

2017-06-08

## The Weekly Challenger : 2017 : 06 : 08

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2017

# The Weekly Challenger

BLACK MEN MUST SELL AS WELL AS BUY OR ELSE REMAIN A BEGGAR RACE.

VOL. 49 NO. 42

JUNE 8 - JUNE 14, 2017

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## College Bound



Jenella Arscott

### The doctor spoke it first!

BY DEXTER MCCREE  
Feature Writer

ST. PETERSBURG – Growing up to be a doctor was always the career Jenella Arscott had in mind for her future. During one of her first physicals at a local doctor's office, the doctor commented that she had great attention for detail. Immediately, her parents knew that one day she would achieve goals and set high standards.

After overcoming a few obstacles and minor setbacks, she can now say that one hurdle has been crossed. She is officially a 2017 high school graduate.

Though many of her peer's lives began in cities within the States, Jenella was born in Birmingham, England, in the United Kingdom and came to the America when she was four months old. Although she has no mem-

See **ARSCOTT**, page 3



Azure Je'Neve Brown

### Too close for comfort

BY DEXTER MCCREE  
Feature Writer

ST. PETERSBURG – Azure Je'Neve Brown is a graduate of Lakewood High School. She has a quiet demeanor but is fun loving once she gets to know you.

During her high school years, she was involved in cheerleading, softball and many other clubs. At the start of her freshman year, Azure got involved in College Reach Out Program (CROP), AVID and Girl Service League (GSL).

"I did not want to get too involved with extra-curricular activities because I wanted to start my high school year strong academically," explained Azure.

After finishing strong her first year, she became more involved in clubs on campus and sports. She joined the cheerleading squad and softball team.

See **BROWN**, page 3



Myiah Moody

### Living life to the fullest

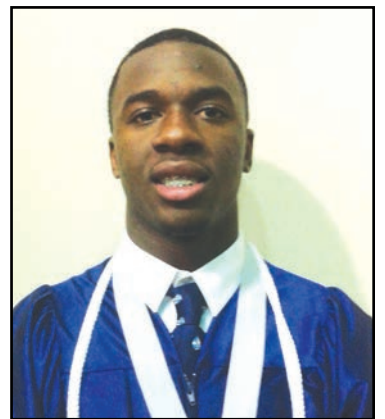
BY DEXTER MCCREE AND  
DAMARIS BROWN

ST. PETERSBURG – When losing a loved one, it can seem like everything is falling apart right in front of your eyes. For Myiah Moody, this happened just last year. She felt that there was no reason to keep pushing until everything changed. By pushing herself to overcome, she became the young woman her aunt would have wanted her to be.

Myiah, born to Donita and Steven Moody, was scheduled to be a senior this upcoming school year, but she decided to push past the pain and turn it into a reason to strive for more.

She became an early graduate and recently walked with the class of 2017 instead of the class of 2018. Making her way through many obstacles, she

See **MOODY**, page 3



Caleb Dials

### Dancing to his own beat

BY DEXTER MCCREE  
Feature Writer

ST. PETERSBURG – Friday nights were exciting for Caleb Dials as he lined up at the goal line for Calvary Christian football team, awaiting the arrival of this oval, leather pigskin for the opening kickoff for a high school football game.

There was much anticipation as to what would happen when Caleb decided to make a move. One thing was for sure, it was heart wrenching if not unorthodox. Very little moved Caleb in any expeditious way other than his football quickness, where he performed a 90-yard kickoff return from one end zone to the other without an opponent putting a hand on him.

His quickness was also on display on the basketball court when he juked his opponents, leaving

See **DIALS**, page 3

## MYcroSchool class of 2017 graduates 40 students

BY FRANK DROUZAS  
Staff Writer

ST. PETERSBURG – For the MYcroSchool Pinellas Charter High School class of 2017, it was the end of the road but the beginning of a new path in life. Forty young men and women received their diplomas at the school's graduation ceremony last month held at the SPC Allstate Center.

With its personalized approach, MYcroSchool is a community-based learning program that prepares at-promise students for college, technical schools, the military or the workforce.

"Tonight our hard work paid off," said class Salutatorian Tatyana Raquel Conway.

For Conway as for some of her classmates, the road to graduation was sometimes a tough

one. The graduate explained that her life changed when she had her first son at the age of 17, but that pushed her to work even harder because she loved him so much.

With childcare issues, Conway was able to work past three in the morning and yet still take courses with the schedule that MYcroSchool allowed her.

Conway noted it took "strength and determination" to be both a mother to her sons and a student set on completing her education, and gave due credit to her supportive friends and family.

"I'd like to thank my mother for raising such a strong woman," she said in conclusion. "She made me realize that failure is not an option."

In addressing his fellow graduates, valedictorian Martin



Thursday, May 25 MYcroSchool held their commencement at SPC Allstate.

Humphery II pointed out the necessity "to carve our own paths that are unique as us and our own experiences."

Principal Steven Humphries explained that high school graduation only signifies the end of high school but "not the end of

learning."

"Your journey starts here," he told the graduates, urging them to "always remember that the hard work you yourself put in pays off and it lasts forever."

See **MYCROSCHOOL**, page 14

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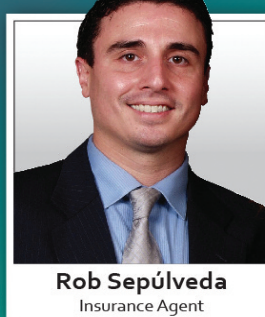


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# COMMUNITY NEWS



## Visionary Brief

by Keisha Bell, Esq.

