

# The Oklahoma Eagle

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

SERVING GREATER TULSA SINCE 1921

LEGACY  
5,384

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

NATION  
Are Black Teens Safe With 5 Hours of Daily Social Media? | A12

By ANISSA DURHAM, WORD IN BLACK

NATION  
V.P. Harris: Here's What We're Doing to Protect Black Mothers | A12

By CHRISTINE SPOLAR, WORD IN BLACK

SOCIAL  
THE OK EAGLE.COM  
#THE OK EAGLE  
#OKEAGLEPAPER

\$1.00

VOL. 103 NO. 25

JUNE 21, 2024 - JUNE 27, 2024

## Lawsuit Against Tulsa Public Schools Moves Forward

John Neal,  
The Oklahoma Eagle,  
A2



### INSIDE

Eagle Publisher Honored By OPA  
Staff, The Oklahoma Eagle, A9

Lawmakers Boost Police Pension System Benefits  
Paul Monies, Oklahoma Watch, A7

Here's A Sure-Fire Way To End DEI, CRT Attacks At Colleges  
Aswad Walker, Word In Black, A11

Talk of Greenwood: Celebrating The Lives of Tulsans Every Week  
Dr. Jerry Goodwin, The Oklahoma Eagle, A14

Last Week's Headlines  
Just in case you missed it. A4

Ada Lois Sipuel Fisher  
Oklahoma Civil Rights Activist. A4

Jobs & Classifieds  
Discover career opportunities. A5

Faith In Tulsa  
The Eagle Church Directory. A10





OK PRIMARY ELECTION RESULTS:  
GOODWIN, STEWART & MCCANE | A6

EAGLE PUBLISHER HONORED AS ONE OF  
OKLAHOMA'S JOURNALISM GIANTS | A9

LAWMAKERS BOOST POLICE  
PENSION SYSTEM BENEFITS | A7



Defendants Pres. Woolley and Gist had worked with lawyers to negotiate a mutual separation agreement and an agreement for Defendant Johnson to become interim superintendent without any deliberation of the entire Board.

# Marshall v. Tulsa Public Schools



ILLUSTRATION THE OKLAHOMA EAGLE

TPS Lawsuit

# Lawsuit Against TPS Moves Forward

John Neal  
The Oklahoma Eagle

Two Tulsa Public School Board members are moving forward with a lawsuit alleging that other TPS school board members violated Oklahoma’s Open Meeting Act. The suit could eventually have a major impact on how the TPS board conducts meetings.

Cont. A3





From left: INTERIM OSU-TULSA PRESIDENT JOHNNY STEPHENS, OSU President Kayse Shrum and Oklahoma Gov. Kevin Stitt speak at the State Capitol on Tuesday, April 16, 2024. PHOTO TRES SAVAGE

Regents

# OU Board of Regents raises tuition, delegates sexual misconduct policy power to president

Tres Savage  
NonDoc

ARDMORE — For the fourth year in a row, the University of Oklahoma Board of Regents approved a tuition increase for undergraduate, graduate and medical students today. The action coincides with a merit-based compensation boost for some OU employees costing about \$15 million, and regents said recent tuition hikes have corresponded with increases in student-aid access and need-based scholarships.

“We are proud of some of the things that we are doing that are reducing costs for students,” OU President Joe Harroz said during the meeting. “Over the last five years, there has been a 38 percent increase in need-based aid for our students. That is important and necessary. There has been a 20 percent increase in scholarships. That is important and necessary. And we have cut, over the last six years, \$140 million in operating costs —

Norman campus alone. Those are all good measures, but they are not enough to avoid what are hopefully seen — although certainly impactful to individuals — as a 3 percent tuition and fee increase.”

Some small fees were also increased for the 2024-2025 academic year, and some tracts within OU’s medical school will see their tuition increase closer to 4 or 5 percent. The OU increases follow similar hikes last year, which occurred despite a bump in state appropriations.

Friday’s OU Board of Regents vote — taken one week after Oklahoma State University’s regents held tuition flat for the fifth time in six years — came the morning after a dinner gathering with Gov. Kevin Stitt and 10 days before a series of celebratory events that will punctuate OU’s official move to the Southeastern Conference on July 1.

“We take a look at it each year,” Chairman Eric Stevenson said of OU’s tuition rates after Friday’s meeting. “What I love about this board is how hard they dig to try to find

expense reductions to make sure there are no other ways (to avoid tuition increases). We are monitoring what’s our overall value proposition, and we feel it is at a good place. You saw some of the enrollment numbers that just reinforce that.

“You have to pay for great faculty and staff.”

Regents also took a series of votes about university policies Friday, including a restructuring of OU alcohol policies and the transition of sexual misconduct, discrimination and harassment policies — dubbed “institutional equity” — from regent responsibility to “presidential level” management.

Functionally, the change means the OU Board of Regents will have no approval or review authority regarding OU’s policies on sexual misconduct, discrimination and harassment. The item received no explanation or discussion during Friday’s meeting.

“Simply, that’s a better place for it at the presidential level,” Stevenson said after adjournment.

Stevenson, who became chairman of the governing body for OU, Cameron University and Rogers State University this year, led the meeting portions of Thursday and Friday’s annual board retreat at a wooded conference center on the east edge of Ardmore.

On Thursday, regents heard a lengthy presentation about governance best practices from Thomas Meredith, a consultant with the Association of Governing Boards for Colleges and Universities. Meredith concluded his remarks by running through a series of “keywords” and offering blunt reminders.

“Students? Just put them first — that’s all I can tell you — in everything you are doing,” Meredith said. “Transparency? We talked about that. Just be as open as you possibly can be. Ethics? If it doesn’t feel right, don’t do it. Trust? Once lost, possibly never regained. You just can’t do anything to lose the trust. Accountability? Everyone is accountable. Everyone is accountable, no matter what role you have, no matter whatever. Even the regents

Cont. A6

TPS Lawsuit

# Johnson dismissed from lawsuit; alleged plans *discussed privately* between Woolley and Gist

From A2

Jennettie Marshall, TPS District 3 representative, and E’Lena Ashley, District 4 representative, filed the lawsuit in January claiming that actions in 2023 by the majority of the board related to then Superintendent Deborah Gist’s resignation and her severance agreement and the appointment of then senior TPS administrator Ebony Johnson as her replacement were unlawful.

The lawsuit was reached the trial scheduling phase. While parties have clarified their positions on issues before the court, Tulsa County Court Judge Doug Drummond has made several critical pre-trial rulings.

One of Drummond’s key decisions was removing Superintendent Ebony Johnson as a defendant in the lawsuit. The principal plaintiffs had sought to tie Johnson and Gist to the alleged wrongdoing.

Drummond ruled on June 21, 2023, in the state District Court of Tulsa, that he was dismissing Johnson as a defendant without a hearing or further court proceedings. TPS attorneys sought this action in a court filing arguing that the “public body,” defined in the Open Meeting Act, “does not include superintendents or employees.”

Plaintiffs Marshall and Ashley are represented by Tulsa attorney Maria Seidler. A frequent critic of the board, Seidler warned the TPS Board at

“

**Defendants Pres. Woolley and Gist had worked with lawyers to negotiate a mutual separation agreement and an agreement for Defendant Johnson to become interim superintendent without any deliberation of the entire Board.**

Lawsuit Brief, Marshall v. Tulsa Public Schools

their Dec. 11, 2023, meeting that a lawsuit would likely be forthcoming. A common theme in the initial January 18, 2024 filing was that decisions of the TPS board were made secretly as part of a “backroom” deal and violated the Open Meeting Act. (See <https://theokeagle.com/2024/01/19/lawsuit-deepens-rifts-on-the-tulsa-school-board/>)

The Act requires deliberations and actions of a public body, e.g., a local school board, to be made in a public meeting, including public notifications and other requirements.

The Oklahoma Eagle, through the court filings, judge’s decisions, public records, and TPS response to an Open Records Request, is seeking to provide our readers with a much clearer picture of what happened and what is alleged.

**Gist’s resignation and Johnson’s interim appointment**

Under intense pressure from Oklahoma’s State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Ryan Walters, Deborah Gist announced on Aug. 22, 2023, that she was resigning as TPS district superintendent. She also announced that the board would take up her recommendation that Ebony Johnson be named interim superintendent. A special meeting of the TPS school board was posted for the next day.

In the lawsuit filing, the plaintiffs allege that

“Defendants President Woolley and Gist had worked with lawyers to negotiate a mutual separation agreement and an agreement for Defendant Johnson to become interim superintendent without any deliberation of the entire Board.”

The Oklahoma Eagle made an expansive request for public records reflecting any deliberations and communications among board members, Gist, and Johnson about these matters before the board meeting. The TPS response to the Eagle’s official Open Records Request (ORR) provided no evidence that any such deliberations or internal communications occurred.

While the ORR response is not part of the official court records, it seems to support Marshall’s and Ashley’s contention that they and other board members first saw these agreements at the special meeting. In two separate documents the Eagle obtained, Gist said that prior to the meeting, she was “in discussions with our school board to leave my position as superintendent.” Separately, she referred to the “board’s plan to act upon the approval of Dr. Johnson as interim superintendent.”

At the special Aug. 23, 2023, meeting, the board voted to approve the detailed “Mutual Separation Agreement” for Gist and Johnson’s “Contract of Employment for the Interim Superintendent of Schools.” Gist and Johnson signed their agreements

Cont. A8



# Ada Lois Sipuel Fisher: Oklahoma Civil Rights Activist

By MELVIN C. HALL, THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF OKLAHOMA HISTORY AND CULTURE



Oklahoma Civil Rights activist Ada Lois Sipuel was born February 8, 1924, in Chickasha, Oklahoma. An excellent student, she graduated from Lincoln High School in 1941 as valedictorian. Initially, she enrolled in Arkansas A&M College at Pine Bluff. After one year she transferred to Langston University in September 1942, and she majored in English and dreamed of being a lawyer. On March 3, 1944, she married Warren Fisher. On May 21, 1945, Ada Lois Sipuel Fisher graduated from Langston University with honors.

Even in education, Oklahoma was segregated. Langston University did not have a law school, and state statutes prohibited blacks from attending white state universities. Instead, Oklahoma provided funding whereby they could go outside the state of Oklahoma and attend law schools and graduate schools that accepted blacks. At the urging of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) twenty-one-year-old Fisher agreed to seek admission to the University of Oklahoma’s law school in order to challenge Oklahoma’s segregation laws and achieve her lifelong ambition of becoming a lawyer.

On January 14, 1946, she applied for admission to the University of Oklahoma College of Law. After reviewing Fisher’s credentials, the university’s president, Dr. George Lynn Cross, advised her that there was no academic reason to reject her application for admission, but that Oklahoma statutes prohibited whites and blacks from attending classes together. The laws also made it a misdemeanor to instruct or attend classes comprised of mixed races. Cross would have been fined up to fifty dollars a day, and the white students who attended class with her would have been fined up to twenty dollars a day.

