

# The Oklahoma Eagle

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*By JENNIFER PORTER GORE, WORD IN BLACK*

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SPECIAL: BLACK HISTORY MONTH

## THE FATE OF OKLAHOMA RACE-BASED LAW MAY BE DECIDED SOON

A LEGAL CHALLENGE TO THE CONTROVERSIAL OKLAHOMA STATUTE THAT RESTRICTS EDUCATORS FROM TEACHING RACE-RELATED TOPICS, CURRENTLY UNDER CONSIDERATION IN OKLAHOMA’S WESTERN DISTRICT COURT, IS LIKELY TO BE DECIDED SOON.

JOHN NEAL | THE OKLAHOMA EAGLE



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ACLU HB 1775

The law, **HB 1775**, pushed through by conservative state lawmakers in 2021, has hampered teachers across the state from educating students about such issues as the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre that affected African Americans who were attacked and many were killed by a white mob in Tulsa or forced removal of Native Americans from the South to Indian Territory in the early 1800s.

*Cont. A3*



PHOTO THE OKLAHOMA EAGLE AND ADOBE IMAGES





ANTHONY CRAWFORD, Oklahoma City, Okla. high school teacher and plaintiff noted in Black Emergency Response Team, et al., vs. Gentner Drummond.  
PHOTO PROVIDED

ACLU HB 1775

# ‘Unqualified’ Judge to make ruling

From A2

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), the nationally renowned nonprofit advocating civil rights, is the lead organization marshaling the case through the legal system. The ACLU made oral arguments in the District Court in December 2023 before District Judge Charles Goodwin. Oral presentations are often the last step in a case before a judicial ruling. Emerson Sykes, the lead ACLU attorney in the suit, argued that HB 1775 is “unconstitutionally vague, overbroad and viewpoint discriminatory.” The statute, Sykes added, “restricts teaching about racism and sexism in Oklahoma’s colleges, universities and public schools.”

Sykes encouraged the court to issue a preliminary injunction blocking the law. The plaintiffs in the case, including an Oklahoma City high school teacher, expressed hope that the case will lead to the dismissal of the statute and end the cloud of censorship it has brought over classrooms across Oklahoma.

The fervent statements of the schoolteacher, Anthony Crawford, and the eloquent presentation by Sykes, made their battle against HB 1775 even more powerful. Both are African American human rights advocates. Their views of the Oklahoma statute are that it is misguided and harmful.

And yet, District Judge Charles Goodwin, who will decide the case, has been found “unqualified” by the American Bar Association. The ABA, the leading national organization for legal professionals, initially found Goodwin unqualified for the bench in 2017. Goodwin, appointed to District Court in 2018 by then Pres. Donald J. Trump, has delayed court proceeding in the ACLU’s case for over two years. He is the first nominee to a federal District Court in over a decade that the ABA has deemed “not qualified.”

HB 1775 places the accreditation of school districts at risk if they violate any of eight different race related concepts in teaching or training. The Oklahoma State Board of Education (OSBE) used the statute to sanction Tulsa Public Schools (TPS) in July 2022. That sanctioning was the first in a series of actions that the board has brought against TPS. The OSBE, under the helm of Oklahoma Superintendent of Public Instruction Ryan Walters, continues to threaten to take control of Tulsa’s school district board.

## Contested law

The ACLU first brought Oklahoma students, teachers, professors, and others together to forge the case against HB 1775 in 2021 in the U.S. Court for the Western District of Oklahoma. The case was brought on behalf of Black Emergency Response Team, the American Civil Liberties Union, ACLU Oklahoma, and the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights. It is officially the Black Emergency Response Team, et al., vs. Gentner Drummond in his official capacity as Oklahoma attorney general, et al.

ACLU attorney Sykes said early in his oral arguments, that “...teachers, many of whom are here with us in the courtroom, can’t understand what content can be taught and what can’t, and they risk losing their livelihoods if they get it wrong.” HB 1775 provides for potential revocation of a teacher’s license.

One of the teachers in the courtroom was Crawford, an Oklahoma City high school teacher. In an exclusive interview, Crawford told The Oklahoma Eagle that although he “only provides information in the classroom,” he was scared when HB 1775 became law. “I’m going to get fired” was among his first thoughts, the teacher said. “They took down some of my books and changed my lesson plans.” Nevertheless, Crawford feared a teaching complaint, although he labored to “not show bias,” he told The Oklahoma Eagle.

Complaint-based HB 1775 affected TPS in 2021 when a white teacher at Memorial High School griped that an outsourced training course on implicit bias “shame white people for past offenses in history.”

The Oklahoma Eagle uncovered the basis for the Tulsa complaint filed with the OSDE via an Open Records Request by the newspaper. The law enacted in May 2021 includes a prohibition against eight concepts in mandatory training “or make part of a course.” The law has had a chilling effect on training and classroom instruction, as no other HB 1775 complaint has resulted in a downgrading of a district’s accreditation since 2022.

One concept of the eight that are banned in HB 1775 centers on the prohibition on training or teaching those causes “any individual should feel discomfort, guilt, anguish, or any form of psychological distress on account of his race or sex...” Based on the complaint, the OSBE, in a controversial decision, downgraded Tulsa

Public Schools to “Accreditation with Warning” at its July 28, 2022, meeting.

Then TPS District Superintendent Deborah Gist called the board action “egregious and baseless.” At the TPS meeting on August 2022, the board, in a 3-2 vote, denied TPS’s request to reconsider the accreditation downgrading. Megan Lambert, legal director of Oklahoma’s ACLU, told The Oklahoma Eagle in an interview in August 2022 that the action against TPS was “extremely troubling.” However, Lambert added the accreditation sanction imposed on TPS would bolster its case against the racially discriminatory law.

### Oral arguments

In the oral arguments, ACLU attorney Sykes reminded the court that the Oklahoma law’s “eight divisive concepts was directly cut and pasted from former Pres. Donald Trump’s Executive Order 13950, which before we even filed, was enjoined on the grounds of vagueness.”

Sykes also argued the law violates the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. He noted for the Court the “legislature’s inflammatory radicalized statements while the law was being considered, and the disparate impact the law is having on Black and Indigenous students whose stories are being erased from the curriculum.”

OKC teacher Crawford said this legislative finger-pointing was hypocritical. In an interview with The Oklahoma Eagle, Crawford said that “the judicial system is biased; the educational system is biased. All we are doing is presenting the bias to our students. Students need to know who they are and where they are coming from.”

Sykes, the ACLU attorney, also pointed to legislative hypocrisy, arguing antidiscrimination, as claimed by defense counsel, “is not their real intent here.” “What this law does is something quite different and unique. It picks specific ideas that are politically incorrect, according to Oklahoma legislature, and prohibits the mere discussion of these ideas in public schools...”

Crawford’s practical experience in the classroom paralleled Sykes’ views expressed in the courtroom. Sykes said, “By the plain letter of the law,” Sykes said, “teachers should somehow teach that African-Americans should not feel discomfort learning about slavery, that

Jewish students should not feel discomfort learning about the Holocaust, that American Indian students should not feel discomfort when learning about the Trail of Tears.”

### Judge Goodwin ‘unqualified’

Oklahoma ACLU’s Lambert told The Oklahoma Eagle, “In September (2023), the plaintiffs made a motion to get this case moving because it had been pending for almost two years.” This implied criticism of Judge Charles Goodwin is not new. Criticism of his work habits, including “frequent absence from the courthouse,” was noted in a letter to the Senate Judiciary Committee in 2017, when the panel was considering Goodwin’s nomination to the federal bench.

Ultimately, the 15-member American Bar Association Standing Committee on the Federal Judiciary gave Charles Barnes Goodwin a “not qualified” rating on his nomination from a magistrate judge to the federal judiciary. The ABA JOURNAL reported this decision in its October 30, 2017, article. In 2018, the Senate approved Goodwin as U.S. District Judge for the Western District of Oklahoma.

Nevertheless, Lambert told The Oklahoma Eagle, “The Court told us to expect the order soon so we can make a decision on our motion for a preliminary injunction any day now.” However, Judge Goodwin made clear in December’s court proceedings he had several alternatives, including passing the case to the Oklahoma Supreme Court.

Crawford, the Oklahoma City teacher, expressed optimism about the Court’s pending decision.

“It’s unfair for us not to tell the truth about what happened,” he told The Oklahoma Eagle. “They burned down things we began in this country. Tulsa was not the only place where (B)lack towns were burned down. Many (B)lack towns were burned down because of the economic power we developed. This is a major part of American History.”

JOHN NEAL, the author, is a former resident of Sand Springs. He is well versed in urban renewal, its uses and abuse, as a former city manager in Oklahoma and departmental consultant for the city of El Paso, Texas. In 2008, he was that city’s planning director when the city won multiple awards for its planning accomplishments. He is now retired and resides in Austin, Texas..



# Rosenwald Schools: Historic African American Schools

By CYNTHIA SAVAGE, THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF OKLAHOMA HISTORY AND CULTURE



During the first half of the twentieth century educational opportunities for African American schoolchildren were stifled by racism, a shortage of money, and inadequate facilities. Beginning in the mid-teens, however, black schools throughout the south received much needed financial assistance from the Julius Rosenwald Fund. In 1913 Julius Rosenwald, president of Sears, Roebuck and Company and philanthropist for a variety of causes, began providing limited funding for the construction of black schools in Alabama. Due to the success of this endeavor and the persistent need in Alabama and other southern states, the Julius Rosenwald Fund was formally established in 1917. The fund

was active in the states of Oklahoma, Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia. The Rosenwald Fund’s initial activity was to aid in the construction of new buildings for black schools. Although the fund did not supply all the money necessary for the erection of new buildings, it did provide sufficient money to act as an impetus for the local district to better their facilities. In Oklahoma the Rosenwald Fund aided in the construction of 198 education-related buildings in forty-four counties between 1920 and 1932. Of the 198 buildings, 176 were schoolhouses, ranging in size from one-teacher

to twenty-two-teacher, sixteen were teacherages, and six were shops. The Rosenwald school building program ended in Oklahoma and nationally in 1932. In addition to constructing schools the Rosenwald Fund contributed money for black school libraries, transportation to separate consolidated schools, African American teacher education, and black colleges and universities. The fund also had programs related to health and medicine, race relationships, and miscellaneous other activities related to human well-being. The Julius Rosenwald Fund continued in operation until 1948 when, as intended by Julius Rosenwald, all monies had been spent, and the trustees dissolved the fund.