### Cheering for her

Who is cheering for the professional success of black women? The idea of her climbing higher in traditionally male and white industries may be applauded in public forums, but what is the “behind the scenes” atmosphere? When we send young black women to college, are we only sending her there to find a husband or does the plan include becoming a college-educated, independently-thinking, career-oriented torch-bearer?

Without attaching her identity to that of a man or to a child, who continues to celebrate her growth after she leaves the collegiate stage? Chances are, as she advances in her profession she will encounter fewer and fewer females who can relate to her unique professional struggles. If not careful, her credentials will be labeled “token” and her presence dismissed.

Who is cheering for her?

Interestingly, life presents situations that will reveal who truly supports educated women, particularly those who are black. Regularly, black women are asked to support others and their political and/or social justice causes. Should she proactively and collectively demand more in return? By not demanding the inclusion of agenda items that directly benefit her collective self in exchange for her support, in many ways she is doing herself a disservice.

There is an assumption that “black-American issues” are limited to those of black men. This assumption is faulty. Black women’s value is recognized when asked to support others, but who is intentionally working for her advancement—professionally or otherwise?

According to the U. S. Department of Education, the national college graduation rate for black women is 44.8 percent. She is entering into and working within professional environments at increasing rates. Her desire for promotions, for the opportunities to work at management and upper-management levels, should not be hindered because of beliefs that she

does not “fit.” If you struggle to conceptualize her as senior vice-president, will you respect her as president—of anything?

Social etiquette says that if she is qualified, she will advance professionally just like a white male. Actions, however, speak louder than words. Is she advancing accordingly or does the “behind the scenes” atmosphere dictate prerequisites that the qualifications for advancement include white and male?

Identify a black woman obtaining — or attempting to obtain— prestigious, professional success. Pay attention to who supports her.

Oprah Winfrey is a media mogul and philanthropist. Raised in poverty, reportedly she is now North America’s first and only black multi-billionaire.

In 2012, Winfrey had a near nervous breakdown. She was stressed starting the OWN Network. In 2013, Winfrey revealed in an interview with “People” magazine that during this trying time she asked herself, “Do I not get credit for 25 years?”

Winfrey was referencing her previous accomplishments. Her works had been routinely applauded by millions across the world. Still, there she was having a near meltdown arguably because of the added pressure of breaking both gender and racial barriers of possibility.

How many professional black women have found themselves in positions whereby any other standard they would be considered qualified and therefore supported, but because she does not “fit” she quietly is left to analyze the question, “Don’t I get credit for...?”

It is always easier to cheer for black women when milestones are achieved, but who is pushing her forward during the climb? Who maintains support for her after she reaches her goal? Who encourages her to dream bigger? Pay attention. Future generations will thank you.

*Keisha Bell is an Attorney, author, and public servant. [www.emergingfree.com](http://www.emergingfree.com)*

### Being a black woman in America

Dear Editor:

“The most disrespected person in America is the black woman. The most unprotected person in America is the black woman. The most neglected person in America is the black woman.”

This famous quote by Malcolm X is finding its way back into pop culture as a response to the attacks on black women by public officials and entertainers alike. Beyonce, on her 2016 album “Lemonade,” references the quote and uses her album as a platform to highlight the pleasures and pain associated with being a black woman in America.

The quote reignited again for me last week after the historical appointment of Dr. Tonjua Williams as the next president of St. Petersburg College (SPC). The quote came into my spirit as a result of some of the comments received regarding Dr. Williams’ appointment.

It was difficult to ascertain her ability to do the job primarily because some sidebar comments ranged from her likability to who she was friends with and other pettiness that had very little to do with the vetting of her educational credentials and 30 years of experience within the community college culture.

This very shallow and oftentimes mean-spirited commentary has often resulted in women, and particularly women of color, being refused opportuni-

ties simply because God made them women and then had the gall to make some of us black and brown.

Never was I more proud to hear that trustee member Deveron Gibbons rejected criticisms that he was friends with Dr. Williams but focused on her education and her professional experience at SPC.

St. Petersburg is, by all means, a very homogeneous community for people of color. We are either related by blood, marriage or other linkages that are very important to the African culture. Most often even if there is no blood linkage, we simply operate as family!

This cultural reality can’t be used as a disqualifying factor for those of us who are blessed to ascend to positions such as Deveron where we are positioned to potentially support the appointment of someone that you may have known through the years.

His responsibility, and any other public official, has to be clear on their organization’s missions, clear on its challenges and regardless of the candidate’s race, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation, must begin to focus on the skills and competencies one needs to get the job done.

SPC, like all other major community colleges, has some challenges ahead of them. Therefore, a very reason-




able Board of Trustees had to consider was the individual’s learning curve was to the college’s culture. In most public arenas, it can take years to change a culture to get the results needed to claim success.

Dr. Williams’ success will be based on her ability to corral her internal partners, external partners and students around a strategy that increase student enrollment and garners significant funding for the college. The end!

Her success will not and should not be centered on individual personal likes or dislikes, relationships to board members or anyone else for that matter.

On another day during another time, Deveron could have easily acquiesced to the typical disrespect of Dr. Williams simply because she is an African-American woman. He did not, so kudos to Dr. Williams and kudos to Deveron for standing up and holding on to his support of her.

*Maria L. Scruggs, President, St. Petersburg Branch NAACP*



THE ST. PETERSBURG BRANCH

# NAACP

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A JUNETEENTH CELEBRATION

### SATURDAY JUNE 17, 2017

6:00PM - 10:00PM

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- Generating operating funds to support the mission of the NAACP
- Rejuvenating a renewed interest in the Juneteenth Celebration.
- Generating substantial business opportunities for community based businesses
- Creating memorable and meaningful events within the confines of our own community

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### PICK OF THE WEEK!

