow Run, festival, parade, and Pride in the Park. Local vendors, artists, and national acts, including Coco Montrese (above), performed for attendees.



LEGACY

TULSA REMEMBERS
LOCAL FIGURES

AUG 18
J. Kevin Ross remebered with
honorary street sign

By Sam Levrault

A sign, dedicated to the late James Kevin Ross, can be seen on the northwest corner of the intersection of East 11th and South Peoria, near Oaklawn Cemetery.



SEPT 18
Hip Hop 918 celebrates
50 years of the genre

By Sam Levrault

The third year of the festival was held on Sept. 18, also known as "918 Day". This year's emcee was Playa 1000. Performances included local rappers K.O. (upper-mid), Steph Simon & the Straight Outta Tulsa Diamonds (middle), Dangerous Rob (bottom), and headliner, EPMD.



PÄRLÁ CITYWIDE CREATIVE FESTIVAL



SEPT 22
Theatre in the Park

By Sam Levrault

Music, laughter, and monologues filled the air as the Black Actors League (above) performed in Centennial park.



SEPT 23
Fashion shows up
in Tulsa

By Sam Levrault

J'Parle Artist Group started to wrap up the week-long festival with a local fashion show, highlighting local designers and models at the Historic Big 10 Ballroom with The Stylish Agency as well as 5th and Fab.