**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.

**ROSENWALD HALL** at New Lima (19687.TO.N033.67.1.4, Chester R. Cowen Collection, OHS).

## Featured Last Week



Minority Opportunity Program Facing Elimination



State School Superintendent: No Teacher Pay Increases



Election Board Removes GOP Members, County Election Board

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Chase, Tulsan Financial Profiles

A new financial literacy program is poised to help working individuals in Tulsa improve their financial profiles and pave a brighter path to successful entrepreneurship.

Gary Lee  
The Oklahoma Eagle

The endeavor, launched by The Tulsa Economic Development Corporation (TEDC), is designed to help 300 low and middle-income Tulsans boost their credit scores and take other steps to gain economic stability. JP Morgan Chase has pledged to invest \$405,000 over two years in the program. Chase representatives said the banking and financial services company is committed to assisting minority-owned small businesses to achieve greater economic security. Rose Washington Jones, TEDC’s executive director, strongly advocates the initiative. “The program will heavily impact low-and-moderate income residents of the Tulsa community who can’t get a loan because their credit score is too low,” she said. TEDC is focusing on improving credit scores as a primary goal of the program because credit

scores are one of the toughest JPMorgan Chase has a solid history of supporting TEDC’s work in entrepreneur development. With their backing of the new program, Chase’s total investment in TEDC’s endeavors has been nearly \$940,000 since 2019. TEDC’s existing programs help low-wealth Tulsans learn how to scale small businesses through an in-depth finance, operations, marketing, sales, and leadership curriculum. JPMorgan Chase has invested over \$5 million in Oklahoma non-profits since 2019, including its contributions to TEDC. Through its support of the CARE program, the bank aims to address wealth disparities and create a more equitable business environment across the region.

**A win for Tulsa entrepreneurs**  
The Coaching and Resource Empowerment (CARE) Program builds upon the bank’s initial investment and enhances TEDC’s

current programs through new personal financial management courses and credit score accountability mentors. “This new credit management curriculum is critical, and clients are embracing the information,” Washington-Jones said. “Understanding the importance of credit management is essential to managing a loan and the first step towards growing a business.” “Successful entrepreneurship starts with a strong foundation in financial literacy,” said Ginger Kollmann, Chase’s market leader and head of private banking in Oklahoma. “JPMorgan Chase is committed to supporting our state’s entrepreneurial spirit and lifting business owners from low-income communities.” Entrepreneurs can apply for a TEDC business loan by visiting the organization’s website. Select applicants with a credit score lower than 625 will be placed in the CARE program with the opportunity to advance to TEDC’s traditional business development

curriculum upon completion. TEDC aims to serve 300 individuals through the new program. It is actively seeking volunteers as mentors and accountability partners for clients’ moral support. Another program to help Tulsans gain a better financial footing is The Tulsa Financial Empowerment Center (FEC). Under the direction of Goodwill Industries, FEC was established in December 2020 to aid Tulsans in their quest to improve their finances, such as reducing debt, improving Personal credit and increasing savings. It bills itself as Tulsa’s only one-on-one service to help residents boost their financial standing.

GARY LEE is the managing editor and a key contributor for The Oklahoma Eagle, a stout advocate for the African American community and those that champion equity.

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INTEGRIS Health Cyberattack

# FBI Investigation ongoing

The hospital system changed digital security providers last fall, but officials have declined to say if the hack was related.

Joe Tomlinson  
NonDoc

SEVERAL LAWSUITS have been filed against INTEGRIS Health, the largest not-for-profit Oklahoma-owned health system in the state, after a hacker claims to have obtained names, dates of birth, Social Security numbers, and contact and demographic information from more than 2.2 million patients during a November cyberattack.

Meanwhile, a separate health care system that serves northeast Oklahoma suffered a cyberattack within the same week, and lawmakers are proposing legislation that would require hospitals to notify the Attorney General’s Office after data breaches occur.

Although INTEGRIS Health’s leadership believes their attack occurred Nov. 28, impacted patients were not notified of the breach until the bad actor emailed people on Christmas Eve seeking payment in exchange for deletion of their personal health information.

INTEGRIS Health is Edmond’s largest private employer and operates the city’s largest hospital. Several people whose families apparently had their personal information stolen declined to speak publicly about the data breach for fear of reprisal by the hacker, although each expressed frustration with INTEGRIS for the apparent delay in notifying patients about the breach.

One Edmond resident affected by the data breach — who agreed to speak with NonDoc on the condition of anonymity — said the hacker emailed him Dec. 24 with his name, Social Security number, phone number and address. INTEGRIS Health notified him of the attack Jan. 5, about 38 days after the breach occurred and 12 days after the hacker emailed patients. By that time, news outlets had already reported the hack publicly.

“They breached in November, the bad guys let me know in December, and I don’t hear anything from INTEGRIS until the start of the new year?” the man told NonDoc on the condition of anonymity. “It appears to me that INTEGRIS couldn’t organize a two-car funeral.”

INTEGRIS Health has offered 24 months of free credit monitoring to patients impacted by the data breach.

“The notion of giving someone free credit monitoring for two years after knowing they have been hacked for nearly two months seems like a half-assed gesture to help you,” the INTEGRIS patient said.

Initially, 11 separate class-action lawsuits were filed against INTEGRIS Health in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Oklahoma. In the latest court filings, Timothy DeGiusti, chief U.S. district judge, consolidated each case under Zinck et al v. INTEGRIS Health Inc.

Owing to the sheer amount of class-members involved in the case, the court has found some potential conflict-of-interests involving its law clerks. The mother of one law clerk assigned to the case is a class member, while two other law clerks in the court’s chambers are class members themselves, DeGiusti wrote in a Jan. 31 order.

If any party of the case files an objection against those law clerks by 5 p.m. Monday, Feb. 5, the court will find a “conflict-free law clerk from another judge in the Western District.” If no objections are filed, those law clerks will continue on the case.

Additionally, there are jurisdictional concerns under the Class Action Fairness Act. CAFA vests federal courts with jurisdiction over putative class actions where the amount in controversy exceeds \$5 million in the aggregate and there is minimal diversity between the parties.

“Amanda Harvey, counsel for INTEGRIS, stated that, based on preliminary calculations, there are approximately 2,285,646 INTEGRIS patients impacted by the data breach. Of those patients, Ms. Harvey stated it is currently believed that approximately 90 percent are Oklahoma residents,” DeGiusti wrote in the Jan. 31 order.

To address the issues under CAFA, DeGiusti ordered Harvey to file a notice with the court by Feb. 13, “in which counsel shall set forth INTEGRIS’s most recent interpretation of the figures regarding residency of putative class members, as discussed during the status conference.”

Brooke Cayot, a communications manager with INTEGRIS Health, provided a statement directing impacted patients to the company’s website for further information.

“The privacy, confidentiality and security of our patients’ personal information are top priorities for INTEGRIS Health. As we work

The privacy, confidentiality and security of our patients’ personal information are top priorities for INTEGRIS Health. As we work with third-party specialists to investigate this matter and determine the scope of affected data and to whom that data relates, we are providing the latest information for patients and the public here.”

with third-party specialists to investigate this matter and determine the scope of affected data and to whom that data relates, we are providing the latest information for patients and the public here,” Cayot wrote. “As we confirm affected individuals, we are reaching out to them to provide notification and support, including 24 months of access to free credit monitoring and identity protection services. As our investigation into this matter is ongoing, we are unable to provide additional information at this time.”

## INTEGRIS Health switched security providers in fall 2023

INTEGRIS Health representatives have largely declined to answer specific questions about the situation, but Cayot confirmed the FBI is involved in an ongoing investigation.

“We are unable to answer some of the below questions as we continue to work with third-party specialists, as well as the FBI, to complete the investigation,” Cayot said. “INTEGRIS Health takes the security of our patients’ information seriously. Our security team regularly consults with industry experts on the latest protections and safeguards available to thwart illegal activity.

“We understand the uncertainty and concerns that the data breach has caused our community. It is an unfortunate reality of doing business today that new threats continuously emerge in an attempt to disrupt the care we provide and impact the trust of those who rely upon us in their time of need.”

Sometime in fall 2023, INTEGRIS Health changed its software security provider from VMWare to Citrix. However, the health system has since switched back to VMWare “temporarily.”

“We did move to Citrix in the fall,” Cayot said. “However, we moved temporarily back to VMware.”

Complications related to the switch to Citrix last fall allegedly caused an array of problems, including at least one weekend during which nurses and doctors struggled to access certain patient data.

Asked whether the changes in software security systems is believed to be related to the data breach, Cayot declined to answer.

Jonathan Rule, the chief hospital executive of INTEGRIS Health Edmond, spoke on the hospital’s growth and expanding workforce needs during a Zoom presentation at an Edmond Economic Development Authority meeting Jan. 16, but he did not address the data breach. INTEGRIS Health is the fourth largest employer in Edmond, following Edmond Public Schools, the University of Central Oklahoma

and the City of Edmond.

“We said we’re going to grow with Edmond, and we’ve done that. We’re now the largest private employer in the city,” Rule said. “As we add additional clinics and as we continue to operationalize the rest of our expansion, I fully anticipate that we’ll probably move into that number three spot here in the next three to five years.”

## Ardent Health Services sustains separate November cyberattack

Around the same time as the INTEGRIS Health data breach, Ardent Health Services — the parent company of the Hillcrest Healthcare System, which serves northeast Oklahoma — endured a cyberattack of its own. Although Ardent announced its breach within a week of it occurring, patients whose data had been breached were not contacted directly by the company for nearly two months, according to a timeline of statements on the Ardent Health website.

In a Nov. 27 press release, Ardent Health Services announced it became aware of a “cybersecurity incident” that occurred Nov. 23, five days before the INTEGRIS Health breach.

In response, Ardent Health Services informed law enforcement of the incident and “took its network offline, suspending all user access to its information technology applications, including corporate servers, Epic software, internet and clinical programs,” according to the press release. The health care provider restored access to Epic, its electronic health record provider, on Dec. 6, according to another press release.