On April 6, 1946, with the support of civic leaders from across the state, Ada Lois Sipuel Fisher filed a lawsuit in the Cleveland County District Court, prompting a three-year legal battle. A young attorney, Thurgood Marshall, later a U.S. Supreme Court Justice, represented Fisher. She lost her case in the county district court and appealed to the Oklahoma Supreme Court. It sustained the ruling of the lower court, finding that the state’s policy of segregating whites and blacks in education did not violate the United States Constitution.

After an unfavorable ruling from the Oklahoma Supreme Court, Fisher filed an appeal with the U.S.

Supreme Court. On January 12, 1948, the nation’s highest tribunal ruled in Sipuel v. Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma that Oklahoma must provide Fisher with the same opportunities for securing a legal education as it provided to other citizens of Oklahoma. The case was remanded to the Cleveland County District Court to carry out the ruling. Following the Court’s favorable ruling, the Oklahoma Legislature, rather than admit Fisher to the Oklahoma University law school or close the law school to students both black and white, decided to create a separate law school exclusively for her to attend. The new school, named Langston University School of Law, was thrown together in five days and was set up in the State Capitol’s Senate rooms. Ada Lois Sipuel Fisher refused to attend Langston University School of Law, and on March 15, 1948, her lawyers filed a motion in the Cleveland County District Court contending that Langston’s law school did not afford the advantages of a legal education to blacks substantially equal to the education whites received at OU’s law school. This inequality, they argued, entitled Fisher to be admitted to the University of Oklahoma College of Law. However, the Cleveland court ruled against her, finding that the two state law schools were “equal.” The Oklahoma Supreme Court, predictably, upheld the finding.

After this second adverse ruling Fisher’s lawyers announced their intention to again appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court. However, Oklahoma Attorney General Mac Q. Williamson declined to return to Washington, D.C., and face the same nine Supreme Court justices in order to argue that Langston’s law school was equal to OU’s law school. As a result of this concession, on June 18, 1949, more than three years after Ada Lois Sipuel Fisher first applied for admission to the University of Oklahoma College of Law, she was admitted. Langston University’s law school closed twelve days later.

Although Fisher was generally welcomed by her white classmates, she was forced to sit in the back of the room behind a row of empty seats and a wooden railing with a sign designated “colored.” All black students enrolled at the University of Oklahoma were provided separate eating facilities and restrooms, separate reading sections in the library, and roped-off stadium seats at the football games. These conditions persisted through 1950.

However, the end of segregation in higher education had already begun. In 1948 a group of six black Oklahomans applied to University of Oklahoma’s graduate schools in disciplines ranging from zoology to social work. All were denied admission under the same statute that denied admission to Fisher. Thurgood Marshall selected one of the six students, George W. McLaurin, to present yet another challenge to segregation in higher education. In a June 5, 1950, U.S. Supreme Court decision in the case of McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents, the Court ruled that the restrictions of segregation imposed on McLaurin at OU impaired and inhibited his ability to study. The decision meant that blacks could no longer be segregated at OU and could now be admitted to graduate schools at all state-supported colleges and universities in the nation. The state soon realized that it could not create separate graduate programs for blacks similar to the sham law school it had quickly invented for Ada Lois Sipuel Fisher.

In August 1952 Fisher graduated from the University of Oklahoma College of Law. She earned a master’s degree in history from the University of Oklahoma in 1968. After briefly practicing law in Chickasha, Fisher joined the faculty of Langston University in 1957 and served as chair of the Department of Social Sciences. She retired in December 1987 as assistant vice president for academic affairs. In 1991 the University of Oklahoma awarded Fisher an honorary doctorate of humane letters.

On April 22, 1992, Gov. David Walters symbolically righted the wrongs of the past by appointing Dr. Ada Lois Sipuel Fisher to the Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma, the same school that had once refused to admit her to its College of Law. As the governor said during the ceremony, it was a “completed cycle.” The lady who was once rejected by the university was now a member of its governing board.

On October 18, 1995, Dr. Ada Lois Sipuel Fisher died. In her honor the University of Oklahoma subsequently dedicated the Ada Lois Sipuel Fisher Garden on the Norman campus. At the bottom of a bronze plaque commemorating Fisher’s contribution to the state of Oklahoma, an inscription reads, “In Psalm 118, the psalmist speaks of how the stone that the builders once rejected becomes the cornerstone.”

**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.

**ADA SIPUEL FISHER** signing the register of attorneys, 1952 (21412.M657.12, Z. P. Meyers/Barney Hillerman Photographic Collection, OHS).

## Featured Last Week



Judge Rules Educators May Teach Racial History



Eagle Receives Top Awards In Annual OPA Contest



SCOTUS sides with tribes, DOJ sues OKCPS, ‘rape culture’ alleged TJC

## The Oklahoma Eagle

### Founded in 1921

- James O. Goodwin**  
Publisher 1980-Present
- Robert K. Goodwin**  
Publisher 1972-1980
- Edward L. Goodwin, Jr.**  
Co-Publisher 1980-2014
- Edward L. Goodwin, Sr.**  
Publisher 1936-1972
- Theodore B. Baughman**  
Publisher 1921-1936

### Business

- Jerry Goodwin**  
Principal
- M. David Goodwin**  
Principal
- Ross D. Johnson**  
Principal
- David W. Cole**  
General Council
- Marsh Media**  
Advertising

### News

- Gary Lee**  
Managing Editor
- Ray Pearcey**  
Sr. Contributor
- Russell LaCour**  
Contributor
- Victor Luckerson**  
Contributor
- John Neal**  
Contributor

### Photography

- Cory Young**  
Photographer

### Print

- Sam Levrault**  
Production Director

### Circulation

- Kirstein Lynn**  
Subscription Manager

### Digital

- Web**  
TheOKEagle.com
- Facebook**  
TheOKEagle
- Twitter**  
OKEaglePaper

### Contact

- Letters to the Editor**  
editor@theokeagle.com

- Advertise**  
advertise@theokeagle.com

- Circulation**  
publishers@theokeagle.com

- Subscribe**  
theokeagle.com/subscribe

The Oklahoma Eagle

Enjoy articles, events and featured content online

Online

WEB: [www.theokeagle.com](http://www.theokeagle.com)

FACEBOOK: [#TheOKEagle](#)

TWITTER: [#OKEaglePaper](#)

The Oklahoma Eagle | Founded in 1921 | Vol. CII No. 25

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

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

©2024 The Oklahoma Eagle, LLC. All rights reserved. No portions of this periodical may be reproduced with expressed written consent.

**Delivery**  
For questions about deliver, billing and our membership program, please contact us at +1 (918) 582-7124, ext. 241.

**Submissions**  
Submitted content may be edited for space, clarity and for considerations of liability. All submissions become the sole property of The Oklahoma Eagle, which reserves the right to run all or part of any submissions due to timeliness or newsworthiness.

**Letters to the Editor**  
Want to write a letter to be published in the paper and online? Email us online to submit.

**Advertising**  
For print and online advertising information, go to [theokeagle.com/media-kit/](http://theokeagle.com/media-kit/) or call. +1 (918) 582-7124.

**The Newsroom**  
Know something important we should cover? Send an inquiry to [theokeagle.com/subscribe](mailto:theokeagle.com/subscribe).



NOTICE

OKLAHOMA ALCOHOLIC  
BEVERAGE LAWS ENFORCEMENT  
COMMISSION

NOTICE OF INTENT TO APPLY  
FOR AN ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE  
LICENSE

In accordance with Title 37, Section 522 and Title 37A Section 2-141 Sabrina Jackson 3228 N. Lewis Ave., Tulsa OK 74110 (name & address of individual, partners, limited partnership, corporation, or limited liability company) an/a Individual (individual, partnership, limited partnership, corporation, limited liability company) hereby publishes notice of her (his, her, its, their) intention to apply within sixty days from this date to the Oklahoma Alcoholic Beverage Laws Enforcement Commission for a Mixed Beverage License under authority of and in compliance with the said Act: That she (he, she, it or they) Intend (s), if granted such a license to operate as a Mixed Beverage establishment with business premises located at 3228 N. Lewis Ave., Tulsa, OK 74110. (full street address or legal description) in Tulsa (City), Tulsa (County), Oklahoma, under the business name of dba Protocrat 007 Club

Dated this 21st day of June 2024

Signature of applicant (s): If partnership, all partners must sign. If corporation, an officer of the corporation must sign. If limited liability company, a manager must sign. If tribe, a tribal member must sign.

Sabrina Jackson  
County of Tulsa, State of Oklahoma.

Before me, the undersigned notary public, personally appeared:

Sabrina Jackson to me known to be the person (s) described in and who executed the foregoing application and acknowledged that she executed the same as here free act and deed.

Rose Anna Woods 05-14-2027  
(Notary Public) (My commission expires)

CLASSIFIEDS

OKLAHOMA  
CLASSIFIED  
AD NETWORK  
FOR MORE INFO CALL  
1-888-815-2672

WANT TO BUY

OLD GUITARS WANTED! LARRY BRINGS CASH for vintage USA guitars, tube amps, banjos, mandolins, etc. Fender, Gibson, Martin, Gretsch, others. Call or text 918-288-2222. www.stringswest.com

HAPPY JACK

WHEN VETERINARY CARE IS UNAVAILABLE OR UNAFFORDABLE ASK FOR HAPPY JACK® Animal Health care for cats, dogs, & horses. At Tractor Supply®. Distributed by K&K Vet Supply. 479.361.1516

2003 MONACO CAMELOT

2003 MONACO CAMELOT! 38 FT Three slideouts, 350 Cummins Diesel, 38,312 miles, all new tires, washer/dryer stored inside, GREAT condition, \$79,500 Leonard Branen 580-370-1712

ADVERTISE STATEWIDE

Put your message where it matters most – IN OKLAHOMA NEWSPAPERS. We can place your ad in 142 newspapers. For more information or to place an ad, contact Landon Cobb at (405) 499-0022 or toll-free in OK at 1-888-815-2672.

CLASSIFIEDS



THE OKLAHOMA EAGLE  
People. Narratives. News.