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is distributed in the following cities:  
**St. Petersburg • Clearwater • Largo**  
**Tarpon Springs • Dunedin • Safety Harbor**

**Ethel L. Johnson**  
CEO/Publisher Emerita

**Lyn Johnson**  
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**Advertising**  
Advertising Dept. 727-896-2922  
[advertising@theweeklychallenger.com](mailto:advertising@theweeklychallenger.com)

**Lorrie Bellinger**  
Art Director

**PUBLISHED WEEKLY**  
on Thursdays

**READERSHIP**  
100,000 monthly

**SUBSCRIPTION RATES**  
\$50 for 1 year (local only)

**SINGLE COPY** 50 cents

**ATTN. POSTMASTER:**  
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**Volume 49 • Number 42**  
**Published Thursday,**  
**June 8, 2017**  
**14 pages • 1 section**

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### RATE REDUCTION SPECIAL!



# COMMUNITY NEWS

## Irma Daniels retires after 44 years at Boca Ciega High

**BY JOYCE NANETTE JOHNSON**  
*Staff Writer*

ST. PETERSBURG – Irma Daniels has a quiet grace and a shy, warm smile that spreads into a wide grin as she reminisces and celebrates her retirement from The Boca Ciega High School after 44 years of service.

Daniels wore many hats during the past four decades including being a teacher’s assistant for the Foreign Language Department, clerk to the Assistant Dean of Boys, data prep clerk and data management technician.

She will forever be a part of the living history of that institution and has witnessed firsthand the many changes that have occurred throughout the years.

A single mother to two children, Dala and David, Daniels began her career at Boca Ciega in 1973. The principal at that time was Hugh B. Kriever. Since her tenure at the school, she has served alongside six principals and is retiring while Michael Vigue is the current principal.

“Irma Daniels spent a better portion of her adult life at The Boca Ciega High School...,” said Principal Vigue. “Students, staff and visitors have been greeted with her affable personality for over 43 years. Her kind and gentle nature has been a pleasure with which to work. We have been most fortunate to have had her as part of the ‘pirate’ family and wish her felicitations on her retirement from a long and successful career.”

Being a fixture through

the hallways and classroom, Daniels has observed many changes that reflect both positively and negatively concerning the students, curriculum and teachers.

“The dress code is too loose now, and back then the kids were more polite,” she stated. “Drug use has increased to a certain level.”

She has also stressed that parental interaction has improved greatly over the last five years, teachers are more dedicated and that there are more innovative and alternative learning methods and acceleration programs.

“A big change education wise,” she stated.

She pointed to the dual enrollment and collegiate programs that help students obtain college credits and in some cases, they

can graduate with not only a high school diploma but also an associate’s degree.

“Travel, travel, travel,” she laughingly described her future plans. After seeing the world, she’d like to do some mentoring and volunteering at a school or hospital.

“I will miss the routine and my colleagues,” Daniels said, noting that Mrs. Rampersaud and Mrs. Davis have been some of her “closest colleagues and comrades.”

She feels that her time at the school was also a learning experience for she learned all about the different cultures of the kids and the teachers.

“I thank God for being my navigator and provider and for keeping me proficient through the many years of change at Boca Ciega High School.”



**ARSCOTT, from front page**

ory of her birthplace, the values of the culture are inherited. As she learns more of her heritage, she has established a strong love for her country and an appreciation for its fondness of exceeding expectations.

Jenella expresses appreciation for her mother and father having always been involved with her schooling, and having an older sibling has provided her with a role model.

“My brother, who happens to be nine years older than me, is a part of my creation. Seeing a sibling tackle an obstacle that I found was impossible developed me into a rather fearless being,” stated Jenella.

Throughout years of peer pressure and finding her, mostly at in middle school at Thurgood Marshall Fundamental, she found herself excelling through experiences because she followed her brother’s example.

“Having someone who can relate to you on a

friendly level, and also as a hovering and protecting guardian has not always been the most pleasant experience, but I would never replace my brother for anything in this world.”

Jenella’s parents raised their children to be considerate of their surroundings and responsible for their grades. She and her brother knew that bringing home the modest grade of a “B” was unacceptable.

Having a solid foundation and strict rules instilled in her the perfect attitude. She praises her parents for it now, even though she could not understand why she had to work so hard in the past.

Jenella’s academic life began at Bay Vista Fundamental Elementary School and now she’s completed her senior year at The Boca Ciega High School in the Center for Wellness and Medical Professions program as summa cum laude.

“What a journey! In my opinion, it is important to



remember that all things have been conquered through the grace of God,” she said.

“Looking back five years ago, I would have never thought that I would have achieved so much,” she said.

Graduating with a 4.4 grade point average, Jenella will attend Florida State University, her dream college. As she goes on her journey, no doubt she will continue to be a driven young lady and one day will exceed her dreams and expectations. It’s in her heritage and the doctor spoke it first.

To reach Dexter McCree, email [dmccree@the-weeklychallenger.com](mailto:dmccree@the-weeklychallenger.com)

**BROWN, from front page**

Azure continued with CROP, AVID and GSL, but also joined several other clubs.

In her second year, she began to take on more school-wide leadership roles. She joined the Key Club, Mu Alpha Theta, Varsity Club, Peer to Peer Mentoring and Student Government. In addition to school involvement, Azure made an impact in the community by becoming an Exquisite Gem at the AKA Academy, she joined the ministry at her church, Relay for Life and the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation.