In a Jan. 22 press release, Ardent Health Services said its investigation into the issue “revealed that an unauthorized actor extracted copies of documents that include certain individuals’ personal information.” That information includes addresses, phone numbers, Social Security numbers, email addresses, medical treatment information, health insurance and claims information, as well as Medicaid and Medicare numbers.

“On Jan. 22, 2024, Ardent Health Services and its affiliated entities began mailing letters to individuals whose information may have been involved in the incident,” the updated statement reads. “Our data review process is ongoing and will take time to complete. As we identify additional impacted individuals, we will mail letters to them in accordance with all applicable laws.”

Asked whether there is any indication the Ardent cyberattack and INTEGRIS cyberattack could be related, Brittany Parmley, a spokeswoman for Hillcrest, said that question

Cont. A10



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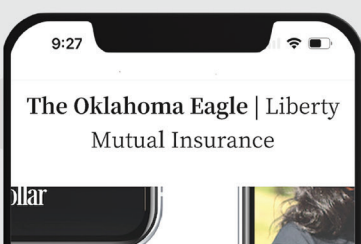
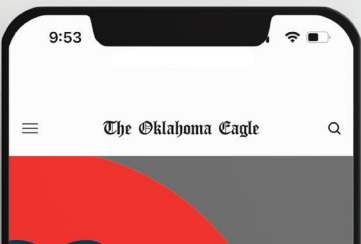






PHOTO ADOBE IMAGES

Racially Discriminatory Covenants

# Bill would let cities remove racially discriminatory covenants from land records

Joe Tomlinson  
NonDoc

As part of an ongoing legislative push to expunge racist language from land records, Sen. Kristen Thompson is running a bill that would allow municipalities to remove discriminatory covenants from existing neighborhood plats. Although a 1948 U.S. Supreme Court decision declared such language unconstitutional and unenforceable, many land documents created for older neighborhoods still state that Black people are not allowed to own certain properties.

Senate Bill 1617, which advanced out of the Senate General Government Committee by a 10-0 vote Feb. 8, would create a process for city planning commissions to remove racist or discriminatory language from existing subdivision plats.

“It was a request from the City of Edmond,” Thompson (R-Edmond) said of the bill. “We had found through some of the existing plats that there was some language that we needed to take out because it was discriminatory.”

**Edmond mayor: ‘It hurts me. It hurts me everyday.’**

Thompson’s bill is particularly applicable for the city of Edmond, although racially restrictive covenants linger in communities across the state and nation.

Racially restrictive covenants and other outgrowths of racism largely prevented Black people from living in Edmond for much of the 20th century. According to the Edmond History Museum, Edmond’s first housing addition platted with a racially restrictive covenant was the Highland Park Addition in 1907. Excluding the Edmond Highway Addition in 1924, every neighborhood platted in Edmond from 1911 until 1949 contained a racially restrictive covenant.

Prior to statehood, several Black families lived in Edmond, according to the Edmond History Museum. African Americans first settled inside Edmond city limits in 1891 near West Edwards Street. A segregated

**County-level election secretaries are appointed by the state election board, which has the power to remove party representatives from the county election boards.**

school opened at 21 W. Edwards St. in 1892, and a Black church was established at 31 W. Edwards St. in 1901. According to the Edmond History Museum, the school closed in 1905 owing to a lack of available students.

In September, the city paid homage to Edmond’s early Black history with the installation of the “Bridge of Brotherhood” sculpture at the corner of West Edwards Street and North Broadway.

However, Jim Crow Laws were enacted immediately after Oklahoma became a state in 1907. By 1910, only two Black families lived in Edmond. About a decade later, the Ku Klux Klan established a chapter in Edmond, citizens began promoting Edmond as an all-white town, and it was widely recognized as a sundown town — meaning Black people faced intimidation and threats for being visible in the community after sunset.

By 1920, no Black people lived in Edmond, according to the Edmond History Museum. It wasn’t until the 1970s that another Black family moved into the city limits.

For each of the past two years, the Edmond City Council has included “support legislation to allow for the expungement of discriminatory restrictive covenants from public plats” in its annual legislative agenda.

Edmond Mayor Darrell Davis, who became the city’s first Black mayor after being elected in April 2021, discussed SB 1617 at the Oklahoma Association of REALTORS’ Capitol conference Wednesday.

Davis said families buying properties in 2024 should not have to see racist language lingering in land records for the house they just bought.

“How do you think that feels that if you go buy a piece of land, and all of a sudden you see on the plat, ‘Old Edmond says we wouldn’t sell this to you because of the color of your skin?’” Davis asked. “Do you know what that does to the mental health capacity of individuals? It hurts. It hurts me everyday.”

SB 1617 would allow municipalities to “amend an existing plat which was previously filed with the office of the county clerk of the county where the addition is located to remove an illegal discriminatory restrictive covenant pursuant to the Fair Housing Act.”

At least 30 days ahead of a planning commission meeting where such an amendment would be considered, SB 1617 would require a municipality to notify all property owners in an addition about the city’s effort to remove the language. After being approved by a planning commission, a municipality’s governing board — such as a city council — would need to approve the amended plat for it to be filed on record with the county clerk “against all parcels within the addition.”

Davis said Thompson’s bill is an important companion piece to a law passed last year allowing individual property owners to repudiate discriminatory language within their land records by filing a declaration with the county clerk.

“We now have the ability to take it off, and now we’re working on language for the city to take it off, which needs to be done,” Davis said.

Davis said Realtors play a critical role in who moves into Edmond and the community’s makeup.

“You direct them to what school they go to, you direct them to what type of housing they live in, you direct them (as to whether) they live on the east side or west side of the tracks,” Davis said. “So, you all have a very important part to that, and that’s very important for Edmond to get out of this shadow that we have of being a discriminatory community. Yes, Edmond has its past, just like a lot of communities have. But me as the mayor? We’re not going to forget it. We’re going to remember it, build off of it, and go forward. So we have to take that language off.”

Referencing the outcry in response to a housing assessment Edmond received in August, Davis said housing discrimination still exists today, particularly regarding income levels and housing unit types.

“It was amazing that people stood in line to complain,” Davis said. “Basically they said, ‘If you can’t afford to live in Edmond, we don’t want you here.’ We have to change that mentality. (...) What I’ve been trying to do as mayor is show that Edmond is a welcoming community. I don’t care what you look like, I don’t care where you’re from, I don’t care who

*Cont. A9*



Prison Staff Terminated

# ‘Oversight & Surveillance’ Absent

Keaton Ross  
Oklahoma Watch

Oklahoma prisoner advocate Emily Shelton awoke to her phone buzzing about 7 a.m. on Oct. 26.

Using state-issued tablets, prisoners told Shelton that a man on their unit had been beaten to death overnight with no staff intervention. Word spread on social media that morning and concerned family members began calling the facility urging them to investigate.

At approximately 10:20 a.m., several hours after inmates started messaging Shelton, prison personnel found Raymond Bailey dead at the bottom of a trash can, covered with empty milk cartons. A state medical examiner’s report indicates that a group of prisoners hogtied and gagged Bailey and proceeded to stab and beat him to death. The medical examiner, who found no evidence of intervention to save Bailey’s life, ruled the death a homicide.

Bailey, who was 44, was serving a 40-year sentence for second-degree murder out of Oklahoma County. He would have been eligible for parole in 2039.

Shelton, who runs the prisoner advocacy group Hooked on Justice, said a routine overnight cell check would have revealed that Bailey was missing from his cell and prompted an investigation. Improved oversight and surveillance could have prompted officials to respond and intervene in the assault, she said.

“During the nighttime, when the warden isn’t there, things aren’t being done properly,” Shelton said. “There’s no excuse why they did not find that body until 10:30 in the morning.”

The Department of Corrections requires facilities to conduct a minimum of five inmate counts throughout the day, including at least one overnight count, spokesperson Kay Thompson said. She said prisoners are required to raise their hand or otherwise indicate that they’re conscious during the count.

A spokesman for the GEO Group, the Florida-based private corrections company that the state pays to operate the facility, referred questions about the incident to the Oklahoma Department of Corrections.

“During the nighttime, when the warden isn’t there, things aren’t being done properly.”

Emily Shelton, Hooked on Justice, prisoner advocacy group.



THE LAWTON CORRECTION AND REHABILITATION FACILITY is Oklahoma’s last remaining private prison.  
PHOTO KYLETTA RAY/SOUTHWEST LEDGER

Thompson confirmed three prison staff members were terminated as part of an ongoing internal investigation into the murder, but said the agency cannot release more information about the firings until the investigation is complete. She said the Comanche County District Attorney’s Office has taken over a criminal investigation into Bailey’s death from the Department of Corrections with formal charges expected by March.

Bobby Cleveland, a former state lawmaker and executive director of Oklahoma Corrections Professional, a group that advocates for state prison employees, said persistent understaffing raises the likelihood of violence behind bars. He said employees are sometimes expected to monitor more than 200 prisoners at a time.

Department of Corrections budget documents show the agency employed 1,301 state correctional officers as of Dec. 31, down from 1,501 in March 2021. Lawton prison staff are not included in this count, which reflects broader correctional staffing trends in the state.

“When you don’t have enough people, bad things are going to happen,” Cleveland said. “These inmates are dying because they can’t get around quick enough to save them.”

Violent incidents and allegations of staff misconduct have plagued the Lawton prison, which houses more than 2,500 medium and maximum security prisoners.

In early December, three staff members were hospitalized after a prisoner stabbed them with a homemade weapon. The injuries were non-life threatening, KSWO-TV reported at the time.

In a wrongful death lawsuit filed against the GEO Group in November, Linda Gray claims staff willfully neglected her son Justin Barrientos’ medical emergency and caused his

death in January 2023. While a Department of Corrections investigator recommended manslaughter charges, the Comanche County District Attorney’s office has yet to file formal charges in the case.

Oklahoma’s contract with the GEO Group to house state prisoners at the Lawton prison runs through July 31. The agreement gives the state the authority to purchase the facility and take over operations with at least 180 days’ notice.

Declines in Oklahoma’s prison population over the past five years have prompted state officials to vacate or take over multiple private prisons. The Department of Corrections took control of the 1,600-bed Allen Gamble Correctional Center, previously known as the Davis Correctional Facility, from CoreCivic on Oct. 1.