Get 52 weeks for only \$1 per week

Visit theokeagle.com/subscribe-advertise

The Oklahoma Eagle  
www.theokeagle.com

**LARGE ABSOLUTE AUCTION**  
**ONG\*OG+E\*OTHER CONTRACTORS**  
**THURS. JUNE 27TH AT 9:00 AM**  
200 NW 114TH ST, OKLA. CITY, OKLA.  
(W. Side Service Rd of the Bdwy Ext. between 122nd & Hefner)  
**INSPECTION: WED. JUNE 26TH**  
**FROM 8:30 AM TO 4:30 PM AND**  
**STARTING AT 8:00 AM DAY OF AUCTION**  
**Can't make to the auction, BID LIVE online at**  
**WWW.DAKIL.COM**  
Trucks, Semi-Truck/Tractor, Pick-ups, Porsche, 1970 Hem Cuda, 1959 Sprint Car, SUV, Cars, Party Buses, Stretch Limo's, Equipment Trailers, Roll-Off Trailer, Car Hauler, Radio Tower Trailers, Commercial High Power Power Washer Mounted Trailers, Forklift, Electric Carts, Electrical Equipment, Tankless Water Heaters, Truck Bed Covers, Tooling, Industrial Equipment, and Much More.  
PLEASE SEE WEBSITE FOR DETAILED LISTING & PICTURES.  
**Dakil**  
**AUCTIONEERS**  
**405-751-6179**  
**www.dakil.com**

The Oklahoma Eagle  
**Arts**  
**Culture**  
**History**  
**Education**  
**Business**  
**Faith**



# OKLAHOMA PRIMARY ELECTION RESULTS: Goodwin, Stewart & McCane



OKLA. STATE REP. REGINA GOODWIN (District 73) celebrating her State Senate (District 11) campaign victory with James O. Goodwin, publisher of The Oklahoma Eagle, on June 18. PHOTO ROSS D. JOHNSON



(FROM LEFT) RON STEWART, Tulsa firefighter and candidate for Okla. State Rep. seat in District 73, secured a narrow victory (52.84 percent) against candidate Darrel Knox (47.16). MICHELLE MCCANE, a Tulsa educator and candidate for Okla. State Rep. seat in District 72, secured a significant victory (72 percent) against Adam Martin (28 percent). PHOTOS PROVIDED



Kimberly Marsh  
The Oklahoma Eagle

Democrat State Rep. Regina Goodwin will move into Oklahoma Senate Seat District 11, which encompasses North Tulsa, following her win over former Tulsa Councilor Joe Williams in the June 18 primary. Goodwin won 83 percent to William’s 16 percent of 3,527 total votes. Since there is no Republican candidate in the general election, Goodwin’s win to fill the seat is secured. In the Democratic primary race for Goodwin’s current District 73 Oklahoma House seat, Tulsa firefighter Ron Stewart rallied a narrow margin over Tulsa restaurateur Darrell Knox, owner of Sweet Lisa’s Cafe. Stewart received 52.84 percent of the votes to Knox’s 47.16 percent with all precincts reported. The official results

are pending. Tulsa educator Michelle McCane has won election to the Oklahoma House of Representatives to represent District 72 in the Democratic primary on June 18, 2024, after the general election was canceled. McCane defeated Adam Martin collecting 72 percent of the votes. Martin challenged and was defeated by incumbent US Congressman Kevin Hern in the 2022 general election. With no Republican contender to face in a general election, McCane takes the seat. District 72 Representative Monroe Nichols did not seek re-election in order to run in the race for Tulsa Mayor, a nonpartisan position that will go to a vote on Aug. 27. Tulsa Mayor G.T. Bynum did not seek re-election. He has accepted a position as Vice President for Community and Government Affairs at Saint Francis Health System.

## Regents

# OSU BOARD OF REGENTS *vote to keep current tuition & mandatory fees flat*, for the third straight year

From A3

are accountable. They’re accountable to the public. They’re accountable to all the constituents on the campus to do the right thing.” Asked about the board’s decision to relinquish its policy powers on topics like “sexual misconduct” and “prevention of alcohol abuse” in light of Meredith’s remarks on accountability, Stevenson said the board’s role is governance of the president. “That’s 100 percent consistent,” Stevenson said. “What [Meredith] also said is that the most important thing that the board does is to manage and work with the president. So we work with him on objectives, we work with him on [key performance indicators], and we hold him accountable for those decisions that he and his staff make.” Harroz, who immediately left the Noble Research Institute Conference Center when Friday’s meeting concluded, will now be responsible for reviewing, maintaining and updating OU’s policies on student alcohol use, university employee substance use and sexual misconduct, discrimination and harassment. Asked whether Friday’s action meant Harroz and OU administrators will be reviewing and revising any of those policies soon, a spokesman said the process has been ongoing. “The university has been reviewing and assessing its policy processes and making changes as needed, which includes reclassifying the Student Alcohol Policy,” Zack Higbee, an OU spokesman, said in a statement. “Most other institutions do not include detailed non-discrimination policies at the board level, and this action brings OU in line with similarly situated institutions. OU continues to engage in a thorough review of the Title IX regulations.”

## Oklahoma State University tuition to remain flat

For the third straight year and the fifth out of the last six, the Board of Regents for the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical Colleges voted to keep tuition at Oklahoma State University flat. Colloquially called the OSU Board of Regents, the body met in Tulsa last week. “As regents overseeing Oklahoma State University, we are pleased to maintain our current tuition and mandatory fees for the third consecutive year without an increase,” Chairman Joe Hall said in a statement. “This decision reflects the commitment of OSU leadership and the regents to responsible fiscal management. As a land-grant university, our primary mission is to offer an affordable, accessible, and high-quality education so as many students as possible can earn a college degree. By prioritizing affordability, we can play a



UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA BOARD OF REGENTS CHAIRMAN ERIC STEVENSON, embraces retiring Rogers State University President Larry Rice during a meeting Friday, June 21, 2024. PHOTO TRES SAVAGE

significant role in advancing our state by making it possible for many individuals to obtain a college degree and contribute to the betterment of society.” OSU board members and administrators are awaiting resolution of a peculiar political situation involving Stitt’s latest appointment decision. Meanwhile, OSU President Kayse Shrum issued a statement praising the OSU Board of Regents’ decision to keep tuition and mandatory fees flat for the 2024-2025 academic year. “The decision reflects our shared commitment to affordability through prudent management of our financial resources,” Shrum said. “The OSU community’s dedication to solid financial management allows us to fulfill our land grant mission to provide access for as many students as possible to a high-quality college education.”

## Stevenson discusses making OU ‘accessible’ for all

A graduate of Oklahoma State University who grew up in Norman and also roots for OU at sporting events, Stitt has pushed three primary concepts at the state’s two research institutions since becoming governor: avoid obligatory tuition increases and keep the cost of college affordable; focus on increasing enrollment in

key employment sectors like nursing and engineering; and avoid race-based preferences and “diversity, equity and inclusion” programs that include mandatory participation or preferential treatment. On Thursday night, Stitt ventured to the east edge of Ardmore where the OU regents were holding their annual treat. He arrived just after 7 p.m., mingling with the 35 to 40 people in attendance and staying for a steak dinner and casual conversation. He departed about 90 minutes later, leaving regents and university administrators to bond over pool and other games. “It was a nice dinner,” Stevenson said Friday. “It was a lot of fun.” Stitt’s office did not respond to a request for comment from the governor regarding OU’s tuition decisions, but he has been vocal in recent months about his executive order requiring a review and report about all DEI programs at state entities by May 31. Released in December, the convoluted order spurred significant confusion about what compliance looked like. At first, Harroz announced OU would eliminate its DEI programs. Later, some efforts were simply rebranded. Eventually, word spread that a women’s leadership program hosted by OU’s Carl Albert Center had been deemed

impermissible under the university’s executive order implementation guidance. The program’s May 17-21 conference occurred ahead of the order’s May 31 compliance deadline, but the ultimate fate of the women’s leadership program remains unclear while Stitt’s order is in effect. Asked how he views Stitt’s executive order and remarks criticizing DEI efforts, Stevenson — the board’s first Black chairman since 1998 — said the regents are focused on “making OU as accessible for everyone in the state as we possibly can.” “That includes all aspects of making it accessible, whether that’s housing, whether that’s any accommodation that we need to make,” Stevenson said. “If they’re qualified to get here, we want them here and to make it affordable and keep it affordable.” Stitt’s first OU Board of Regents appointee in 2019, Stevenson said he is most proud of last year’s freshman class being comprised of 26 percent “first-generation” students. “I think that really speaks to how inclusive, how inviting and how welcoming we are,” Stevenson said. “We also saw our first-year retention rates increase. That just again speaks to — we are doing our job. The last four years each class has been more diverse than

the class before. So it just feels like, regardless of what you call it, we are a welcoming place. We are achieving our strategic plan, and I could not be more proud of how that is going.” Asked if he has discussed Stitt’s criticisms of diversity, equity and inclusion efforts with the governor, Stevenson — a Wagoner native who works as an insurance executive in Ohio — said he focuses on his roots from “small-town Oklahoma.” “My passion is how do we, one, continue first gen, and then how do we expand for rural Oklahoma?” Stevenson said. “How do we get more kids from all over this state, not just Oklahoma City and Tulsa and Muskogee? How do we get to rural Oklahoma? I think as we do more and more of that, we are going to be more and more successful. That’s how I think about access and being inclusive.” Asked what he would say to people of color who are concerned about Stitt’s executive order, Stevenson advised people “to look at the results.” “When I get those questions, I encourage people to look at the results. Look at what’s happening,” Stevenson said. “Look who is being admitted, look who is succeeding, look at who is graduating, and look at what kind of jobs they’re getting, and then evaluate us on that. Because those numbers all say we are doing a great job across all metrics.” Last month, three white students sued the university alleging discrimination in the university’s application of financial aid, saying it disproportionately benefits minority student populations even when accounting for first-generation and familial income measurements. Speaking about Thursday’s dinner with the governor and recent investments from the Oklahoma Legislature for a pair of OU capital improvement projects for engineering and science programs, Stevenson said the board feels positive about its direction. “We’re a state institution,” he said. “Part of what Dr. Meredith talked about was that we make sure we are aligned to try to achieve the goals of the state, and that’s what we want to do.” Regents also formalized the retirements of Rogers State University Larry Rice and Cameron University John McArthur on Friday, affirming Mark Rasor as Rice’s interim successor former Lt. Jari Askins as the interim president of Cameron. Both universities will conduct national searches for their next permanent presidents.

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





MEMBERS OF THE OKLAHOMA FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE on May 23, 2024, talk about Senate Bill 102, which would boost the retirement benefits of police officers nearing retirement. The police union successfully convinced Oklahoma lawmakers to override Gov. Kevin Stitt's veto of the bill in the last week of session. PHOTO PROVIDED/FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE

Police Pensions

# Lawmakers Boost Police Pension System Benefits

Oklahoma taxpayers are helping to foot the bill for millions of dollars in expanded pension benefits for police officers. State lawmakers approved the deal in the waning days of the legislative session.

Paul Monies  
Oklahoma Watch

The changes would greatly boost the pensions of current officers in the late stages of their careers. Police in the system can retire at age 50 with at least 10 years of service or after 20 years of service, whichever is later.

Backers of Senate Bill 102, including police unions like the Fraternal Order of Police, said it could help with police recruitment and retention. The expanded benefit comes as police retirees getting pension benefits have had one cost-of-living adjustment, or COLA, in the last 15 years.

The conflicting priorities of retirees and active officers was evident in public comments last year after the legislation was introduced. Pension bills have to be introduced in odd years and can only be voted on in even years after proposed changes go through an actuarial analysis.

David Shupe, who retired as a deputy chief after 43 years with the Oklahoma City Police Department, said the responsibility to increase retention and recruitment should fall on municipalities, not the pension system. He said the Legislature's passage of SB 102 makes it less likely that retirees will get any COLAs for the foreseeable future.

"I understand both retirees and active

police officers are members of the same pension. I get that," Shupe told board members last year. "But to even consider lowering the assets of the pension at the expense of some members to recruit some unknown person who is not an OPPRS member and has not contributed a dime to the system is at the very least illogical and at the most not in line with a board member's fiduciary responsibility of acting in all current members' best interests."