Being involved in the extra-curricular activities at school and in the community has pushed her out of her comfort zone. While at cheerleader camp, she was forced to step up to be a leader to get her team back on track and focused and was effective in doing so.

“I had a reality experience while volunteering

with Relay for Life and Cystic Fibrosis. When I hear of Relay for Life and Cystic Fibrosis, my mind focuses on adults over 40 or 50 years old. My reality came when I learned that these diseases can affect my peers, babies and little children. Putting in time for these two events really touched my heart,” expressed Azure.

After high school, Azure plans to spend the summer at St. Petersburg College doing the Summer of Success (SOS) program so that she can get an early start on college credits as and get a feel for what college will be like.

Getting accepted into SOS would automatically get her into the fall term at St. Petersburg College. The program also gives her a scholarship that pays for school.

Azure plans to stay active at SPC by joining the cheerleading and softball teams. After finishing SPC, she plans to



transfer to the University of Central Florida in Orlando. There she will try out for their cheer team as well getting involved in other clubs on campus. Her plan is to major in nursing.

In 10 years, Azure sees herself completing college and working as a neonatal nurse. She also foresees having a home in Florida, staying close to her family, accomplishing goals and enjoying life.

Azure is the daughter of Larry and Beverly Brown.

To reach Dexter McCree, email [dmccree@the-weeklychallenger.com](mailto:dmccree@the-weeklychallenger.com)

**MOODY, from front page**

chose to take the next step that would help her in the long run.

Aside from being an early graduate, Myiah was involved in athletics, cheer, track and field, National Achievers Society, Mt. Zion College Prep and the ONYX Youth Ski Group. She not only attends these programs, she likes volunteering in less fortunate and high-poverty areas.

This budding philanthropist has a plan on how to help those in need on a large scale.

“I want to own a Fortune 500 company and use portions of my earnings to support others in need through philanthropic work,” she said.

While maintaining a 3.75 weighted grade point average, Myiah made everything work in her favor. Not only did she keep her grades up, but also she made homecoming princess and maintained on the honor roll.

She was a part of the

National Honor Society, on the Principal’s List, won a Scholastic Art & Writing Award and was the Student Government Association president. Myiah has done excellent even when all odds were against her. Death can be a hard thing to deal with, but she stayed strong.

“The biggest challenge I faced during high school was trying not to give up after the passing of my aunt, LaMetra Moody,” said Myiah. “I overcame this challenge by deciding to graduate early and turn that experience into a positive challenge in my life instead of a negative one. Along with this decision, my grade point average improved and my future got clearer.”

In the near future, Myiah has set her sight on St. Petersburg College and Savannah College of Art and Design. She plans on majoring in business and fashion marketing and management. She will



then work on creating a business that will turn into a Fortune 500 company.

“Never let anyone tell you you can’t do something. You can do anything that you put your mind to. If you can dream it, you can achieve it. If it’s your passion, don’t make excuses, no matter what. Continue to strive for what makes you happy and don’t worry about what anyone else has to say about it because in the end, it’s your life to live and you should live it to the fullest.”

To reach Dexter McCree, email [dmccree@the-weeklychallenger.com](mailto:dmccree@the-weeklychallenger.com)

**DIALS, from front page**

them in their shoes as he swiftly passed and drove in for a layup and scored. Caleb has quickness and speed, there’s no doubt about it, but his movements oftentimes is that of his own pace.

Whether on the football field, basketball court or in life, with Caleb it’s always a mystery how he will move, and fortunate for him, it usually turns out to be something positive.

“Caleb is a different kind of child. He dances to his own music, beats his own drum and has a care-free approach to life,” said his mother Franchon Dials. “I’m excited to see him graduate and start the next chapter of his life.”

When Caleb was promoted to the eighth grade, he was accepted into Admiral Farragut Academy. As an eighth grader, he played on the varsity football and basketball teams. He participated in overnight camps for youth and volunteered to serve underprivileged kids.

On one outing with the youth, his mother recalls, Caleb gave the money given to him for lunch and incidentals away to the children. He said that after

interacting with the kids, he wanted to give them something. The money in his pocket is what he had.

In his junior year, Caleb was faced with a problem. His younger brother Gabriel was accepted to Calvary Christian High School, which is located in Clearwater. The drive proved too time consuming for the boys to go to different schools, so his mom devised a plan.

She put the two of them in a room together and closed the door. Their assignment was to come out of the room with one decision where the two of them would go to school. Caleb conceded and Calvary won out.

As in Caleb’s mode of operation, things began with a splash, or you might say a flash. In his first ever football game as a Warrior, he took the opening kickoff 96 yards for a touchdown. To be sure he left good memories at Calvary, in his final game as a Warrior he ran back an 80-yard punt return for a touchdown. He was also the team leader in receiving yards in his senior season.

In basketball, Caleb finished his career inducted into the “1000 Point Club,” where he

scored well over 1,000 points in two years. He also received the Basketball Coaches Award signifying his outstanding leadership.

“Whenever he puts his mind to something he can succeed,” said Izella McCree, Caleb’s grandmother and personal Uber service.

Caleb is weighing out his options before making a final decision on which offer he will accept to college. His decision has narrowed to Bethune-Cookman University, Becker University in Worcester, Mass., St. Petersburg College and Southeastern Oklahoma State University in Durant, Okla. He has decided to major in business and finance in preparation for a career on Wall Street.

Like those Friday nights on the football field and the hardwood of the basketball court, who knows what moves Caleb will make? One thing is for sure, he won’t approach the matter in the typical way, for he has always danced to his own beat.