Similar to Lawton, complaints of excessive violence and mismanagement plagued the prison when it was privately controlled. Announcing the transition last August, Department of Corrections Director Stephen Harpe said the state could more efficiently and effectively care for the men under state control.

Shelton said she’s pleased the state is investigating the death and fired involved staff but fears similar incidents will continue as long as prisons remain understaffed.

“If something like this was able to happen, how much more is going on that they don’t even know about?” said Shelton, whose husband and son are incarcerated in Oklahoma prisons. “Or they just turn their head and don’t care. It’s one or the other.”

Editor’s Note: This story was updated to clarify that Lawton Correctional Facility staff are GEO employees. ■

Health and Safety Checks

# Inspections ‘dropped off’ agency radar



THE OKLAHOMA SCHOOL OF SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS is seen in Oklahoma City. PHOTO WHITNEY BRYEN/OKLAHOMA WATCH

**A state watchdog agency will restart health and safety inspections at the Oklahoma School for Science and Mathematics, a 2-year residential high school for academically advanced students, after a 16-year hiatus.** The Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth in a meeting Jan. 26 voted to resume annual, routine inspections of the school through its Office of Juvenile System Oversight, which is charged with inspecting all state-run youth facilities as well as investigating complaints at private facilities.

Jennifer Palmer  
Oklahoma Watch

There are six state-run facilities under their purview, including the Oklahoma School for Science and Mathematics. Two others are schools: Oklahoma School for the Blind and Oklahoma School for the Deaf.

Annette Jacobi, executive director of the commission, said the last inspection report on OSSM is dated 2008, and she doesn’t know why those visits stopped. It dropped off the agency’s radar until Oklahoma Watch requested OSSM’s most recent inspection report.

Commission inspectors focus on physical and mental safety issues, and conduct confidential interviews with residents and staff. They review fire inspection reports and check that staff has required certifications and safety training.

“Our job is to put everything in totality with health and safety,” Jacobi said.

For example, at the Oklahoma School for

the Deaf, inspectors ask students: Do you feel safe here? Are you having a problem with another resident or a staff member? Has anyone touched you or tried to touch where they shouldn’t against your will?

There’s no outside agency performing that kind of oversight at OSSM. Even though it’s a state-funded school, it’s not under the oversight of the State Department of Education and isn’t accredited.

An Oklahoma Watch investigation in 2023 revealed pervasive sexual harassment and bullying of students and staff at the school. Students described being subjected to inappropriate and sexist comments, and some struggled with mental health issues while attending and after graduating. Many of the complaints focused on two professors, both of whom agreed to retire this year. The school is undergoing several reforms, one of which is an anonymous complaint system.

Oversight there was so scarce that during a routine financial audit in 2019, employees pleaded with auditors to address sexual harassment and the toxic work environment because it was the best opportunity they’d found to be heard.

Joe Dorman, chief executive officer of the Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy, said the commission should be conducting routine inspections of the state’s children’s facilities to ward off future problems.

“This falls right in line with their original, primary mission,” he said.

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.

GOP, Border Condemnation

# Senator Lankford ‘strongly condemned’



JAMES LANKFORD, Senate photo, 114th Congress.  
PHOTO WIKI COMMONS

Sue Bin Park  
Oklahoma Watch

The Oklahoma Republican Party issued a resolution condemning Republican Sen. James Lankford, who represents Oklahoma in the U.S. Senate, for his work on a bipartisan border security package. Party leadership retracted it two days later.

The resolution, passed during a Jan. 27, 2024 meeting, read in part, “The Oklahoma GOP strongly condemns Senator James Lankford ... and calls upon him to cease and desist jeopardizing the security and liberty of the people of Oklahoma and these United States.”

On Jan. 29, the Oklahoma Republican Party issued a statement characterizing the meeting as illegitimate, as proper notice was not provided to all members, and advised the media not to report on any business conducted that day as official party actions.

Republican Senate minority leader Mitch McConnell has privately acknowledged that former president Donald Trump’s opposition to the deal presents a dilemma for the party, The Oklahoman reported. ■



Racially Discriminatory Covenants

“We’re not going to forget”

From A7

you root for. You’re welcome in Edmond.”

‘A big step in the right direction’

Rep. John Pfeiffer authored House Bill 2288 last session to allow Oklahoma property owners to repudiate discriminatory language within deed restrictions by filing a declaration with their county clerk. That law officially took effect Nov. 1.

Now, Pfeiffer is the House author on SB 1617.

“I think this is an important step to allow us to just speed up this process and get this language that isn’t enforceable out of these records,” said Pfeiffer (R-Orlando). “This is going to build off what we started last year.”

Pfeiffer said he filed HB 2288 after learning about racially restrictive covenants in a NonDoc article about Wayne Frost, a Black Edmond businessman who came across a racially restrictive covenant on his business property’s plat while seeking to expand his auto accessory business.

“This is a good follow-up,” Frost said of SB 1617. “I think this is what we’ve been working toward — to get this into the mainstream to make it easier to remove.”

Frost called SB 1617 a “a big step in the right direction.”

“At my age, from what I’ve seen and experienced over the years, any step forward is good,” Frost said. “Laws don’t change people’s hearts, but this is still a big step in the right direction. This racist language is coming from people’s hearts. This is what they felt. This is what they thought. Hopefully, over the years



PHOTO ADOBE IMAGES

their hearts have softened, and they don’t have that same hatred for someone because they’re different than you.”

Sen. George Young, who serves on the Senate General Government Committee, signed on as a co-author of SB 1617.

“It’s just another one of those things that the sooner we get it cleaned up and clear it up, the better it is,” said Young (D-OKC). “I don’t want my children or grandchildren even reading that kind of stuff.”

Young grew up in Memphis, Tennessee, during the Civil Rights Movement.

“I think that’s one of the reasons I’m so intent about these kinds of things — getting them changed, getting them corrected,” Young said. “I have seen what we’ve tried to do as far as racial reconciliation, what it’s about, what we’re trying to get, and then making the moves to try and bring true equality in a real way.”

Young said SB 1617 can provide a history lesson for younger

Oklahomans.

“These kinds of things are always useful and good, and we’ll make some more progress because we’ll have a chance to talk about them and the fact that they actually existed in reality,” Young said. “A lot of folks — they don’t think we’re making it up — but they think, ‘Oh, that was years ago. It had nothing to do with us.’ But it’s still in [land records].”

**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).



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PHOTO ADOBE IMAGES

INTEGRIS Health Cyberattack

# Details Have Not Been ‘Forthcoming’

From A6

should be directed to law enforcement.

Asked what agency is investigating the Hillcrest data breach, Parmley replied that Ardent would not share that information.

“Everything that we have shared is available online,” Parmley said.

Both INTEGRIS Health and Ardent Health Services use Epic as their electronic health record provider. However, Cayot said INTEGRIS Health officials could not consider whether the two November cyberattacks were linked in any way, emphasizing that the investigation is still ongoing.

“We are unable to speculate on whether the Hillcrest cyberattack was related. INTEGRIS Health’s investigation and review of potentially impacted data to determine the type of information and to whom it relates is ongoing,” Cayot said Feb. 5. “We have emailed letters to those with an email on file and additional letters will begin mailing later this week.”

William Federman, an attorney representing the group of INTEGRIS patients affected by the data breach, said the company has not communicated effectively with its customers.

“INTEGRIS has not been forthcoming with many details. It appears there was a ransomware attack. It appears the ransomware attack was successful to infiltrate INTEGRIS’ cyber environment. It further appears that the ransomware attackers gained access to the confidential health and personal information of INTEGRIS’ employees and potentially patients,” Federman said. “We’re fairly confident that information was exfiltrated (...) because all of the (lawsuit) class members have been receiving essentially blackmail emails from the bad actor wanting to be paid off.”

After the perpetrator emailed patients Dec. 24, INTEGRIS Health posted a statement to its website that day notifying patients of the cyberattack.

“Regrettably, we are writing to inform you of a cyber event that may have impacted our patient data. Specifically, we became aware of unauthorized access to a certain portion of our network that stores patient information,” the Dec. 24 statement said. “Upon becoming aware of the activity, INTEGRIS Health promptly took steps to secure the environment and commenced an investigation into the nature and scope of the activity. There was no interruption to any services as a result of this event, and INTEGRIS Health remains fully operational.”

After allegedly failing to receive extorted

payments from INTEGRIS Health itself, the hacker attempted to extort patients, Federman said, by giving them until Jan. 5 to pay \$50 for their stolen personal health information. If they failed to make the payment, “[the hacker] threatened it would sell the entire database to (dark web) data brokers on Jan. 5, 2024,” the litigation complaint states.

It is unclear whether patient data was sold Jan. 5.

In their email to patients, the hacker said they contacted INTEGRIS after the breach, “but INTEGRIS refused to resolve the issue,” according to the complaint.

INTEGRIS Health’s updated statement said an investigation was launched after “becoming aware of the suspicious activity.”

“The investigation determined that certain files may have been accessed by an unauthorized party on Nov. 28, 2023. INTEGRIS Health initiated a review of the potentially accessed data to determine the type of information and to whom it related, which is currently underway,” the statement said. “As that review was ongoing, on Dec. 24, 2023, INTEGRIS Health learned that patients began receiving communications from a group claiming responsibility for the unauthorized access.”

The company encouraged “anyone receiving such communications to NOT respond or contact the sender, or follow any of the instructions, including accessing any links.”

Federman claims INTEGRIS Health put its patients at risk by failing to take action against the cyberattack in a timely manner.

“It’s very troubling that INTEGRIS is not ahead of the game here and seems to be behind the eight ball. INTEGRIS should have done something to lock down its system to prevent the problem from happening. Once the problem happened, they should have advised the [affected patients] immediately so they could have taken action,” Federman said. “It’s essentially been silence from INTEGRIS. You just can’t be the ostrich with your head in the ground. You have to be proactive. You’re failing your customers, your patients.”

Federman said he expects INTEGRIS Health to “stiff arm” the class members of his lawsuit as they continue to seek more information about the attack and its impact.

“It doesn’t behoove anyone — the class members, INTEGRIS, nobody — for INTEGRIS to simply keep a secret here,” Federman said. “That’s what they’re doing: Playing corporate amnesia.”