Gov. Kevin Stitt vetoed SB 102 on May 21. Lawmakers in the House and Senate overrode the veto in the last week of the session, with police officers packing the galleries to watch the override votes in each chamber.

Several lawmakers conceded it was a tough vote to take, especially in an election year. Police union political action committees have contributed more than \$60,000 to legislative candidates in the current election cycle, according to reports filed with the Oklahoma Ethics Commission.

Sen. Darrell Weaver, R-Moore, who spent more than a decade leading the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs Control, said recruitment and retention are frequent topics at law enforcement conferences. Weaver sponsored a separate House bill that would have granted a COLA, but it never made it to a floor vote in the Senate.

"I hate positions where it's one against

the other," Weaver said before the Senate passed the bill May 14. "The officers, some of them sitting in the balcony, I worked with some of their dads. I wish this would have been tied to a COLA. This is a tough vote for me because of the retirees. But I can't stand in this body and not vote for the men and the women for the job they're doing. I know the struggles they're having in Oklahoma City and Tulsa and almost every small department all over the state."

Pension Reform Battles

In passing the law, legislators exempted the Oklahoma Police Pension and Retirement System from a statute forbidding declines in the funding-level ratio for the \$3 billion pension system. That move alarmed some of the architects of the state's wide-ranging pension reforms more than a decade ago. At that time, most of the state's seven retirement systems were woefully underfunded, although few in office now remember the bruising battles over pension reform.

Separate actuarial estimates for the Legislature and the police retirement system projected the system's funded ratio under SB 102 would drop to 94%, down from 106%. The police pension system is among the best-funded of the state's public pension systems.

Mike Mazzei, a Stitt appointee to the

police pension board and a former state senator, was instrumental in pushing pension reforms during his 12 years in office.

"In 2004, the police pension system was only 81% funded," Mazzei said in a briefing paper circulated to lawmakers. "It took 20 years to get it to today's healthy state, and we reformers always hoped that when the systems got financially stable, the retirees would then be able to benefit from regular cost of living adjustments, which are sorely needed right now in this era of punishing inflation."

Backers of SB 102 said it would not affect state appropriations because the expanded benefit would be paid by higher contributions by police officers and their municipal employers. The employee contribution will rise to 9%, up from 8%. The local government contribution will rise to 14%, up from 13%. The measure was authored by Sen. Jessica Garvin, R-Duncan, and Rep. Steve Bashore, R-Miami.

As well as member and employer contributions, the police pension system uses investment returns to pay for benefits. It also gets annual allocations – about \$44.5 million in fiscal year 2023 – from the state's insurance premium tax, which is collected from policyholders by insurance companies. The police pension system gets 14.7% of the revenues collected under the insurance premium tax.

Cont. A8

Violent Prison

# OK's Most Violent Prison to End State Contract

Heather Warlick and Ruby Topalian  
Oklahoma Watch

Lawton Correctional Facility, the last state-contracted private prison in Oklahoma, may soon close.

As first reported by The Oklahoman, the prison's owner/operator, The GEO Group, a corporation that owns and operates private prisons nationwide, informed the Oklahoma Department of Corrections, or ODOC, and Oklahoma Senate leadership through a letter received Friday that it will not renew the state contract for its operation of the prison.

GEO gave the state three months to move 2,616 inmates housed in the Lawton Correctional Facility, starting July 1.

According to the Department of Corrections, the correctional facility is the most violent prison in Oklahoma with several concerning incidents making headlines in the last few months, including the homicide of a prisoner whose body went undiscovered in a trash can for several hours.

The decision to discontinue the contract was based at least partially on Governor Kevin Stitt's veto, which denied GEO a \$3 million raise on top of the \$48 million the state pays to GEO annually.

Before Stitt's veto, GEO appealed to ODOC for the additional money but was denied; over the last four years, the state increased funding to GEO by \$6.8 million.

"In recent years, wage inflation and staffing shortages, following the COVID

pandemic, have negatively impacted staff recruitment and retention at all state correctional facilities," a GEO spokesperson wrote in an emailed statement to Oklahoma Watch.

The Department of Corrections Board of Directors is weighing options for the prison, its inmates and staff. The board is expected to release a statement Wednesday.

GEO still has interests in Oklahoma as the owner of the buildings that house the Great Plains Correctional Facility in Hinton. GEO is not involved in the daily operations of that prison, which is leased to the state.

In a statement to Oklahoma Watch, GEO indicated that it would consider renegotiating contract terms for the Lawton Correctional Facility.

RUBY TOPALIAN is a 2024 summer intern at Oklahoma Watch covering general assignments. Contact her at rtopalian@oklahomawatch.org.

HEATHER WARLICK is a reporter covering evictions, housing and homelessness. Contact her at (405) 226-1915 or hwarlick@oklahomawatch.org.





TULSA POLICE DEPARTMENT, RIVERSIDE DIVISION, building, Tulsa, Oklahoma. PHOTO ADOBE IMAGES

Police Pensions

# SB 102: Annual benefit increases significant for retired police officers

From A7

Stitt, in his veto message, said SB 102 puts the state on a slippery slope. “I recognize that the bill would require both members and municipalities to contribute to the system at higher levels than they do currently, but those contributions will not be enough to offset the cost of the increased benefit,” Stitt said. “This will cause the system’s funded ratio to meaningfully decline – even with the assumption of the system meeting its return target in the future.”

Boosted Benefits

Under SB 102, police officers who retire with 20 years of service would see their annual benefit calculated as 3% of their final average salary multiplied by 20. That compares to existing members who reached retirement after 20 years. They get 2.5% of their final average salary multiplied by 20. Those small differences in the percent multiplier can boost the retirement benefit in big ways. For example, an officer retiring at a base salary of \$80,000 would see their annual pension benefit go from \$40,000 to \$48,000. The expanded benefit includes a stair-step mechanism where officers close to retirement have to stay employed one, two or five additional years to be eligible for the 3% multiplier. Still, an officer nearing retirement could contribute an extra \$2,000 over three years and boost their lifetime pension by more than \$180,000. A compromise version of the bill increased the multiplier to 2.75% and passed the Senate in

“My problem with it is you’ve got two people sitting on that pension board that are expected to take that hat off and put on their other hats, and they’re actively lobbying for the passage of that bill.”

Jeff Pierce, retiree, former member of the police pension board and state fop board member

March. But the House amended it in committee and sent the bill back to the Senate with the multiplier restored to 3%. The police pension board’s trustees took a neutral position on SB 102. But some members of the board, like Mark Nelson, actively lobbied for the bills’ passage. Nelson is the president of the Oklahoma Fraternal Order of Police and the FOP’s Oklahoma City lodge. Retiree Jeff Pierce, a former member of the police pension board and board member at the state FOP, said pension board members who wanted the bill passed should have recused themselves from any discussions about it during board meetings. Some retirees called for the pension board to request an attorney general’s opinion, but they were rebuffed by the board. “My problem with it is you’ve got two people sitting on that pension board that are expected to take that hat off and put on their other hats, and they’re actively lobbying for the passage of that bill,” Pierce said. “It was sold and promoted as a recruitment and retention bill, but it’s an out-the-door bill. If it would have been a recruitment and retention bill, it would have only affected new hires or officers in the system who weren’t vested.” Nelson said recruitment and retention has always been a challenge. The COVID-19 pandemic and the fallout from the protests after George Floyd’s death under police restraint in Minneapolis exacerbated the crisis. Nelson called it a “no-brainer” for the police pension system to help out with recruitment, at least on a short-term basis. He said the FOP continues to push for a COLA for retirees

drawing a pension. Still, any COLAs granted would also cause the pension’s funded ratio to drop, he said. “The pension board had nothing to do with that whatsoever,” Nelson said about SB 102. “We took a neutral stance, and it was an employee organization that went out there and lobbied and fought for this increased benefit. It was similar to back in 2020 when we got a COLA for our retirees. The FOP was right there along with all the other employee groups lobbying for that.” Nelson said officers eligible for the expanded benefit under SB 102 can’t take advantage of it until July 2026 at the earliest. “In reality, it changed it to a two- and three-year timeline from where we’re at currently before anybody could retire and receive this increased benefit,” Nelson said. Stitt, who is in his final term, said the Legislature’s override of SB 102 was a short-term win for lawmakers that allowed them to say they support law enforcement in an election year. He said the bill would only encourage other public employees to argue for the same boost in benefits for their pension systems next year. That benefit boost comes at the expense of existing retirees, who likely won’t see a cost-of-living increase, Stitt said. “When you have people who are politicians, looking for the short-term win, looking for the endorsement from law enforcement when they run next time, then they vote for it,” Stitt said at a May 31 press conference. “That’s why Oklahomans voted for me. Because I’m a businessman governor, and they know I don’t just go along and play political games.”

PAUL MONIES has been a reporter with Oklahoma Watch since 2017 and covers state agencies and public health. Contact him at (571) 319-3289 or pmonies@oklahomawatch.org. Follow him on Twitter @pmonies.

TPS Lawsuit

# Woolley again tried to manipulate the Board’s own policies

From A3

that same day. Johnson named permanent superintendent In contrast to the TPS board’s August decision, there is extensive public dialogue of what transpired at the Dec. 11, 2023 meeting when Johnson was named permanent superintendent over the dissent of Marshall and Ashley. Weeks before the meeting, Board President Stacey Woolley convened an ad hoc committee to consider a national search for a permanent superintendent. Five of the seven members of the TPS board were aware of the committee’s existence, and three of these same five constituted the committee. Jennettie Marshall, Stacey Woolley, and Susan Lampkin served on the

ad hoc committee. However, board members’ opinions on what transpired diverge wildly, and the differences are reflected in plaintiff and defendant court filings. Marshall and Ashley contend in a court filing, “Woolley again tried to manipulate the Board’s own policies” and “abuse her authority over the agenda” to promote Johnson to permanent status as TPS superintendent. They allege the behavior and events encompassing the board’s actions before and including the approval votes violate the Open Meeting Act (OMA) and constitute an “unlawful hire.” In response, TPS attorneys categorically deny any wrongdoing. They assert, in part, that the ad hoc committee was a “discussion group” that never “rose to the level of being a public body under the OMA.”

Highlights of lawsuit status

The Oklahoma Eagle has pinpointed the key points of Judge Drummond’s June 21, 2024 order pertaining to the plaintiff’s allegations of intentional violation of the Oklahoma Open Meeting Act. They include the following:

- Dismissed Ebony Johnson as a defendant.
- Allowed the lawsuit to move forward against TPS as a public body, not individuals making up the public body.
- Stated the sole remedy of an action taken by the school district in willful violation of this Act shall be the invalidation of that action.
- Instructed the plaintiffs any evidence of a criminal misdemeanor should be presented to the Tulsa County District Attorney.
- Required the parties to submit an agreed upon [trial] scheduling order by July 3, 2024.

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 pirector when the city won multiple awards for its planning accomplishments. He is now retired and resides in Austin, Texas.