Caleb is the son of Chico and Franchon Dials.

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# COMMUNITY NEWS

## Ryian knows it!

BY DEXTER MCCREE  
Feature Writer

ST. PETERSBURG – Ryian Freeman came a long way from sitting on the sidelines watching his teammates play football, fighting injuries on the track field and making low grades in Lakewood High School’s Center for Advanced Technologies (CAT) program, to becoming one of the top receivers on the football team and making the honor roll.

The early high school years were tough times in Ryian’s life and he thought about giving up on everything. That CAT program was not for him! Going from making As and Bs to now making Cs and Ds was unacceptable and not the expectations his parents had for him, and he knew it.

“I went through so much the first two years in high school,” said Ryian.

He convinced his parents to take him out of CAT and his grades shot back up. Everything started to fall into place. He even moved up the depth chart to second string by his junior year.

With his grades now in order and his mind becoming clearer, Ryian got more involved in extracurricular activities and areas of leadership. He participated in 5000 Role Models, Pathfinders, Beautillion 2016 and the Boy Scouts. He ran track and became the city champ in the 400 open and the 4x4 Relay. He was even awarded the Dean’s Academic Merit scholarship from



Ryian Freeman

Stetson University.

“Although comical most times, Ryian has a promising future and I can’t wait to see him and his great accomplishments in the coming years,” said his brother Raymond C. Freeman.

Ryian remembers his first day of practice his freshmen year as not being too funny when he was the smallest person on the field and had to literally fight his way up the depth chart. By senior year, he had earned a starting position for the entire football season and was named one of the top receivers in the county.

“I see myself in the next 10 years playing in the NFL and also working for a major sports

team handling the player’s contracts and managing the player’s health as well,” stated Ryian. “I also see myself moving my mom and family out of Florida and into a nice city where she and my family members can enjoy themselves.”

Making a drastic change in his high school career is what he is most proud of achieving. Ryian has risen to the upper level of life’s depth chart with his recent graduation and acceptance into Stetson University. This is only the beginning of what he can achieve in life, and he knows it.

To reach Dexter McCree, email [dmccree@the-weeklychallenger.com](mailto:dmccree@the-weeklychallenger.com)

## Living in the moment

BY DEXTER MCCREE  
Feature Writer

ST. PETERSBURG – Nikole Lynch is a very interesting 2017 graduate of Lakewood High School. She made an impact in the community by mentoring younger kids. Through a reading program, she read books to them and helped the little ones identify useful tools they will help them exceed academically.

She also performed community service projects where she was able to gather a collection of books and donate to Kidz World Preschool.

There are several interesting facts about Nikole that others may not know. She enjoys eating a Dorito sandwich. She takes her bag of nacho flavored Doritos and places them between two slices of bread. From there it’s bite and crunch.

One of the items on her bucket list is to visit Italy for the sole purpose of eating authentic Italian food. That’s right! She wants to travel 5,206 miles from St. Pete to Rome one day just to eat.

Very interesting! Nikole has a focused, yet carefree life and operates from her personal belief that

“life will go on, so we shouldn’t get stuck worrying about the negatives.” She believes that things happen for a reason and we should just move forward from those situations and grow.

During her time at Lakewood, Nikole was involved in the Advancement Via Individual Determination program, St. Petersburg College’s College Reach Out Program,



Nikole Lynch

Women in the Making and a host of other programs all while graduating with a 3.3 weighted grade point average.

Living carefree and in the moment has its advantages, but it can also create concerns. There were times throughout her high school career where she focused on making friends and working on her job rather than on her academics. It was a challenge for her.

“I overcame these challenges by realizing that the friends I was choosing to hang out with weren’t helping to better me or to lead me to the path that I have planned for myself,” said Nikole. “It was time to be by myself so I could stay focused. I also was able to shorten my hours at work so that I could focus more

in on my academics.”

With help from her parents, Claire and Nicholas Lynch, she made the necessary adjustments and is now planning to attend to attend St. Petersburg College in the fall. After obtaining an associate of arts degree, she then plans to transfer to a four-year university for a bachelor’s degree.

In 10 years, she hopes to have purchased a home and moving up the corporate ladder at Publix Super Markets.

Nikole’s life is filled with giving back, mentoring youth and the challenge of working to climb the corporate ladder. She won’t allow anyone to dull her sunshine or forfeit new opportunities.

To reach Dexter McCree, email [dmccree@the-weeklychallenger.com](mailto:dmccree@the-weeklychallenger.com)



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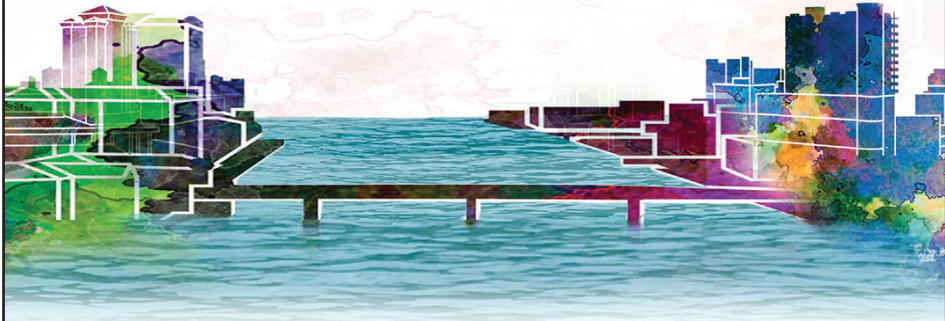
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EPIC





# COMMUNITY NEWS

## The precursor to my life

BY DEXTER MCCREE  
Feature Writer

ST. PETERSBURG – Life for Aaliyah Buchanan started out quite uneventful according to her standards. That is until she started high school. The past four years have proven to be the most significant transformational period to date.