The civil complaint filed Dec. 28 lists five causes of action: Negligence, negligence per se,

breach of implied contract, unjust enrichment, and declaratory and injunctive relief.

## Legislation filed related to notice of data breaches

Prior to the Oklahoma Legislature gaveling in for its 2024 regular session Feb. 5, Sen. Brent Howard (R-Altus) filed legislation in December that would modify notice requirements for data breaches of certain security systems. The bill would add new definitions for “reasonable safeguards” and “restricted information.”

Senate Bill 1337, if passed, would require entities or individuals to “provide notice to the attorney general of such breach without unreasonable delay but in no event more than 60 days after discovery of the breach.”

Currently, Oklahoma’s existing Security Breach Notification Act provides no time frame for when the attorney general should be notified of such a breach.

While the Security Breach Notification Act already allows the attorney general or a district attorney exclusive authority to bring action and obtain either actual damages or a civil penalty not to exceed “\$150,000 per breach of the security of the system or series of breaches of a similar nature that are discovered in a single investigation,” Howard’s legislation would also allow the attorney general or a district attorney to seek actual damages and civil penalty equaling \$150,000 or \$2,000 per individual affected per breach, whichever is greater. The bill also adds hospitals as specific entities to be in compliance with provisions of the act.

Asked if SB 1337 was filed in response to the recent data breaches at hospitals, Howard said the bill is part of an initiative that began in the Attorney General’s Office back in “August or September.”

“This one is something that the Attorney General’s Office has been working on, and I’ve kind of helped just shepherd it through,” Howard said. “But yeah, it’s to put that within the AG’s office and overview within there.”

Phil Bacharach, communications director for Attorney General Gentner Drummond, called the bill a “common-sense” proposal.

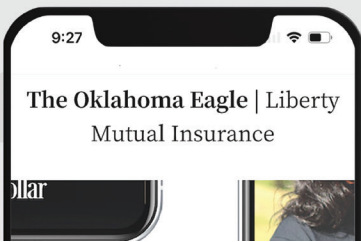
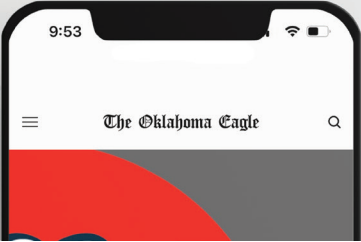
“Businesses and consumers all too often find themselves victimized by hackers and other unscrupulous actors, and without recourse for prosecution,” Bacharach said. “SB 1337 would help ensure bad actors are held accountable for data breaches. It’s a common-sense, pro-business and pro-consumer measure.”

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CLASSIFIEDS



Published in The Oklahoma Eagle:  
February 16 and 23, 2024

NOTICE TO BIDDERS  
SEALED BIDS FOR  
PROJECT NO. SP 23-2

Notice is hereby given that pursuant to an order by the Mayor of the City of Tulsa, Oklahoma, sealed bids will be received in the Westby Conference Room at Tulsa Performing Arts Center, 110 E 2nd St, Tulsa, OK 74103 until 2:00 p.m. the 15th day of March 2024 for furnishing all tools, materials and labor and performing the work necessary to be done in the construction of the following:

TULSA PERFORMING ARTS  
CENTER  
Project No. SP 23-2  
Package No. 1 and No. 2

A Pre-Bid Conference is scheduled for Monday February 26, 2024 at 10:00 a.m. at the Tulsa Performing Arts Center located at 110 E 2nd Street, Tulsa, Oklahoma, 74103. Meet at the third street main entrance.

Attendance at the Pre-Bid Conference is MANDATORY for GLAZING CONTRACTORS and AUDIO/VISUAL CONTRACTORS to submit a bid for this project.

Bids will be accepted by Lowry Construction Services, Inc. on behalf of the City of Tulsa.

Drawings, specifications and contract documents for construction of said public improvements may be obtained through Lowry Construction Services, Inc. via email request to [hutton@lowrycs.com](mailto:hutton@lowrycs.com)

Contract requirements shall include compliance as required by law pertaining to the practice of non-discrimination in employment.

Attention is called to Resolution No. 18145 of August 23, 1988, requiring bidders to commit to the goal of employing on the project at least fifty percent bona fide residents of the City of Tulsa and/or MSA in each employment classification.

Attention is called to Resolution 7404 of November 8, 2006, requiring bidders, their subcontractors and their lower-tier subcontractors to hire only citizens of the United States.

The City of Tulsa itself is exempt from the payment of any sales or use taxes.

A Certified or Cashier's Check or Bidders Surety Bond, in the sum of 5% of the amount of the bid will be required from each bidder to be retained as liquidated damages in the event the successful bidder fails, neglects or refuses to enter into said contract for the construction of said public improvements for said project and furnish the necessary bonds within thirty days from and after the date the award is made.

The bidder to whom a contract is awarded will be required to furnish public liability and workmen's compensation insurance, in conformity with the requirements of the proposed contract documents.

All bids will be opened and considered by the Bid Committee of said City project at a meeting of said Committee to be held in the Westby Conference Room at Tulsa Performing Arts Center at 2:00 p.m. the 15th day of March 2024.

Dated at Tulsa, Oklahoma, this 16th day of February, 2024.



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The Oklahoma Eagle



# THE OKLAHOMA EAGLE CHURCH DIRECTORY



**The Oklahoma Eagle publishes news and announcements for churches currently listed in *The Oklahoma Eagle's* Church Directory. For information, please call our office at (918) 582-7124**

## 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

## Words of Wisdom Ministries FC

Temporarily meeting at the Courtyard Marriot 3340 S 79th E Ave Tulsa OK  
(918) 230-3022

Pastors Wesley & Alfie Gray would like to invite you to come and experience the Word of God in action this Sunday! God has a word for you, He Guarantee's it! You'll be glad you did!!!

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## GTOMi

Gospel Tabernacle Outreach Ministries, Inc.  
Traveling Outreach Ministries

609 E. Zion Street  
Tulsa, Oklahoma  
Elder Julius W. Bland  
Sr., Pastor  
918-810-3882

**ALL ARE WELCOME**

## MOHAWK FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

3329 E. 30th St. North • 834-0391

Sunday School  
9:30 a.m.

Sunday Morning  
Worship 11 a.m.

Bible Study  
Wednesday  
7 p.m.



Rev. Emanuel L. Collier, Sr.  
Pastor

## Gethsemane Baptist Church

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

Dr. W. T. Lauderdale

Sunday School  
9:00 a.m.

Church Services  
11:00 a.m.

## Zoe' Life Church of Tulsa

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

Pastor Richard and Cher Lyons

Sunday Worship: 1pm  
Wed- Healing School: 6:30p - 8p

"The Righteous Are As Bold  
As A Lion." - Prov.28:1a

## SOLID ROCK 7th DAY BAPTIST CHURCH

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

Pastor Rick Bruner

Sabbath School (Saturday)  
9:30-10:45 a.m.

Praise & Worship 11:00 a.m.

Choir Rehearsal  
Wednesday 6:00 p.m.

"The Seventh Day Is Still  
God's Sabbath"

## Northside Christ Gospel Church

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

Sunday School -  
10 am

Sunday Morning  
Worship - 10:45

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

Rev. John W. Anderson

## VERNON AME CHURCH

307-311 N. Greenwood Ave.

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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Senior Minister

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Sunday School  
9:40 a.m.

Sunday TV  
Worship  
11:00 a.m.

KTUL Channel 8

## TIMOTHY BAPTIST CHURCH

821 E. 46th St. N. • 425-8021

REV. TWAN T. JONES

Sunday School  
9:45 a.m.

Sunday Morning Worship  
11:00 a.m.

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Fax:

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918-584-PRAY

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Morning

Worship 10:45

Wednesday

Bible Study

Noon and 7:00



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DESPITE PUSHBACK, BLACK LIVES MATTER AT SCHOOL KEEPS GROWING A15



# 9 Facts About The *Racial Wealth Gap*



PHOTO ADOBE IMAGES

## Racial Wealth Gap

**Experts say** Black households continue to face high unemployment, burdening student debt, and low wages.

## *Not enough wealth to shrink the wealth gap*

**Bria Overs**  
Word In Black

Five hundred years. That’s how long experts say it would take for Black people to reach economic parity with white people and close the racial wealth gap, given current trajectories.

That’s 100 years longer than slavery existed in the U.S. In fact, it’s longer than the U.S. has been a country. And it’s about six times the lifespan of an average Black person.

Economists and researchers from the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago shared findings in a webinar earlier this month on where Black Americans stand compared to other racial and ethnic groups since 2019.

While acknowledging Black people have made gains in recent decades, they also identified a series of disparities that keep them from gaining financial ground with whites — including higher rates of unemployment, lower rates of home ownership and wages, regardless of education.

**1. Minorities have more wealth than ever, but not enough to shrink the racial wealth gap**

Data from the Federal Reserve’s 2022

Survey of Consumer Finances shows Asian-American households have a median net worth that is 1.8 times greater than white households at \$536,000. Their net worth is 8.7 times greater than Latino households and 11.9 times greater than Black households.

“While the multiplier for the Black-white wealth gap decreased from 9.9 in 2016 to 7.8 in 2019 to 6.3 in 2022, the gap in dollar terms increased from \$153,800 to \$165,000 to a staggering \$240,000 — showing that the disparity is getting worse,” said Kristen Broady, senior economist, economic advisor, and director of the Economic Mobility Project at the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago.

**2. Black Americans earned 34% less than all racial and ethnic groups combined**

Stark differences in earned income — take-home pay — still exist. It is why conversations around the racial and gender pay gap and its intersections are so persistent.

As of 2022, the median U.S. household income across racial and ethnic groups was \$74,580. Black households earned around \$52,860, but white households earned \$81,060, and Asian households brought in \$108,700. Half of Black households’ total income was between \$15,000 and \$75,000.

Cont. A14

## ‘Dangerous’ Section 8 Housing

## *Fire That Kills 6 Children Puts Focus on ‘Dangerous’ Section 8 Housing*

Young siblings, including a 17-month-old, died in a house that failed a city inspection six months earlier.