OPA

# Eagle Publisher Honored As One Of Oklahoma’s Journalism Giants

STAFF  
The Oklahoma Eagle

OKLAHOMA CITY – James Osby Goodwin, an accomplished attorney who has dedicated his life’s work to preserving the legacy of America’s “Black Wall Street” as the owner of Tulsa’s only Black-owned newspaper, The Oklahoma Eagle, was awarded the H. Milt Phillips Award at the Oklahoma Press Association Convention in Oklahoma City on June 8.

The award is the highest honor given by the Oklahoma Press Association. The OPA Board of Directors selects the recipient based on publishing a high-quality newspaper; contribution to the profession and the newspaper industry; years of service to the community, state, and nation in various volunteer activities; and strong love and dedication to the family.

OPA President Sheila Gay, publisher of the Woodward News, presented the Phillips Award to Goodwin. He is the first Black person to receive the award in its 44-year history.

OPA noted that “Phillips was the kind of editor all editors should be. He was involved. He gave freely of his love and concern...”

Phillips purchased the Seminole Producer in April 1946. Before beginning his newspaper career, he served as department adjutant of the Oklahoma American Legion and as editor of the Oklahoma Legionnaire.

Phillips was active in the OPA, holding several offices, including that of president in 1954. He was a long-time member of the board of directors of the Oklahoma Historical Society. He was the moving force in the society’s efforts to microfilm all Oklahoma newspapers.

## ‘Printer’s devil’

Goodwin began in journalism at six as a “printer’s devil” apprentice cleaning the shavings and ink around the Linotype machines at The Oklahoma Eagle. He has served in practically every role related to producing the newspaper on the editorial and business sides.

The Goodwin family has owned The Eagle since 1936. Their 88-year ownership in the Tulsa media market trails only the Lorton family’s 96-year ownership of the Tulsa World, which ended in 2013. The Eagle – which marked its centennial anniversary in 2022, is the 10th oldest Black-owned newspaper in America.

Five generations of the Goodwin family have been part of the Eagle’s masthead, including the family patriarch James Henri Goodwin; his son, Edward Lawrence Goodwin Sr., and his wife, Jeanne B. Goodwin; and grandsons, the late Edward Lawrence Goodwin Jr., James, and the Rev. Robert Kerr Goodwin. James O. Goodwin and his sons, David Goodwin and Dr. Jerry Goodwin, are on the Eagle masthead today.

## ‘To speak truth’

“I’m particularly concerned about saving journalism because we have people in power talking about the press being the enemy of the people,” Goodwin said in a video shown at the convention. “So the challenge today we all have as journalists is to be able to do what journalism was intended to do – at least one important feature of it – and that is to speak truth.

“Freedom of the press is so important, and we must be involved to attack that need to be the underdog. It’s so important because we have so many people whose voices are not heard.

“Our publication, our communication company, is dedicated to making sure that people who have no voice get a voice.”

In the past three years, Goodwin has reorganized the newspaper operations. That resulted in hiring a new managing editor, Gary Lee, a creative director, Ross Johnson, and his sons, Jerry and David. The Eagle has won dozens of journalism awards from the OPA and the eight-state Great Plains Journalism Awards contest.

This leadership team has created partnerships with several local, statewide, and national businesses and organizations, including Liberty Mutual Insurance, the Local Media Association, the Oklahoma Media Center, URL Media, the University of Maryland’s Philip Merrill College of Journalism, University of Wisconsin-Madison’s School of Journalism & Mass Communication, the Google News Initiative and the Business for Good Foundation among others. The National Association of Black Journalists

“

Our publication, our communication company, is dedicated to making sure that people who have no voice get a voice

## Oklahoma Press Association

THE OKLAHOMA PRESS ASSOCIATION is proud of its history serving Oklahoma’s daily and weekly newspapers, and now online news media. OPA is the oldest trade association in Oklahoma.

OPA has a colorful and vibrant past. Its first major project was founding the Oklahoma Historical Society in 1893. Since that time, OPA has worked tirelessly to advance and safeguard the newspaper industry to the benefit of the press and the public.

Today’s OPA is a strong, dynamic organization that looks to the future and serves members who are creating and navigating a new media landscape to meet the ever-changing needs of today’s readers.

OPA and its affiliates help companies with print and digital marketing campaigns, digitally track news and information, and understand the superior value of local newspapers when you need to reach an engaged and influential audience. Additionally, OPA provides educational programs, rewards excellence in publishing, and provides legal services to members. Oklahoma Newspaper Foundation assists college students working to become journalists through internships and training opportunities.



has also recognized the Eagle for journalism excellence.

“James Goodwin’s guidance and inspiration as publisher has been vital in keeping the Eagle true to its mission,” Lee said. “The support of and collaboration with our partners is crucial to helping the Eagle amplify its reach throughout Oklahoma and nationwide.”

## ‘Preserving Greenwood’

In the late 1970s, Goodwin laid the foundation to preserve Tulsa’s famous “Black Wall Street” with his initiative, the “Greenwood Market Community.” For two decades, he had the option to purchase all of Greenwood’s remaining vacant properties before negotiating an agreement with the Greenwood Chamber of Commerce – which was co-founded and incorporated by his father in 1938 – to gain control over owning and developing the district.

Goodwin was born in Tulsa’s Greenwood community in 1939, the fourth of eight siblings. At nine years old, he became an amputee when he lost his right arm in a horseback riding accident that involved a train on the Katy Railroad.

He attended George Washington Carver Middle School and Booker T. Washington High School before transferring to and graduating from Cathedral Boys High School in Springfield, Ill. He graduated from the University of Notre Dame (Class of 1961) and the University of Tulsa College of Law. During law school, Goodwin was appointed as a district court clerk, becoming the second Black appointment in the Tulsa County District Court justice system.

## Desegregating a hotel

While still in law school, Goodwin married Vivian Palm, a childhood friend. In 1961, Jet magazine noted that the newlyweds and their “wedding guests set a precedent when they were served breakfast at the Hotel Tulsa, a Negro first.”

He and Vivian, a former Eagle journalist who died in 2012, have five children, all of whom have worn many hats working in the family business.

As an attorney, Goodwin specializes in civil rights and social justice. He was co-plaintiff against the State of Oklahoma, resulting in legislative reapportionment immediately after the U.S. Supreme Court declared a one-man vote rule. He initiated the first desegregation lawsuit in the City of Tulsa, resulting in school desegregation, and he was co-counsel in litigation, resulting in Tulsa’s new city council form of government.

He successfully challenged the constitutionality of a state statute and city ordinance regarding freedom of speech before the U. S. Supreme Court and Oklahoma Court of Criminal Appeals. He was co-counsel in the matter of reparations for the survivors of the 1921

Tulsa Race Massacre.

## A lifetime of service

Goodwin was named president and legal counsel of the Eagle in the early 1970s and has been its publisher and editor since 1979. During his tenure, he also served as co-publisher with his brothers before taking full ownership in 2014 following the death of his older brother, Edward.

In 2003, Goodwin received the Lifetime Excellence Award from the Tulsa Health Department. THD named its East Regional Health Center and its main administrative office in Goodwin’s honor as the James O. Goodwin Health Center. He served 50 years on the Tulsa City County Board of Health, the first African American and longest-tenured member in the board’s history.

He is also the first Tulsan to have three different mayors from both political parties dedicate an official day (1986, 2008, and 2018) that recognizes his lifetime contributions and civic commitment to his hometown.

Goodwin has received many awards and Hall of Fame inductions, including the Tulsa Press Club Print Icon Award. Other accolades have included induction into the University of Tulsa College of Law Hall of Fame, the Oklahoma Journalism Hall of Fame (along with his father and two brothers), the University of Tulsa Collins Business School of Hall of Fame; recipient of the Tulsa Association of Black Journalists Lifetime Achievement Award for Excellence in Journalism; and recipient of the Oklahoma State University Paul and Louise Miller Endowment from the School of Journalism and Broadcasting.

He has also received numerous awards for his editorial writing.

Today, the Eagle remains vigilant on issues involving human rights, civic equality, economic enfranchisement, educational equity, and judicial reform.

Goodwin said his career has benefited from the support of his four surviving siblings – JoAnn Goodwin Gilford, Jeanne Goodwin Arradondo, Susan Goodwin Jordan, and Robert K. Goodwin – a large circle of friends throughout Tulsa and statewide.

Goodwin’s honor comes one year after Gary Lee, the Eagle’s managing editor, received the Ray Lokey Memorial Award for Excellence in Reporting from the Oklahoma Newspaper Foundation, which “honors a writer whose published work exemplifies well-researched, responsible, and fact-driven journalism for the benefit of the community and newspaper industry.”

Lee, a Creek Freedman, was the first African American and Eagle staff writer to receive the award named for third-generation publisher John Raiford “Ray” Lokey, who owned the Johnston County Capital-Democrat in Tishomingo from 1990 until he died in 2017.

TOP JAMES O. GOODWIN, The Oklahoma Eagle publisher, owner, and third-generation Oklahoma journalist James O. Goodwin, Esq., receives the H. Milt Phillips Award, the highest honor given by the OPA Board of Directors. PHOTO PROVIDED

CENTER JAMES O. GOODWIN, publisher, The Oklahoma Eagle, with former law school classmate Clifford Hopper, who became an assistant district attorney and Tulsa County District Court Judge. PHOTO PROVIDED

BELOW JAMES O. GOODWIN, publisher, The Oklahoma Eagle, discussing a graphic design concepts with former graphic and layout designer Anne Pirkey. PHOTO PROVIDED





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!!!

The Oklahoma Eagle Church Directory

List your church in one of the largest church directories in Oklahoma.

Participation in the directory allows free church announcements/ church news.

Post events and celebrations. Priority over non-listed churches for news.

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.

The Oklahoma Eagle Church Directory

Participation in the Directory allows free church announcements and church news. Post events and celebrations. Priority over non-listed churches for news.

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  
vernnamechurch@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

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH NORTH TULSA  
THE CHURCH WHERE THE HOLY SPIRIT LEADS US



Pastor Anthony L. & Mrs. Kelly Scott  
Sunday School - 9:30 a.m.  
Morning Worship - 11:00 a.m.  
Wednesday Prayer Meeting - 6:30 p.m.  
Bible Study - Noon & 7:00 p.m.

1414 N. Greenwood Ave.  
Tulsa, OK 74103  
918-582-5129  
www.fbcnt.org  
Changing Hearts Touching the World"

Place your church directory with us today! Advertising your church in *The Oklahoma Eagle* will get you results! Call (918) 582-7124

The Oklahoma Eagle Church Directory

Participation in the Directory allows free church announcements and church news. Post events and celebrations. Priority over non-listed churches for news.

BOSTON AVENUE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

1301 S. Boston (918) 583-5181  
Rev. David Wiggs Senior Minister  
Sunday Worship 8:30 and 11:00 a.m.  
Sunday School 9:40 a.m.  
Sunday TV Worship 11:00 a.m.  
KTUL Channel 8

TIMOTHY BAPTIST CHURCH

821 E. 46th St. N. • 425-8021  
REV. TWAN T. JONES  
Sunday School 9:45 a.m.  
Sunday Morning Worship 11:00 a.m.  
"We've come this far by faith"

NORTH PEORIA CHURCH OF CHRIST

2247 N. Peoria Tulsa, Okla. 74106 (918) 425-1071  
Warren Blakney, Minister  
Sunday Bible School.....9:00 a.m.  
Sunday Morning Worship.....10:00 a.m.  
Sunday Evening Worship.....6:00 p.m.  
There's no place, like this place, anywhere near this place.