Upon the start of this new chapter in her young, untouched soul, she was able to exude only one sentiment: hope. In her heart, this hope—which extended through all aspects of her being—was not to be condemned under the strength of any given circumstance, as the warm welcome of her quinquennial year of living in conjunction with the abrupt transition to an environment of “higher caliber,” a new sense of purpose was

ignited.

But as this 10-month period came to an end, she saw a lack in the anticipated progression that she had hoped for. Though she managed to stay true to her high expectation of exceptional grades, those grades were of no merit as they were a product of courses that she felt did not challenge her in any way.

Aaliyah’s most successful feat was the beginning of her immersion into the minds and hearts of those around her. Though it was only found within the individuals preparing to leave, she finally was at a place where she felt at home, Gibbs High School.

Proceeding a time for a vacation that fell far from the spectrum of being “much-needed,” she returned with the same hopeful yet elementary energy. Of course,

her drive to remain at the top of the class stood firmly, but she also met new intentions within new circumstances.

Those that she immediately came in contact with served as an ethical shock; the main source of this jolt originating from her involvement in the dance program. The other aspects that filled in the blanks of this time period grew increasingly insignificant as she finally delved into the beginning of her career as a Pinellas County Center for the Arts dance major.

Yet, there was another culprit that slowly but surely presented itself and dominated her functionality.

She stumbled into this predicament with oblivious grace, innocently seeking genuine companionship and returning their affections tenfold. She welcomed him

with curiosity and trust, eventually acknowledging this shared abstraction as love.

The most important passage did not make itself evident until the end of this season, which she witnessed from a picture...literally. The first picture was taken at the beginning of the year, an uneven caramel complexion was surrounded by large, thirsty tresses that had been bleached and neglected.

The most striking detail being the windows to her soul exemplifying ingenious perception and application through a glossy spark not yet blessed with the exploitation of pain and a composure perched in false alertness of her orientation in space and time.

The picture taken at the end of the year drew a much



Aaliyah Buchanan

different vibration. Her eyes exuded such energy that spoke with much serenity.

“I have seen, heard, felt and done such things that I would have previously interpreted as inconceivable,” stated Aaliyah. “I survived with new peace. I see myself; I see others. I comfortably welcome discomfort. This is a time of blatant vulnerability. And through learning so

much about myself I leave high school with not only a strong sense of self but an idea of how I would like to live my life.

“I no longer live for myself. I live for all beings around me and within me, and it is my purpose to educate, inspire and elevate the consciousness and lives of as many souls I can possibly reach, in this lifetime.”

## The standard of success

BY DEXTER MCCREE  
AND DAMARIS BROWN

ST. PETERSBURG – Nicole Richardson was born and raised in St. Pete and has lived in the same house her entire life. Her family consists of her mother, a pediatrician, her father, an attorney and her younger brother. Both her maternal and paternal grandparents were educators. They are a family who believes in standards and success.

“They impressed upon me the value of education at an early age. Through observing the success of my family members, I have learned that education is the key to achieving one’s goals and living a prosperous life,” said Nicole.

It was her maternal

grandmother who shared her gift and nurtured Nicole’s interest in art. During her elementary and middle school years, she frequently spent her free time drawing in her sketchbook and painting on canvases.

Nicole’s portrait of her paternal grandmother was selected to be displayed in the “Honoring My Ancestors” exhibit at the Morean Arts Center, and another one of her pieces, a self-portrait in pencil, hangs on the wall at the Johnnie Ruth Clarke Health Center.

As Nicole entered middle school, she participated in the Emerging Young Leaders (EYL) program by the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. This program focused on character build-

ing, educational enrichment, leadership development and civic engagement. She feels that her involvement in the EYL program has helped shape her leadership abilities.

Through her membership in Jack and Jill of America, Inc., she began to exercise those skills. She joined the teen group of her local Suncoast Chapter and served as parliamentarian (2013), foundation chair (2014), vice president (2015) and president (2016).

Her qualities and characteristics have always been to do the best that she can at everything. She has received honors from the Dr. Mac J. Williams Academic Excellence Award, the National Society of High School Scholars and this

year became a member of The Boca Ciega High School’s chapter of the Science National Honor Society.

In an effort to become a well-rounded person, Nicole became active in sports and community service. She was a member of the junior varsity soccer team for two years and then played varsity soccer for one year.

When she wasn’t on the soccer field, she spent time volunteering at St. Anthony’s Hospital, Child’s Park YMCA, Clothes to Kids, Suncoast Hospice and the Pediatric Health Care Alliance.

Graduating from the Center for Wellness and Medical Professions program at Boca Ciega, she’s looking forward to pursuing



Nicole Richardson

a career in the medical field. Her future plans are to study biology on a pre-med track and attend medical school to become a dermatologist.

Nicole is the daughter of John and Athena Richardson.

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# COMMUNITY NEWS

## Education is the key

BY DEXTER MCCREE  
Feature Writer

ST. PETERSBURG – Education has always been an important aspect in the life of Loretta Snow and it continues to be as important to her today as it did years ago.

It stands to reason that she has received a Bachelor's Degree in Human Development with a concentration in Creative Arts from Eckerd College. The world is changing and if she is to change with it, she will need to remain competitive and knowledgeable.