**Jennifer Porter Gore**  
Word In Black

Last summer, when housing inspectors combed through a four-bedroom house in South Bend, Indiana, they reportedly found so many code violations — roaches, a collapsing kitchen ceiling, and widespread electrical problems — that the tenant living there on a low-income public housing voucher was relocated.

Yet the ramshackle house in the city of 103,000, located 72 miles east of Chicago, wasn’t vacant for long: 67-year-old David Smith and his six young children soon moved in.

Then, in late January, on a frigid night in

Cont. A14



Racial Wealth Gap

Disproportionate unemployment & access to banking



From A13

3. Higher education is important, but it does not guarantee better economic mobility for Black graduates

Black people with a bachelor’s or master’s degree had on average the most student debt and borrowed more than other groups yet had the lowest income. Black students borrowed around \$58,400, and after four years, they still owed 105% of it, according to data from the National Center for Education Statistics. The combination of low income and high debt makes repayment more challenging, leaving many Black people in a financial hole that is hard to climb out of. “When we think about this, it makes it harder to accumulate capital and do things like get a mortgage,” Broady said.

4. Unemployment is still higher for Black workers

During the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, Black and Latino workers had the highest unemployment rates. Four years later, as the national rate moved closer to pre-pandemic levels, Black workers were left behind. “Their unemployment rate took longer to peak and also longer to subside back to that normal baseline relative to other workers,” said Anthony Barr, research and impact director at the National Bankers Association. That’s important because income is the

most significant driver of wealth for most households, Barr added. It’s also why “periods of unemployment, even if relatively brief, can have outsized effects” like taking on more debt.

5. Black households are less likely to own a home and more likely to be undervalued

While homeownership is another driver and indicator of wealth, the Black homeownership rate has never reached 50%. It came close in recent years, peaking at 46.4% in 2020, but dipped during the post-pandemic economic recovery period. Homeownership “is a very illiquid form of wealth,” Barr said. “And so even if, during the pandemic, your on-paper wealth went up, that doesn’t necessarily translate to better financial health in a month-to-month period.” Adding insult to injury, Black-owned homes in majority-Black neighborhoods tend to be devalued because of systemic racism in the U.S. housing market.

6. Thinking About Their Financial Futures Differently

There are several ways to build a nest egg for retirement: employer-sponsored retirement savings plans, Roth IRAs, and pensions, to name a few. Yet as of 2022, just 35% of Black workers had some type of retirement account, and those that did had saved only around \$117,530, according to the Survey of Consumer Finances. A lack of preparedness and investment

puts Black people at risk of spending their golden years living in poverty, Word In Black previously reported. While they still have the least amount on average invested in the stock market, Black Americans are increasingly active on Wall Street. Young Black investors are changing the game; experts say access to technology and information has helped.

7. Lower Access and Higher Distrust in Traditional Banking Systems

The term “unbanked” refers to those who do not have an account with or use a bank, credit union, or other financial institution. Black people are overrepresented within this group at 13%. The use of check cashing companies, payday loans, and money orders is higher for the unbanked and underbanked. But high transaction fees and interest rates lead experts to warn against using predatory banking companies, which are disproportionately located in Black neighborhoods. At the same time, however, traditional financial institutions do not have branches in Black neighborhoods, charge their own fees or require minimum deposits or balances — factors that can affect Black consumers’ ability to do business with them. “We do know there are disparities in terms of where branches are located, for example,” Barr said. “A Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago working paper finds that banks are less likely to be located in Black-majority neighborhoods, even relative to low-income neighborhoods.”

8. Black Households Rely on Credit Cards

Credit cards’ popularity is due to their direct effect on credit scores. A higher credit score lowers interest rates, increases credit limits, and even what neighborhood someone can live in, according to the Fair Housing Center for Rights and Research in Ohio. Undermining this is a common myth that carrying a balance on credit cards helps boost credit scores. It’s the opposite, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau says. But, in 2022, 78% of Black households had a balance they were carrying monthly.

9. The Black-Owned Business Boom May Fade

The COVID-19 pandemic brought challenges for small businesses, leading thousands to close their doors — temporarily and permanently. In the years since, a surge of new Black-owned businesses hit markets. “While Black entrepreneurs may start businesses in an effort to increase wealth and income, without proper support and tools, their efforts may prove inadequate to increase wealth and may even become detrimental,” Broady said. And this is already proving to be true. Broady points to the U.S. Census Bureau that found Black-owned businesses with employees were “least likely to have earned a profit and most likely to have taken on losses in 2022.”



BALLOONS LINE THE FENCE around what’s left of the burned home at 222 N. LaPorte Ave. in South Bend, Indiana. PHOTO GENEVA HUTCHINSON

From A13

South Bend, fire swept through the two-story clapboard home at 222 N. LaPorte Ave. Smith survived, but all the children — ranging in age from an 11-year-old to a 17-month-old baby — were killed. The tragedy in a predominantly Black neighborhood shocked the community, raising questions about the property management company’s statement they made repairs before renting to Smith. The fire’s cause is under investigation. But the deadly blaze also put a spotlight on the nation’s affordable housing crisis, a situation that disproportionately affects Black families. The situation is so dire, experts say, that many people with few resources and even fewer housing options are forced to live in homes that are dilapidated, vermin-infested, and unsafe.

‘Dangerous’ Section 8 Housing

Extensive health and safety problems found by inspectors

Housing Shortage Forces Tough Choices

“When people can’t afford housing, all the choices are bad,” says Will Fischer, a senior housing policy analyst for the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, a Washington, D.C. think tank. Desperate to make rent, people “take money away from other basics like food or medicine,” Fischer says. “Or they can double up in overcrowded housing, or some people end up in homes that are substandard and dangerous.” Last week, as officials in South Bend continued to investigate what caused the North LaPorte Avenue fire, hundreds of residents gathered to mourn and remember the children who died. Authorities identified the siblings as Angel Smith, 11; Demetris Smith, 10; Davida Smith, 9; Deontay Smith, 5; D’Angelo Smith, 4, and Faith Smith, 17 months. “It’s pretty tough on the family and the community,” says Lynn Coleman, a local activist and community trauma liaison at Memorial Hospital–Beacon Health System. “Now comes the hard part of trying to help [Smith] get his feet on the ground and begin to move forward.”

While lingering questions remain about exactly what happened at the home in the months after the housing inspection, data indicates the tragedy is a symptom of a much larger problem. The previous tenant at North LaPorte Avenue was a participant in the Housing Choice Voucher program, also known as Section 8. The federally funded subsidy program helps more than 2.3 million families find affordable housing by paying approximately 60% of the participants’ rent directly to the landlord. The national program is reserved for very low-income families: statistics show more than 60% of voucher recipients have household incomes of less than \$15,000 a year. Nearly 80%, however, are extremely low-income families, earning well below a residential area’s median income.

Nearly Half of Sect. 8 Households Are Black

Marsha Parham-Green, South Bend Housing Authority executive director, confirmed that the North LaPorte Avenue house came to the agency’s attention after the previous tenant, concerned about the house’s condition, asked for an inspection. According to The South Bend Tribune, inspectors examined the house in June 2023 after the complaint. They found extensive health and safety problems — including burned-out or non-working electrical sockets, broken door handles, and a severe roach infestation. Parham-Green told the housing authority’s board of commissioners that when the property manager, South Bend-based WJM Property Management, missed a 30-day deadline to resolve the problems, her office relocated the tenant, according to the newspaper. “We moved that family out, and fortunately, they were not in there when this fire occurred,” Parham-Green said. “We are very proactive about making sure our families are safe.” There are no indications when or if the repairs were completed, however, before the Smith family moved in. It’s also unclear whether Mr. Smith received housing assistance. Just after the fire, WJM told The Tribune the previous tenant had been evicted, and that all necessary repairs had been made before Smith and his children took occupancy in December. There were no open work orders at the time of the fire. Still, the tragedy underscores the challenge for Black families, who, according to HUD, make up 12% of all U.S. residential households but are nearly half of all households using Section 8 vouchers. Earlier this month, the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development reported expanding rental assistance and increasing the number of housing vouchers available for low-income households. But the increase in voucher availability doesn’t address the growing shortage of available homes for qualified households. The Urban Institute, a Washington, D.C., policy center, estimates the U.S. faces a shortage of 7.3 million affordable and available

homes for renters with extremely low incomes — up from 6.8 million in 2019, the year before the COVID-19 pandemic. A National Low Income Housing Coalition survey put it into sharper focus: it found just 33 affordable and available rental homes exist for every 100 extremely low-income renters. That crunch, authorities say, has left some families languishing on long waitlists for housing, while others turn to unsafe housing to put a roof over their heads. According to a report from Harvard University’s Joint Center for Housing Studies, Black low-income renter households were significantly more likely to occupy inadequate housing than white households. In South Bend, the local building inspector’s office did not respond to questions about their most recent inspection of the North LaPorte Avenue property. The SBHA and the Department of Housing and Urban Development did not disclose data on how many landlords leave the program if or when they fail an inspection. Still, efforts to increase the availability of affordable housing have run into inflationary pressure in the housing market and federal budget changes that have reduced the amount of housing assistance available. Many local communities also have thrown up barriers to affordable housing development through efforts to change zoning laws, and some housing authorities struggle to convince landlords who own higher-quality homes to accept Section 8 vouchers. In Washington, the House of Representatives is considering a budget that would provide \$1.4 billion less than the amount needed to prevent cuts in the number of available vouchers, according to the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities. A proposed bill in the Senate is only slightly better since it falls short by roughly \$962 million. If Congress keeps funding equal to prior years, inflation will still cause roughly 190,000 fewer families to receive assistance. Donations to the Smith family can be made by sending a check to Smith Family Memorial Fund, P.O. Box 11565 in South Bend, Indiana, 46634. 1st Source Bank in South Bend is managing the fund and will accept donations until February 29.



Black Lives Matter at School

# Despite Pushback, Black Lives Matter at School Keeps Growing

Aziah Siid  
Word In Black

We live in an era where a Black teen in Texas can get suspended for wearing his hair in locs, schools in Florida teach that people benefited from enslavement, and books about racism or written by Black authors are regularly banned or challenged in school libraries. And at the start of February, Miami-based iPrep Academy, sent home consent letters that enabled parents to opt their child out of Black History Month events.

“Some people can say Black Lives Matter in School, and some people can’t say it in a district,” says Chanel Hurt, a former teacher and current national staff member of Black Lives Matter At School.