Pettie Chapel CME

19364 S. S. Mingo Road. Bixby, 74008  
Phone: (918) 366-8870  
Rev. Robert Givens  
Sunday School 9:30 a.m.  
Morning Worship 11:00 a.m.

"Where Peaceful Waters Flow"

Church In Power

732 E. 31st North  
Tulsa, OK 74106 - (918) 835-1525

Service times: 9am Sundays, 7pm Wed, and Special Supernatural Breakthrough Services every last Friday and Saturday of every month at 7pm and Sunday at 9am  
Wednesday Bible Study - 6:30 p.m.

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

For Further Information call (918) 835-1525.  
"Have Faith In God." Mark 11:22



Pastor Bukky and Wunmi Alabi

List Your Church Today!

The Oklahoma Eagle Church Directory

Participate in *The Oklahoma Eagle's* weekly church directory. List in one of the largest church directories in Oklahoma.

- Participation in the Church Directory allows free Church announcements and Church news. Post your church events and celebrations.
- Priority over non-listed churches for news.

Two service styles to meet your spiritual & community-building needs.  
2952 S. Peoria Ave. Tulsa, OK | allsoulschurch.org



Mount Zion Baptist Church

419 N Elgin Tulsa, Oklahoma  
Office: 918-584-0510  
Fax: 918-584-1958  
Prayer Line: 918-584-PRAY  
Sunday School 9:30 a.m.  
Morning Worship 10:45  
Wednesday Bible Study Noon and 7:00



In The Spirit Christian Church

"Come And Experience The Spirit"

1020 South Garnett  
Tulsa, Okla., 74128  
Phone: (918) 836-6823  
Fax: (918) 836-6833

Eclectic Praise, Extraordinary Worship, And Spirited Preaching.

Wednesday Services 10:00 a.m. Spirit Seniors 5:30 p.m. Support Groups 6:30 p.m. Community Dinner 7:00 p.m. Bible Study  
Sunday Worship Church School 9:45 a.m. Worship 11:00 a.m.

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



Rev. Sharyn Cosby-Willis,



SMILING HEARTS  
The NICK BLAKELY  
Foundation

Our vision is to turn every potential tragedy of Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA) into a story of survival.

www.nickblakelyfoundation.org



# Here’s A Sure-Fire Way To *End DEI, CRT Attacks* *At Colleges*



PHOTO PIXABAY/PEXELS

IT’S ABSOLUTELY MINDBOGGLING HOW THE SAME UNIVERSITIES THAT HAVE RIDDEN THE BACKS OF BLACK STUDENT-ATHLETES FOR MULTIPLE DECADES TO MARCH MADNESS FINAL FOURS AND NCAA CHAMPIONSHIPS IN FOOTBALL, BASKETBALL AND OTHER SPORTS, ARE OFFERING ZERO RESISTANCE TO THEIR STATES’ MOVES TO END DEI AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION POLICIES.

BY ASWAD WALKER

These states, many of whom were card-carrying members of the confederacy and enforced a strict ban on Black students before the late 1960s and early 1970s, now stand on the verge of having campus populations that mirror the 1950s’ all-white demographic.

Texas is among five states that have recently passed legislation trashing DEI programs. At least 20 others are considering it. The University of Texas at Austin, the supposed bastion of liberalism in the Lone Star State, fired darn near 70 folk complying with Senate Bill 17, the new Texas law effectively banning DEI efforts at public colleges.

The University of Houston was one of the first colleges to shutter its Center for Diversity and Inclusion, bending to the will of that same state law.

But it’s not just in Texas that this is happening.

Duke University in North Carolina discontinued its full-ride scholarship for students of African descent and replaced it with a program without a scholarship that is open to all students. This move came after last year’s U.S. Supreme Court decision to strike down race-conscious college admissions practices.

The irony here is that the scholarship was named after Reginaldo Howard, Duke’s first Black student body president, and created as a pushback against the school’s long history of purposefully barring Black students from admission – a practice that was literally the reason for the need for DEI programs in the first place.

Further south, Alabama Governor Kay Ivey signed a bill banning DEI programs in publicly-funded colleges, making the former member of the confederacy just another Republican-led state to make such a move. Ivey gleefully complied with Alabama’s SB129 that not only banned institutions from maintaining DEI offices but also from teaching what the bill calls “divisive concepts” about race and identity – i.e. the truth about the history of white domestic terrorism, land theft, affirmative action for whites only, etc. and the truth about Pan-African excellence, accomplishment and never-ending resistance to oppression.

And there was no way Florida, the state known as America’s intellectually and morally retarded sociopath, was not going to join in on the “fun” of attacking Black people. The University of Florida closed its “Office of the Chief Diversity Officer, eliminated DEI positions and administrative appointments, halted DEI-focused contracts with outside vendors... and (and this is no small thing) reallocated approximately \$5 million in funds once reserved for DEI expenses.

We would do well to recognize what these schools/states have in common – their legacy of sports domination, especially in football and basketball; a domination that has been dependent upon Black student-athletes. The same Black student-athletes who were denied access to those schools until the late 1960s and early 70s.

Without these Black bodies, none of those national championships won by UT, Alabama, Duke and Florida would reside in their hallowed halls.

Yet, these same schools that have created generational wealth for their institutions and their lilly-white head coaches, off the blood, sweat, tears, talent and intelligence of Black student-athletes – wealth that enriches the coffers of their state houses also – have moved to literally cut off access to those schools by Black students who aren’t athletes; Black students who aren’t on those plantations building “massa’s” empire.

And this same game of punking Black people and Black bodies will continue non-stop until we choose to end it ourselves.

But how do we do that?

Glad you asked. Here’s how: henceforth and forever more, all Black student-athletes, and all Black students period, will attend HBCUs.

Good suggestion. Heard it before. But do we have what we need to make it happen?

Another excellent query. The most important thing we need is the will, but for many, that depends on a viable way.

Here’s the way.

### Needs

- Black millionaire/billionaire class, tax yourself and provide annual funding to the constellation of HBCUs
- HBCU alumni to step up giving
  - All Black people, HBCU alums or not, invest in HBCUs (we’re all HBCU-adjacent in some way)
  - Parents, allow your high school senior star athletes choose their college destination... as long as it’s an HBCU
  - Current Black student-athletes at PWIs, hit the Wakanda transfer portal immediately
  - Corporations that want and need Black dollars, invest in HBCUs with funding for programs, infrastructure, advertising, scholarship
  - Lawmakers who want and need Black votes, stop the centuries of bull\*\*\*\*\*ing and fully fund HBCUs. Then hold yourselves accountable for those gazillions y’all willfully denied HBCUs, and add a punk-a\$\$ racist penalty tax to the overdue funds, plus interest.
  - Industries that need talent, provide additional funding, set up job training and apprentice programs, with employee profit-sharing programs. We’re not trying to simply replace white capitalists with Black ones.
  - Healthcare institutions, provide universal healthcare to staff, students, faculty, alumni, parents, siblings, aunts and play cousins of all affiliated with these HBCUs

### Impact

- Corporate dollars will follow student-athletes
- Larger investment in HBCU infrastructure
- Black coaches (pro and college level) will view HBCUs as a destination rather than a stepping stone, thus improving the quality of coaching and quality of athletic play and competition
- Pay increases for HBCU faculty and staff
- Improved athletic competition which will create a movement back to when HBCUs had the best teams and players
- More investment of time, attention and resources from professional sports leagues
- Destruction of PWI sports monopoly
- More eyes on already-existing excellence at HBCUs (faculty, programs, environment, students, history, etc.)
- Whites step up efforts to officially classify Hispanics and AAPI folk as white (a move whites have consistently done throughout history when they felt their numbers and societal influence were in danger of waning). This move will initiate intense reviews of how Hispanics and AAPI folk have been treated by whites historically. Some will choose whiteness. Others will call for more collaborations with other POC and institutions (i.e. HBCUs) that support them.
- US government will threaten to cut funding for public HBCUs and move to destroy HBCU and Hispanic-Serving Institution status, but will eventually comply.
- Many HBCUs may move to become private institutions until state legislatures fully come around and get with this program.
- State legislatures will be pressured by alumni, corporations and others to end their attacks on programs and policies that are anti-Black, and to reverse decisions made to end programs and initiatives conducive to healthy Black life.
- Blackfolk realize we can do anything, and start doing anything, recognizing the truth of those words the Risen Christ shared with his followers: “What I can do, you can do, and even greater things shall you do.” We get busy doing greater things.



V.P. HARRIS: HERE’S WHAT  
WE’RE DOING TO PROTECT  
BLACK MOTHERS | A12

BLACK FAITH LEADERS SAY:  
‘THE BLACK CHURCH WILL ONCE  
AGAIN SAVE AMERICA’ | A13

# Are Black Teens Safe With 5 Hours of Daily Social Media?



PHOTO SOLSTOCK VIA GETTY IMAGES

Social Media

**Black teens are constantly on social media to form connections. But, with a looming TikTok ban and recent advisory warning, what’s the harm?**

Anissa Durham  
Word In Black

How much time do you spend on social media each day?

The use of social media has recently come under fire by politicians proposing a ban on TikTok and advising parents to set restrictions for their children. More and more research is coming out that says social media is linked to poor overall mental health. Teens often use popular platforms to connect with others and get support.

But, for Black teens, what is the danger?

Here’s What We Know

On average, teens spend about five hours a day on YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram. In a 2023 Pew Research Center survey of 13- to 17-year-old teens, Black and Hispanic teens are more likely to say they are online almost constantly.

The 2023 Gallup Familial Adolescent Health Survey shows that teens who spent four to five hours on social media per day experienced higher rates of worry, sadness, anger, and overall poor mental health.

## Social Media: Mental Health Challenges

Higher social media use was associated with a significantly higher risk of mental health problems for teens.

Mental health outcomes are reportedly worse for teens with weak parental relationships. The strength of the relationship, in addition to regulation of screen time and supervision contributes to less social media use.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, suicide rates for Black people aged 10-24 changed significantly from 2018 to 2021, with an increase from 8.2% to 11.2%. As a result, researchers have been exploring what factors are contributing to suicidal ideation and suicide among Black youth.

A 2024 study explores how Black adolescents experience online racial discrimination and the link to suicidal ideation and traumatic stress. Researchers found an indirect association between online racial discrimination and suicidal ideation among the 525 participants.

Additionally, the Gallup survey found that teens who spent five hours or more on social media experienced two to three times higher rates of suicidal ideation, self-harm behavior in the past year, and poor body image.

Cont. A13

Black Mothers

**V.P. Harris:  
Here’s What We’re  
Doing to Protect  
Black Mothers**

*Speaking to her sisters at the annual Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. convention, Harris touted a new White House plan to tackle the Black maternal mortality rate.*

Jennifer Porter Gore  
Word In Black

Addressing an issue important to Black women, Vice President Kamala Harris rolled out a new set of national health and safety standards for hospitals that she says can help protect new mothers and stem the maternal mortality crisis.