"I have grown to believe that education is the key to freedom from oppression. It has paved the way for many concepts that were instilled and taught to me from a very young age," she said.

Snow believes that education is more powerful than some might believe. She said it develops personal growth, improves quality of life and can make dreams come true. It is also essential in order to be successful economically and socially.

She's found the benefits of education to be endless, which is why she plans to attend Webster University in August. There she will pursue a Master's Degree in Family and Child Play Therapy.

In 10 years, her plan is to have her own financially secured business and a partnership with social service and mental health programs where she can offer pro bono services to indigent persons in critical need of therapy.

"I will also be able to assist children, who have suffered some type of trauma, express their feelings due to lack of vocabulary through play therapy, since play is the universal language for



Loretta Snow

children," said Snow. "We don't have enough of these services for the demands of this population of people."

Snow has spent more than 30 years providing counseling and case management services to diverse populations of men and women with substance abuse and homelessness.

The exact moment when she knew she had a gift for counseling and providing case management services was in 1988. She had just been employed at Horizon Hospital as a mental health technician. This was the nearest mental health hospital in the Pinellas County community.

There her skills were developed with the assistance of Psychoanalyst Dr. Eugene Crone. This development motivated Snow to continue her education and she enrolled in a License Practical Nursing Program.

Once she became an LPN, she obtained em-

ployment at St. Anthony's Hospital as a psychiatric nurse and eventually moved on to Operation Par where she cased managed 137 men and provided them with aftercare services.

"I loved working with people who are in need of empowerment. Assisting people in navigating through difficulties in their lives is something that I'm extremely passionate about," said Snow.

The world is changing and Snow is educating herself to change with it. When she is successful in opening her practice following graduate school, she will be able to help others on a larger scale.

Snow is an inspiration to anyone who is thinking about furthering their education and advancing in their careers.

To reach Dexter McCree, email [dmccree@theweeklychallenger.com](mailto:dmccree@theweeklychallenger.com)

## Erica is Still striving and achieving

BY DEXTER MCCREE  
Feature Writer

ST. PETERSBURG – Erica Still has a belief that nothing good comes easy in life. If you want something bad enough then you will go out and get it. Her personal motto: The change that you want to see in the world all begins with you, so go for it. She encourages everyone to invest themselves into the people that did the same for them and to not be afraid to give back.

Erica is positioning herself to do quite a lot of giving back. A recent graduate of The Boca Ciega High School in the Center for Wellness and Medical Professions Program, she finished with a 4.0 weighted grade point average.

Erica is a dreamer and hard worker. She just finished high school and already has her sight set on a doctorate degree in physical therapy. Adhering to the voice of her teachers, family and coaches, she took on the attitude that school comes first and anything that you do outside of that is second. She was reminded to enjoy what she does and when it gets hard, stick with it.

"Erica has grown into a remarkable young lady. She shows compassion and kindness in all she does," stated school counselor Nancy Stevens. "She is always considerate of others. She is engaged in both school and community activities that allow her to make a positive impact in the lives of others."

At Boca Ciega, Erica made a tremendous impact. She was the First Battalion Commander responsible for about 300 cadets in the Army JROTC program. She ran varsity track and field and was on the cheerleading team where she was selected to the Pinellas South County All-star Cheerleading Team.

In the community, she was a part of the AKAdemy Exquisite Gems program, Expressions of Praise



Erica Still

(Southside Tabernacle Baptist Church Dance Ministry), mentor/volunteer at Bear Creek Elementary and a member of the Kali Kali Dance Company.

"Erica's personality is contagious. She is a self-starter who is always organized and focused. Her high energy and spirit is infectious and makes her a natural leader both inside and outside of the classroom," said mentor Yolanda McGill-Fintak.

In addition to her strong academics, athletic prowess and community involvement, Erica is a terrific dancer. One of her great dance moments took place when she traveled with a group to dance with Debbie Allen at the Debbie Allen Dance Academy in Los Angeles where she also met Denzel Washington, Phylicia Rashad and Stevie Wonder!

With her many involvements, juggling her schedule was challenging.

"One of my biggest challenges was balancing school with other extracurricular and community activities that I'm involved in while also maintaining good

health and wellness with injuries," said Erica.

Overcoming and managing those challenges meant staying up late and waking up early in the morning to finish homework. She took homework to practices and talked to her teachers and coaches to make sure they were all on the same page.

"I also had to listen to my body and tell myself when to slow down," she said. "Keeping me organized with practice schedules and assignments was tough."

Erica will attend Florida A&M University and major in pre-physical therapy. While in college, she aims to join the FAMU Connection, run for Miss Freshman and get involved with the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority.

Ten years from now, look for this dynamic personality to be the physical therapist helping kids become more comfortable and successful in their school work and athletics.

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# COMMUNITY NEWS

## Failure teaches valuable lessons!

**BY DEXTER MCCREE**  
*Feature Writer*

ST. PETERSBURG –For Marissa Stubbs, failing is a part of learning and growing. Such has been the philosophy of the 2017 graduate of The Boca Ciega High School.

She indicates that as she goes throughout life, she will always remember that success comes from failure and obstacles will arise because without struggle there is no strength.

As a young woman of faith and a professed believer of Christ, Marissa’s faith encourages her that God will take her to many places in life, some of which she had never dreamed would become her reality.

She recalled the first time she realized that fail-

ure is inevitable. It was in her junior year when she first started to take the ACT.

“As a student, I’ve always had test anxiety and this specific test brought on so much stress, it was unbearable,” said Marissa.