Launched in 2017, the organization champions racial justice in schools and promotes the dignity of Black students and communities. It sparks dialogue, action, and change around these tenets through ongoing initiatives as well as an annual week of action.

Indeed, from Feb. 5-9, students, parents, educators, and community members participated in Black Lives Matter At School Week, speaking out against anti-Blackness in schools, as well as demanding a better, more just educational experience for Black students.

Despite nationwide efforts to suppress teaching about Black lives, this year the Week of Action saw participants in more than 30 states — even in states and districts that are restricted from teaching about racism. In 2023, actions happened in 13 states, Hurt says.

Participants facilitated their own activities — like hosting rallies, engaging in conversations with parents, or hosting virtual events.

“I’m excited about the continued relevance and importance of Black Lives Matter in everyone’s daily life,” Hurt says. She explains that the week is part of “a framework that addresses all of that racial injustice in education and helps facilitate creating that safe and equitable school communities.”

And depending on the level of anti-Blackness in a school, participation in the week sometimes takes place off-campus.

“We’ve been seeing all the different ways people are engaging their community outside the

iPrep Academy’s Black Lives Matter At School week shows is that these are the people who have solutions — and are committed to transforming public education.



PARTICIPANTS OF BLM AT SCHOOL WEEK. PHOTO IPREP ACADEMY WEBSITE

school, and I think that’s why we’re seeing the number jump,” Hurt tells Word In Black.

But no matter what form they take, the actions taking place during Black Lives Matter At School Week all revolve around the movement’s four key demands: ending “zero-tolerance discipline” policies that push Black students into the criminal justice system and replacing them with restorative justice practices, increasing Black teacher representation, requiring Black History/Ethnic Studies across all K-12 levels, and prioritizing funding for counselors over police presence in schools.

“Parents are engaging with their children, teachers are collaborating on lessons, a TV channel is broadcasting Black History, a community association printed out BLM at School coloring books and put them out for customers and local businesses,” Hurt says. “Year after year, people are finding ways to engage with their community because we’ve had to change the way that we’ve done it.”

Supporters of the movement include the National Education Association, which has been vocal about endorsing the week of action and encouraging their members to participate.

“When we join together to rewrite the rules, we make our schools places where students can investigate, innovate, and make mistakes & missteps — and that’s better for all of us,” the NEA wrote on X, formerly known as Twitter.

The NEA also asked to “create supportive environments where all students can learn, grow, and thrive.”

**IPREP ACADEMY**  
A Nationally Certified Magnet School, committed to creating a learning environment that closes the cultural and digital divide.

Specific ways the NEA said schools can start creating those healthier environments include enacting effective approaches to discipline and improving restorative justice practices. Examples of how that can be done include ending suspensions and arrests for minor infractions, and ensuring school personnel are equipped to diffuse conflict on campus.

The blame for problems in schools often falls squarely on the shoulders of Black parents, teachers, and, most perplexingly, the students themselves. But what Black Lives Matter At School week shows is that these are the people who have solutions — and are committed to transforming public education.

“Our theme this year is collective value, and that’s what I’m really looking forward to,” Hurt says. “When we recognize that our liberation is interwoven and connected, and we recognize the strength that comes with our unity, we then have the strength and the energy to take down the systems that continue to move us farther away from our shared humanity.”



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Famed Opera Star  
Leona Mitchell  
Performance To  
Be Shown At Circle  
Cinema

Grammy Award Winner Mitchell  
Will Participate In Q&A Session

Dr. Jerry Goodwin  
The Oklahoma Eagle

Circle Cinema and Tulsa Opera are welcoming celebrated Broadway star Leona Mitchell as part of a public event on Feb. 29. The recorded performance, “Celebrating Black Excellence: Leona Mitchell,” will be featured at Circle Cinema.

A question-and-answer session with Mitchell will follow the program.

In the film, Mitchell performs as the lead soprano role in “Un Ballo in Maschera” (in Italian means “A Masked Ball”) recorded in 1989 at the world-famous Sydney Opera House, Bennelong Point, Sydney, Australia. The world premiere of the opera was in 1859. As stated by The Metropolitan Opera, the opera was composed in the middle of Giuseppe Verdi’s prolific career. The story is based on the assassination of King Gustav III by a political enemy during a masked ball at the Stockholm Opera House in 1792.

“Leona Mitchell has graced stages across the world with her powerful and captivating voice,” said Aaron Beck, artistic director at the Tulsa Opera. “Ms. Mitchell’s authentic spirit embodies the rich cultural tapestry of her home state. She is a friend to artists and a true Oklahoma treasure.”

Mitchell was recognized in 2003 as the State’s Cultural Ambassador by former Oklahoma Gov. Brad Henry. She rose to prominence after her debut with the San Francisco Opera Theater in 1972. During her performances there, she received an OPERA America grant, providing her the opportunity to study with well-known opera coach and vocal adviser Ernest St. John



LEONA MITCHELL, a native of Enid, received a Grammy for Best Opera Recording in her debut year before spending 18 seasons as a leading spinto soprano for New York’s Metropolitan Opera. PHOTO PROVIDED

Metz at the Los Angeles Opera Center.

Mitchell debuted with the San Francisco Spring Opera Theater in 1972, in San Francisco, Calif. In 1975, at the largest classical music organization in North America, The Met, she performed the role of Micaela in George Bizet’s “Carmen.” From that moment, she traveled to opera houses around the world, including Geneva, Paris, Madrid, and Sydney. Mitchell received a Grammy in 1977 for “Best Opera Recording”.

She performed for 18 seasons at the Met. According to the Oklahoma Historical Society, her consecutive seasons are “a testament to her voice and professionalism.”

“We are proud to join Tulsa Opera in honoring Leona Mitchell,” said Ryan Thomas, programmer at Circle Cinema. “The evening will be a great opportunity for long-time fans and new followers of the opera to join in celebrating her work as one of Oklahoma’s premier performing artists.”

Mitchell graduated from Oklahoma City University before starting with the San Francisco Opera. She became one of America’s most famous performers, winning a Grammy for Best Opera Recording in her debut year before spending 18 seasons as a leading spinto soprano for New York’s Metropolitan Opera. She has received many honors throughout her career, including induction into the Oklahoma Hall of Fame, Oklahoma Music Hall of Fame, and Oklahoma Women’s Hall of Fame.

Prior to the film, attendees are invited to attend a reception featuring a live performance by Stephanie Washington, a recipient of the Tulsa Opera’s Filstrup Resident Artist.

The reception will begin at 6 p.m. followed by the program at 7 p.m. The film’s length is 1 hr. 19 min.

The program will be held at Circle Cinema, 10 S. Lewis Ave. For ticket information, visit CircleCinema.org.

BTW Hall Of Fame Hosts Gala and Brick Paver Fundraisers



DEMARCO MORGAN, co-anchor for “GMA3: What You Need to Know” and an ABC News correspondent, is a 1997 graduate of Booker T. Washington High School. He was recognized by the BTW High School Distinguished Hall of Fame Foundation in 2017. PHOTO PROVIDED

Dr. Jerry Goodwin  
The Oklahoma Eagle

Booker T. Washington High School Distinguished Hall of Fame Foundation is announcing the gala and its sponsorship of a fundraiser for the foundation. The support for these projects provides college scholarships for BTW students and honors graduates of the school.

Gala

The BTWDHOF board of directors has scheduled its annual induction ceremony for April 4 with a reception at 6 p.m. and the program at the Greenwood Cultural Center, 322 N. Greenwood Ave. The program will honor former students who have excelled in their profession, public service, and/or community relations since graduating from high school.

This year’s Hall of Fame honorees are Libby Billings (Business and Professional), Barbara Coleman (Education), Captola Dunn (Lifetime Achievement), Wendell Franklin (Humanitarian and Service), Tyler D. Lockett (Sports), Dr. Anthony Marshall (Education), Ed McQuarters (Sports), Paulette Parker (AKA “Maxayn Lewis”) (Arts and Entertainment), Rev. M. C. Potter (Lifetime Achievement), and St. Rep. John Waldron

(Education).

To purchase tickets, see [paypay.me/tulsabtwhof](https://www.paypay.me/tulsabtwhof) or send your check or money order to the foundation at its mailing address: P. O. Box 52762, Tulsa, OK 74152. The deadline is March 15, 2024.

Brick Paver Fundraiser

The foundation has announced that current and former students and friends of BTW have a permanent place to promote their love for the high school. The walkway in front of the historic entrance to the school campus will be laid with personalized bricks. Each brick will cost \$100 per brick. The foundation will be collecting completed forms until Nov. 10.

Completed forms can be sent electronically to [tulsa.btw.hof@gmail.com](mailto:tulsa.btw.hof@gmail.com) or to the foundation’s mailing address: BTW Distinguished Hall of Fame, P. O. Box 56762, Tulsa, OK 74152.

The Booker T. Washington High School Distinguished Hall of Fame Foundation was created in 1996 by Otis Autry, science teacher, and later became a 501c3 by Dr. La Verne Ford Wimberly. The foundation’s mission is to honor successful seniors, alumni, faculty, and administration.

For more information about the gala or the Brick Paver Fundraiser, contact [tulsa.btw.hof@gmail.com](mailto:tulsa.btw.hof@gmail.com) or visit [www.btwhalloffame.org](http://www.btwhalloffame.org)

Events

February  
Black History Month

Feb. 15-16

Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity will be hosting its statewide conference in Tulsa. For more information, contact Jason Gilley, president of the local Alpha Tau Lambda chapter, at [tulsaalphas1906@gmail.com](mailto:tulsaalphas1906@gmail.com).

Feb. 16

Miss Black and Old Gold Scholarship Pageant – “Elegance of the Nile” at Central High School, 3101 W. Edison St., 7 p.m. The pageant is sponsored by the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity. For more information, contact [alphaokdistrict@gmail.com](mailto:alphaokdistrict@gmail.com).

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](mailto:beverly-baul@alzoutreach.org).