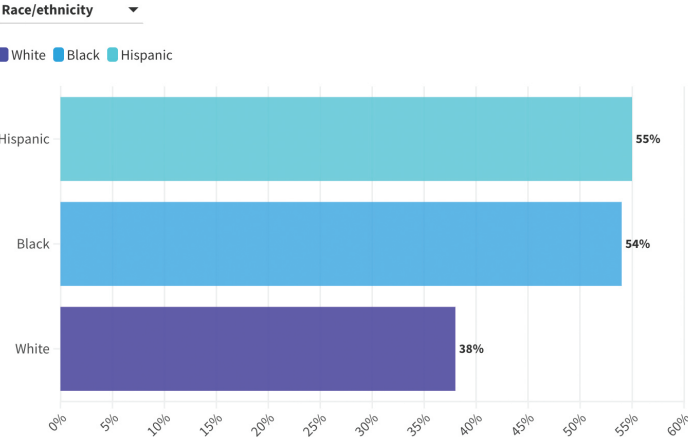
Speaking at the national convention of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc. — a sorority in which she is a member — Harris said the new standards establish clear and proper procedures for hospitals and clinics that deliver newborn babies. It also requires those facilities to stock enough specific medical supplies for any type of

Cont. A13



Social Media

Black and Hispanic teens are more likely to say they are online almost constantly

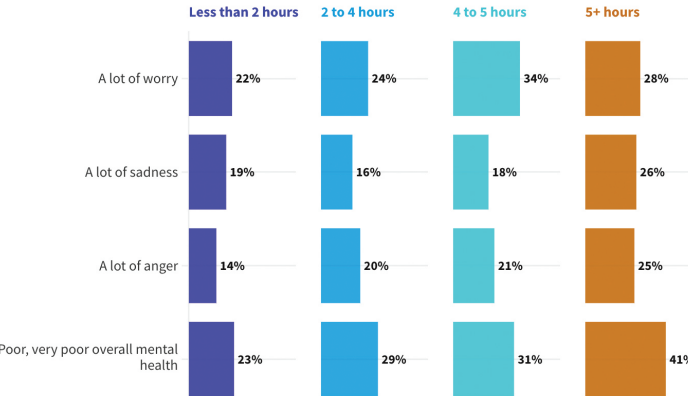


Source: [Pew Research Center](#) • Survey of U.S. teens conducted Sept. 26- Oct. 23, 2023.  
Graphic by Anissa Durham

TOP LEFT **JAMES O. GOODWIN SURVEY OF TEENS CONDUCTED SEPT. 26 - OCT. 23, 2023.** Pew Research Center • Black and Hispanic teens are more likely to say they are online almost constantly. GRAPHIC **ANISSA DURHAM**

BOTTOM LEFT **JAMES O. GOODWIN SURVEY OF TEENS CONDUCTED SEPT. 26 - OCT. 23, 2023.** Gallup Familial and Adolescent Health Survey • June 26 - July 17, 2023 survey of 1,567 U.S. adolescents.. GRAPHIC **ANISSA DURHAM**

Teens who spent 4 to 5 hours on social media per day experienced higher rates of worry and poor overall mental health



Source: [Gallup Familial and Adolescent Health Survey](#) • June 26- July 17, 2023 survey of 1,567 U.S. adolescents  
Graphic by Anissa Durham

From A12

A Psychiatrist Weighs In

Khadijah Booth Watkins, associate director of the Child and Adolescent Psychiatry training program at Massachusetts General Hospital, says racism and discrimination are considered an adverse childhood experience — alongside domestic violence, neglect, abuse, and poverty. It’s important for teens to feel safe and connected, but the repeated exposure of people who look like them being victimized on social media is stressful. This reverberates into mental health issues, how the body functions, and sleep disturbances.

“For Black and Brown kids, there’s an extra layer of being exposed to so much discrimination and racism ... that makes them vulnerable to depression and anxiety,” she says.

Watkins also has concerns about how often teens are using social media and what it takes away from them. For example, social media often provides a false sense of reality, which can make it difficult for young people to have realistic expectations.

“Young people are incredibly impressionable,” she says.

Research on long-term effects is still underway. But Watkins says it’s becoming more challenging for young people to

understand how to read between the lines on social media.

“What we’re seeing is a group of people who can’t tolerate adversity, frustration, and an inability to understand the concept of delayed gratification,” she says. “You can scroll endlessly ... and for young people, it stimulates this area of the reward system. It’s harder for them to pump the brakes ... so they’re constantly chasing this sense of pleasure and gratification.”

Last summer, the U.S. Surgeon General, Vivek H. Murthy, released an advisory on social media and youth mental health. The 25-page report details the positive and negative impacts of social media on children and adolescents. And examines the different harms youth experience as they use social media.

A few weeks ago, Dr. Murthy published an op-ed in the New York Times, calling for a warning label to be placed on social media platforms — similar to warning labels placed on cigarettes.

“An advisory warning is great,” Watkins says. “But, I think the solution is going to be education around what you do. Modeling and teaching young people how to build healthy habits and a healthy relationship with social media.”

**ANISSA DURHAM**, is the health data journalist for Word In Black. She reports on healthcare inequities and mental health in the Black community.

Black Mothers



KAMALA HARRIS, VICE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES PHOTO WIKICOMMONS

From A12

emergencies that a birthing mother might face.

At the same time, hospitals must have clear procedures for transferring maternity patients to other facilities if the facility can’t give patients necessary care. Hospital staff also must be trained annually on evidence-based maternal health practices.

These measures are part of the administration’s “Blueprint for Addressing the Maternal Health Crisis,” which Harris announced in 2022.

“[W]e have addressed the long-standing crisis of maternal mortality—something as you know I e been working on since I was in the Senate,” Harris said.

“Why? Because women in America die at a higher rate in connection with childbirth than women in any other wealthy nation in the world. And Black women are three times more likely to die in connection with childbirth,” she added.

Harris also mentioned reproductive rights and recent abortion bans passed in states like Texas.

“In the South, where a majority of Black women call home, every state except for

Virginia has a ban, many with no exception even for rape or incest,” Harris said. “One does not have to abandon their faith to agree, the government should not be telling her what to do with her body.”

Among other measures, the blueprint also extends postpartum Medicaid coverage from 2 to 12 months and encourages states to cover doula services. The administration approved postpartum extensions in 46 states as well as Washington, D.C., and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Data shows that, while more women die giving birth in the U.S. than in any other wealthy nation, Black women are almost three times more likely to die than white women. Some of the reasons cited for such high maternal mortality among Black women include lack of health care coverage, insufficient postpartum care, and racial discrimination.

Roughly 40% of Black, Hispanic, and multiracial mothers reported being discriminated against when receiving maternity care and 45% of all mothers said they were reluctant to ask questions or discuss concerns with their healthcare provider, according to an April 2023 report from the Centers for Disease Control. □



**BISHOP REGINALD JACKSON**, Presiding Prelate of the 6th Episcopal District of Georgia (front) and Rev. Timothy McDonald, the faith leader at First Iconium Baptist Church on Moreland Avenue (right) and other faith leaders held a press conference in support of United States President Joseph R. Biden at the Georgia State Capitol Thursday morning. PHOTO **DONNELL SUGGS/THE ATLANTA VOICE**

The Black Church

Black Faith Leaders Say: ‘The Black Church Will Once Again Save America’

**Donnell Suggs**  
Word In Black

With only a few hours till United States President Joseph R. Biden takes to a podium and conducts a press conference with the nation’s media, some of whom have been critical of both his debate performance and his lack of full transparency on whether he will step away from the campaign, faith leaders from Georgia held their own press conference in the rotunda of the Georgia State Capitol.

Bishop Reginald Jackson, Presiding Prelate of the 6th Episcopal District of Georgia, and Rev. Timothy McDonald, the faith leader at First Iconium Baptist Church on Moreland Avenue, were very clear about why they and a dozen pastors and church leaders were there on Thursday morning.

“The Black Church will once again save America,” Rev. McDonald said. “The Black Church has saved America time and time again, and we’re going to set records again for voter turnout.”

McDonald and Bishop Jackson took questions from the assembled media in attendance, but not before they spoke about how the current presidential administration and Democratic Party need to show more unity in the face of re-

cent opposition to Biden remaining the party’s choice for a presidential candidate.

“Democrats need to unite and fight against the enemies of democracy,” Jackson said. “We are at war. This nation is at war against MAGA, Project 2025, white nationalists, and efforts to turn back time.”

Jackson asked a rhetorical question to the Republican Party: “Why haven’t you asked the leader of your party to step down?”

He challenged the Democratic Party to focus more on Biden’s record during his three and a half years in office and less on the results of the first debate between him and former United States President Donald J. Trump and recent poll data that has Biden as much as six points in some cases.

“Rather than talk about how old he is,” said Jackson of Biden, “You can talk about his record.”

During his comments, Jackson mentioned the low Black unemployment rate, investments in Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), and the start of more Black-owned businesses during the Biden-Harris administration.

Despite his many talking points, Jackson’s most repeated message was unity within the party.

“The goal is to win,” he said. “In order to win,

you have to be united.”

McDonald also used his time behind the microphones and in front of the cameras to ask questions.

“I ponder who supports Donald Trump. It’s the radical religious right. The same people who supported slavery.”

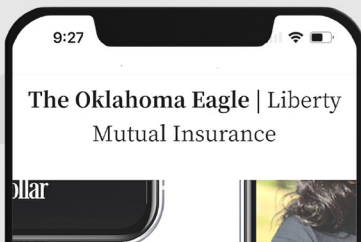
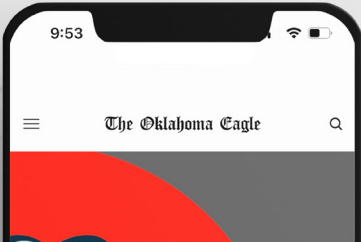
He continued, “We know the character of Donald Trump. I don’t question his character. I question the character of anyone that calls themselves a Christian and supports Donald Trump.”

Jackson and McDonald took turns asking the media to distribute the right information to the voting public. They called the media “tools” for telling the truth.

“The media is a tool,” McDonald said. “It’s a good tool. You all are supposed to tell the truth. If Donald Trump wins, you won’t have freedom of the press. We need you to get the truth out.”

The Atlanta Voice asked Jackson how important the 5:30 p.m. presidential press conference was to slowing or stopping talk of Biden’s political demise. Jackson said the opportunity for Biden to talk directly to the nation through the press is “critically important.”

“I think he will be prepared,” Jackson added. “What I like about Joe Biden is that he’ll tell the truth with or without a teleprompter. □







FELICIA TIGER-MOLL (second from left) is owner of Echelon Chic Boutique, 2329 W. Edison St., for nail art and other services. Other manicurists/pedicurists working with Tiger-Moll are (l-r) Imani Brown, An Doan, and Jenneal Frank. PHOTO PROVIDED

## Echelon Offers Attention To Detail For One’s Nails

Dr. Jerry Goodwin  
The Oklahoma Eagle

Felicia Tiger-Moll had always dreamed of owning her own salon. She had a passion for nail art and massage therapy, and she wanted to create a space where clients could relax and feel pampered.

With the support of her husband, J’on Moll, who owns a construction company, Tiger-Moll’s dream became a reality.

In August 2021, Tiger-Moll and her husband designed and constructed Echelon Chic Boutique,

2329 W. Edison St., a luxurious nail and massage pedicure station salon in midtown Tulsa. The name of the business was chosen to signify the elevated level of service and sophistication that the salon offers to its customers.

As soon as someone walks through the doors, they are greeted by a classy ambiance that exudes elegance. The salon features a state-of-the-art filtration system to ensure a clean and healthy environment, as well as meticulously placed lighting that enhances the overall aesthetic.

The walls adorn with beautiful art pieces, adding to the overall chic vibe of the space. Customers can choose from a variety of nail treatments, including dip, shellac, and traditional acrylic, all expertly executed by the skilled nail techs at Echelon.

One of the standout features of the salon is the specially trained freehand nail designers, who can create intricate and unique designs that leaves customers in awe. Whether it is a simple manicure or a more elaborate nail art creation, the technicians at Echelon never fail to impress.

Tiger-Moll has made sure that every client who walks through the doors feels welcomed and cared for by her employees. She greets them with a warm smile and offers a beverage to enjoy while customers wait for appointments. The laid-

back atmosphere of the salon, coupled with the calming, commercial-free music playing in the background, ensures that customers can relax and unwind during their visit.

As the salon continues to grow in popularity, Tiger-Moll is always on the lookout for licensed technicians and estheticians to join the team. She wants to expand their services and offer even more luxurious treatments for clients.

Echelon is quickly becoming known as a beacon of excellence in the Black entrepreneur community in midtown Tulsa. People flock to the salon not just for the exceptional services it offers, but also to support a local, Black-owned business that is making a name for itself in the industry.

Echelon is a place where clients can come to feel pampered, rejuvenated, and appreciated. Tiger-Moll’s passion for nail art and massage therapy, combined with her husband’s expertise in construction, has resulted in a salon that is truly one-of-a-kind. And as they continue to grow and expand, there is no doubt that Echelon will remain a staple in the Tulsa beauty scene for years to come.

For more information, contact (918) 236-3103 and visit <https://www.echelonchicnailboutique.com/>

## Langston University-Tulsa And LU-OKC Celebrate 45th Anniversary



DR. RUTH RAY JACKSON (l), president of Langston University, recognizes Dr. Wennette Pegues, the first director of the former higher education consortium in Tulsa that included Langston University, Northeastern State University, Oklahoma State University, and the University of Oklahoma. The consortium was the predecessor to Oklahoma State University-Tulsa. PHOTO PROVIDED

Dr. Jerry Goodwin  
The Oklahoma Eagle

### LU’s Urban Campuses Held Luncheon Programs

The Langston University-Tulsa campus commemorated its 45-year anniversary with a celebratory luncheon on June 13. LU-OKC held a similar anniversary program on June 6.

The celebrations recognized the efforts of faculty, staff, and site administrators at these campuses to provide quality educational

opportunities for students in Oklahoma City and Tulsa since 1979, according to a press release.

Participating in the LU-Tulsa program were Dr. Ruth Ray Jackson, LU president; Dr. Sherri Smith-Keys, executive director and associate vice president for clinical affairs at the LU-Tulsa campus; Joshua A. Busby, interim executive director of the LU Foundation; and Diana Sharp, administrative specialist III at LU-Tulsa.

Additional recognition was given to the following: Dr. Wennette Pegues, associate academic dean for the LU-Tulsa Urban Program in 1979-80, and the first director of a consortium of universities (Langston University, Northeastern State University, Oklahoma State University, and the University of Oklahoma) and predecessor to Oklahoma State University-

Tulsa; Dr. Gary Crooms; Dr. Dytisha Davis; Dr. Emily Patterson-Harris; Dr. Roosevelt Mack (posthumously); Rev. Marla Mayberry; Dr. Bruce McGowan; Dr. Orlenthea McGowan; Dr. Virginia Schoats; and Dr. Lisa Weis.

The luncheon programs also served as fundraisers to support the campuses as they continue to promote excellence in higher education and research in Oklahoma.

Sponsors of the LU-Tulsa luncheon were Oklahoma City Community College, Bank of Oklahoma, Tinker Federal Credit Union, LU National Alumni Association, LU National Alumni Association – OKC Chapter, Dr. Ruth Ray Jackson, Theresa Powell, Dr. Emily Patterson-Harris, and Joshua A. Busby.

In January 2023, Griffin Media made the largest corporate donation in Langston University’s history when it gifted the university its KWTN News 9 building located at 7401 N. Kelley Ave. in Oklahoma City. The building has become the new home of the LU-OKC campus and a focal point for the broadcast journalism program.

In March 2023, the LU-Tulsa campus held the grand opening for the new Tulsa Allied Health Facility. The 17,000-square-foot building, home to the School of Nursing and Health Professions, includes simulation labs with mannikins powered by artificial intelligence, spacious classrooms, a lecture hall, conference and meeting rooms, and department and administrative office spaces.

These recent additions to each of the LU urban campuses reflect the university’s efforts to expand its footprint and impact in Oklahoma City and Tulsa and within the state.

## H&M Americas To Promote ‘Buy From A Black Woman’ On July 14

Dr. Jerry Goodwin  
The Oklahoma Eagle

H&M Americas, a multinational clothing-retail company for its fast-fashion clothing for men, women, teenagers, and children, has partnered with Buy From A Black Woman to host an event at its location in Woodland Hills Mall, 7021 S. Memorial Dr. The program will be held on July 14 from 12 p.m. – 6 p.m.

Buy From A Black Woman is a national campaign that has empowered, educated, and inspired Black women business owners and the people who support them, according to its



BUY FROM A BLACK WOMEN logo. PHOTO PROVIDED

website, <https://www.buyfromablackwoman.org/>.

H&M and BFABW are celebrating its fourth year of collaborating to advance Black women-owned businesses. The BFABW Inspire Tour is an annual multi-city pop-up shopping event that features products from Black women-owned businesses in H&M stores across the country.

The national-wide tour is “rallying communities to shop from local vendors and providing important networking opportunities for business owners,” said H&M. Tulsa is one of six cities for the tour.

Other cities include New Orleans, La.; Toronto, Ontario; Chicago; Washington, D. C.; and Macon, Ga.

Jennifer Brown, managing empowerment director of PWEN (Phenomenal Women Empowerment Network) and author of “Manifesting Your Best Life – A 90 Day Manifesting Journal,” contacted the organizers of the partnership and invited them to Tulsa.

“I didn’t think it would happen as quickly as it did, but here we are,” said Brown.

Local vendors to be featured are LAMIK Beauty and Mamie L Pack Media.

For more information and to register to attend, visit <https://www.buyfromablackwoman.org/event-details/buy-from-a-black-woman-x-h-m-11>

## Events

### June

#### June 21 - 22

Lawton Chautauqua is sponsoring “Lift Every Voice: 60 Years Since the Civil Rights Act” at the Albert Johnson Sr. Conference Center, 91 NE Maine St., Lawton, Okla. Workshops are scheduled for 10 a.m. – 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. – 3 p.m. The evening in-character performances are planned for 7 p.m. All events are free and open to the public. For more information, contact <https://www.lawtonok.gov/?navid=56> or (580) 581-3450.

#### June 21 – Jun. 28

Young Entrepreneur Summer Program will be sponsored by the Greenwood Cultural Center, 322 N. Greenwood Ave., 8:30a.m. – 4:30 p.m. The program combines literacy, art, and entrepreneurship providing an avenue for children to meet Black authors, explore new books, and create their own book. Students are required to have completed K-5 grade. Breakfast and lunch will be provided. For more information, contact (918) 596-1020 or [mmburdex@greenwoodculturalcenter.com](mailto:mmburdex@greenwoodculturalcenter.com).

#### June 21 – Jul. 13

Bristow Train and Depot and Museum, 1 Railroad Pl., will be hosting “Voices and Votes: Democracy in America” exhibition. From the Smithsonian’s Museum on Main Street, the exhibition explores the complex history of the nation, including The Revolution, Civil Rights, Suffrage, Elections, Protests, and the Rights and Responsibilities of Citizens. The project is touring the state. For more information, visit [www.okhumanities.org](http://www.okhumanities.org) or call (918) 367-9335

#### June 21 – Aug. 14

Oasis Fresh Market, 1725 N. Peoria Ave., is sponsoring free breakfast and lunch for kids and teenagers under 18 years old from Mon.-Fri. during the summer. Breakfast will be served from 9 a.m. – 10 a.m. and lunch will be available from 12 p.m. – 2 p.m. Extracurricular activities will be offered to the kids and teenagers. For more information, call (918) 935-2092 or send an email to [storemanager@oasisfreshmarket.net](mailto:storemanager@oasisfreshmarket.net).

#### June 21 – Oct. 26

The Original Black Wall Street Merchant Marketplace is open in the Greenwood Business District, 122 N. Greenwood Ave., on Saturdays from 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. In addition to vendors, live music, line dancing classes, yoga classes, sound body and soul meditation and sound bath sessions, and free health care screenings will be offered. For more information, visit [www.theoriginalbwsmarketplace.com](http://www.theoriginalbwsmarketplace.com) or send an email to [hello@tulsacountyliving.com](mailto:hello@tulsacountyliving.com)

#### June 21 - 22

Lawton Chautauqua is sponsoring “Lift Every Voice: 60 Years Since the Civil Rights Act” at the Albert Johnson Sr. Conference Center, 91 NE Maine St., Lawton, Okla. Workshops are scheduled for 10 a.m. – 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. – 3 p.m. The evening in-character performances are planned for 7 p.m. All events are free and open to the public. For more information, contact <https://www.lawtonok.gov/?navid=56> or (580) 581-3450.

#### June 22

Magic City Books, 221 E. Archer St., presents author Charity Barton and her book, “We Did That! A Black History Children’s Activity Book,” 2 p.m. For more information, contact (918) 602-4452.

#### June 29

The Reunion Dance is scheduled to be held at the 36th Street North Event Center, 1125 E. 36th St. N., from 8:30 p.m. – 1 a.m. The event, a Lola Barnes scholarship fundraiser, will include MVP Swing-Out graduation and entertainment (6 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.), Line Dancing MVP, and much more. Entertainment will be provided by Frankie Newsome and DJ Silky Soul. For more information, contact Howard Barnes at (918) 951-5466 or Sheila Harberte at (918) 946-6697.

#### July 1 - 31

The Read to Succeed Summer Program will be sponsored by the Greenwood Cultural Center, 322 N. Greenwood Ave., 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Students must have completed grades K-5. The program is limited to 70 students. Breakfast and lunch will be provided. For more information, contact (918) 596-1020 or [info@greenwoodculturalcenter.com](mailto:info@greenwoodculturalcenter.com)