Feb. 17

Education for Scholars, Inc. to sponsor United to Fulfill the Dream Annual Fundraiser on Feb. 17 from 1 p.m. – 3 p.m. at Northeastern State University (Administrative Office Building), 3100 E. New Orleans St., in Broken Arrow. This year’s theme is “Sowing Seeds for Our Future.” The program is to commemorate the non-violent work of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. For sponsorships, tickets, or more information, visit [www.educationforscholars.org/events](http://www.educationforscholars.org/events).

Feb. 23

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).

Mar. 13

2024 Greenwood Women’s Business Center InnovateHER 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, 10 a.m. -3 p.m. For more information, contact [info@greenwoodwbc.com](mailto:info@greenwoodwbc.com) or [gbcwomensummit.com](mailto: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. The film is an award-winning documentary by Natalie Patillo and Daniel A. Nelson about survivors of abuse fighting for their lives and spending years behind bars. This is the story of how the legal system gets domestic violence wrong, according to a press release about the film. The program is sponsored by the T. Oscar Chappelle Family and the TCC Foundation. For more information, contact [ramona.curtis@tulsacc.edu](mailto:ramona.curtis@tulsacc.edu).

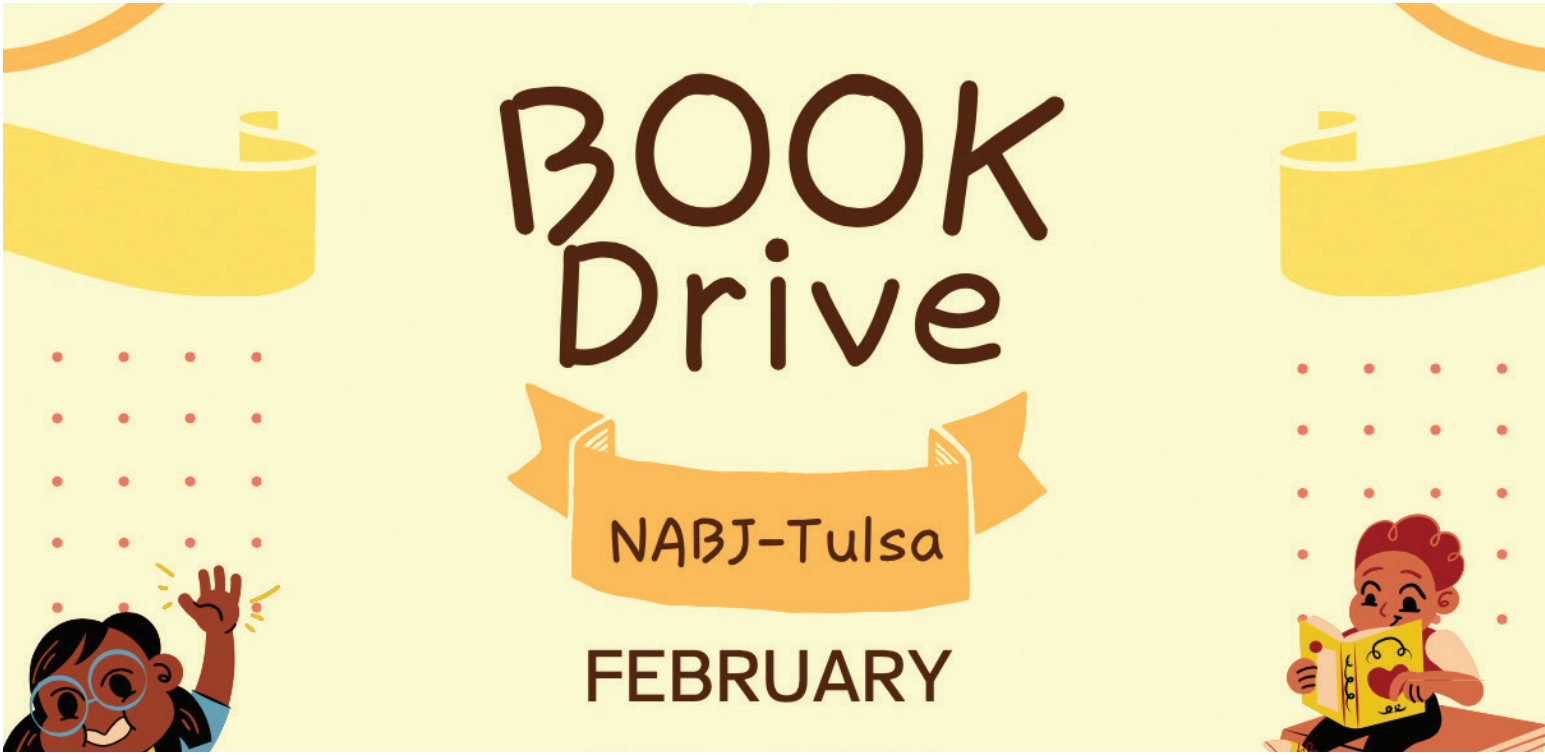
Apr. 12-13

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).

Sep. 15-22

Párlá Citywide Creative Festival sponsored by the J’Párlé Artist Group, Inc. [evacolemannabj@gmail.com](mailto:evacolemannabj@gmail.com).

NABJ-TULSA Conducts Student Book Drive



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BLACK JOURNALISTS – TULSA CHAPTER is sponsoring a children and student book drive during the month. PHOTO PROVIDED

Dr. Jerry Goodwin  
The Oklahoma Eagle

The National Association of Black Journalist – Tulsa Chapter is collecting books for children and students during February. The organization is requesting books written by Black authors.

Individuals are encouraged to purchase books for infants to 12th graders from Fulton Street Books and Coffee, 21 N. Greenwood Ave. The book donations can be dropped off at the bookstore or at Thomas K. McKeon Center for Creativity at Tulsa Community College, Metro Campus, 910 S. Boston Ave. To drop off books at TCC, please call (918) 595-7086 for additional instructions.

The collected books will be delivered to Little Free Libraries in Tulsa, Reading Partners, OKDHS Certified North Tulsa Daycares, and Tulsa Public Schools.

For more information, send an email to [medleyjones1@gmail.com](mailto:medleyjones1@gmail.com) or call (918) 822-5515.



# “Dr. King’s Dream: A vision for the future

**Tulsa MLK Parade**, organizations, business, and community members enjoyed the annual parade in the Historical Greenwood District.

**SPONSORED CONTENT**

The annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Commemorative Parade is one of the largest in the country. Hundreds of companies, organizations, churches, and individuals participate in the celebration of Dr. King’s life and his contributions to humanity. For more information about the Dr. MLK Commemoration Society, visit [MLKTulsa.com](https://MLKTulsa.com)



**TOP LEFT**  
Tulsa School of Arts and Sciences had students and others greeting the crowds, including a mascot decorated as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.  
PHOTOS **SAM LEVRAULT MEDIA**

**LEFT**  
Tulsa Drillers mascots Oily the Oiler (pictured) and Hornsby waved to the crowds.  
PHOTOS **SAM LEVRAULT MEDIA**

**TOP CENTER**  
ONE Gas, Tulsa-based gas company was represented by various staff walking alongside a colorfully decorated float.  
PHOTOS **SAM LEVRAULT MEDIA**

**UPPER CENTER**  
Float attendee for Public Service Company of Oklahoma waves to the crowds.  
PHOTOS **SAM LEVRAULT MEDIA**

**ABOVE**  
Buddy Bookworm, official mascot of Tulsa City-County Library waved to the crowds.  
PHOTOS **SAM LEVRAULT MEDIA**

**LOWER CENTER**  
Parade walkers represented Bank of Oklahoma - one of many financial institutions represented in the parade on Saturday.  
PHOTOS **SAM LEVRAULT MEDIA**

**LEFT**  
Government officials from across the region represented in the festivities including Cherokee Nation Chief Chuck Hoskins (center-left) and Representative Regina Goodwin (center-right.)  
PHOTOS **SAM LEVRAULT MEDIA**



**Tulsa MLK Parade,**  
commemorated  
Dr. Martin Luther  
King, Jr.'s legacy  
for the 45th year.



**TOP**  
Adults, kids, and  
community members  
enjoyed the annual parade.  
PHOTOS **SAM LEVRAULT MEDIA**

**UPPER-MID**  
Wayman Tisdale  
Trailblazers Cheer & Dance  
Team entertain the crowds.  
PHOTOS **SAM LEVRAULT MEDIA**

**CENTER**  
Tulsa Fire Department was  
one of many emergency  
service providers  
represented on Saturday.  
PHOTOS **SAM LEVRAULT MEDIA**

2.17.2024

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Annual Parade

**LOWER-MID**  
Various fraternities and sororities took part in  
Saturday's events, including Phi Beta Sigma (pictured.)  
PHOTOS **SAM LEVRAULT MEDIA**

**BOTTOM**  
Representative Regina Goodwin and supporters for  
her state senate campaign gathered during festivities.  
PHOTOS **SAM LEVRAULT MEDIA**

“Dr. King’s Dream:  
A Vision for the Future”  
Saturday, January 17, 2024

4  
A vision for the future

**PW PRAY WALKER**  
ATTORNEYS & COUNSELORS AT LAW

21 North Greenwood Avenue, Suite 400, Tulsa, Oklahoma 74120

**Dr. King’s Dream:  
A Vision for the Future**  
February 17, 2024

“Everyone can be great,  
because anybody can  
serve.”



**Tulsa MLK Parade**, held Saturday, February 17, 2024 after cold weather caused organizers to reschedule.

# 45<sup>th</sup>



**TOP LEFT**  
Dance groups, including Ladies of Elegance (pictured), schools, and organizations participated in the annual commemorative parade.  
PHOTOS **SAM LEVRAULT MEDIA**

**TOP RIGHT**  
QuikTrip, headquartered in Tulsa, Okla., represented through a large decorated float and a large crowd of parade walkers.  
PHOTOS **SAM LEVRAULT MEDIA**

**CENTER**  
American Airlines employees waved, walked, and danced their way through the Historical Greenwood District.  
PHOTOS **SAM LEVRAULT MEDIA**

**BOTTOM RIGHT**  
Supermercados Morelos, Hispanic and Latin grocery store with locations across the region, participated through parade walkers and traditional folk dancers.  
PHOTOS **SAM LEVRAULT MEDIA**

**BOTTOM LEFT**  
Skillz on Wheelz, a local non-profit mobile mental clinic, greet the crowds during the festivities.  
PHOTOS **SAM LEVRAULT MEDIA**



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