Since the ACT determines college readiness, she studied constantly. Feeling pretty confident, she felt she only missed one or two. Finally, the results were in, and she couldn’t believe her eyes.

“I viewed my results only to see my true shortcomings. Looking at my results, I know it couldn’t have been true,” she said. “I was looking at a screen that told me I did not pass my ACT. In that very moment self-doubt came about and a sense of insecurity arose.”

For weeks, Marissa

dwelled on the fact that she was a high school junior still trying to pass the ACT. Her faith could not fail her now. This is only a test!

Stubbs was actively involved in AVID Leadership, freshman and sophomore class clubs and the peer-tutoring program. She was active in the AKA AKAdeMy, the Young Ladies of Christian Character, the Fellowship Christian Club and a slew of other activities.

In sports, she played middle hitter for the Lady Pirates Volleyball team where she led the team to a district championship in her senior year, and academically she held onto a 3.5 grade point average.

Her positive mindset and involvement in clubs and programs helped to build her confidence, but

her ACT score tore down her self-esteem.

“My mentality changed the day I started to live up to my full potential. Whenever things went wrong in my life I would feel pity for myself,” said Marissa. “Pity held me back, and at one point in my life, I let it. Once I saw my full potential I knew that passing this test wouldn’t be as hard as the first time.”

She was correct. Marissa passed the test and is preparing to attend Florida A & M University where she plans to major in mass communication/journalism. In 10 years, she hopes to be interning at a television network while building her own media empire.

From that junior year experience, Marissa learned that success



**Marissa Stubbs**

doesn’t always come on the first try, but is a highway with many bumps, detours and U-turns. She realized that failure is a teaching tool and one of the most valuable lessons one can learn.

Marissa is the daughter of Felicia Kennedy and Emanuel Stubbs.

To reach Dexter McCree, email [dmccree@theweekly-challenger.com](mailto:dmccree@theweekly-challenger.com)

## From swarming butterflies to graduation

**BY DEXTER MCCREE**  
*Feature Writer*

ST. PETERSBURG –Tiara Trueblood is now a 2017 graduate of Gibbs High School, but four years ago she was a shy, 14-year-old freshman. Her first day of high school was nerve-racking. While walking through the halls, she had butterflies swarming in her stomach as she pondered if the school was too big for her to find her classes.

She wondered if she’d make friends or be alone, but fortunately, that didn’t matter to her as much as keeping up with her studies and making the good grades that she had been accustomed to.

“I was always known as a goody two shoes, even in

middle school. After the first semester of my ninth grade year, it was pretty easy for me because most of the information from middle school stayed with me when I got to high school,” said Tiara.

She started off strong and ended the same way. At the start of her sophomore year, the same nervous feelings were back. These feelings provoked her to try out for cheerleading and volleyball.

Although cheerleading didn’t work out, Tiara was confident that she would make the volleyball team since she had played for the Walter Fuller Recreational Center for three years. Not only did she make the team, she became captain.

“That was a big accom-

plishment for me. Volleyball is my favorite sport. I have now been playing for about seven years, and loved it ever since.”

Tiara loved volleyball so much that her mother had to remind her that homework came before anything else.

“She is my biggest fan.”

Tiara felt that her junior year of high school was most important because these grades would be the first grades that a college or university would receive and that would determine where she would attend, so she worked extra hard.

In her senior year, she decided to blossom out and hung out with friends and joined more school activities.

“I figured that since it

would be my last year that I would make the best of it.”

Her senior year went by rapidly. She felt like just a few years ago she was in elementary school and now she’s a 17-year-old educated young lady who will be successful in life and will surely inspire others to success.

Tiara figured out that high school wasn’t nearly as difficult as she had made it out to be. She was more prepared than she thought.

“I want to be someone who my family is proud to say they raised, a successful young lady.”

Tiara looks back on her 12th-grade year and remembers “all the fun times, struggles, friendships and teachers that help me along the way.”

What seemed like a



**Tiara Trueblood**

long road has now come to an end. The swarming butterflies that she had experienced gave way to her desire to meet higher levels of expectations and academic excellence.

To reach Dexter McCree, email [dmccree@theweekly-challenger.com](mailto:dmccree@theweekly-challenger.com)

## Comfort in the memories

**BY DEXTER MCCREE**  
*Feature Writer*

ST. PETERSBURG –Every year, the first day of school was memorable for Trajan Trueblood because his mother would walk him and his sister to class.

When Trajan got to the fifth grade, however, he figured now that he was older the parental escort service would cease, but it didn’t. Mom was right there making sure that her babies got to where they needed to be. That’s parenting at its finest; although, Trajan wouldn’t have minded a little slack.

Time eventually lent itself to end the parent drop off, now an official 2017 graduate of Gibbs High School. He has many child-

hood memories, ones that he will cherish forever.

“I remember attending Bay Point Elementary School where I went from kindergarten to fifth grade,” said Trajan.

During his fifth grade year, he was chosen to participate in the 5000 Role Models mentoring group, which helped keep him on his path to success.

Over that summer he decided to play football. Although football was not the first sport that he played, it was his favorite.

“I remember in my first football game, my coach told me to run down the sideline towards my mom,” recalled Trajan. “Once I got the ball, surprisingly that run turned into my first touchdown! After that, I re-

alized that I was pretty good at football so I developed a passion for it.”

Entering his freshman year, he was a little nervous because in middle school he was taller than most people, but that wasn’t the case in high school. His fears were soon calmed when he walked into his Algebra 1 class and met Ms. Corbett, his second mom.

“I remember when I’d talk a little too much she would always say: ‘You want me to call your mom? You know she said that I could call her at any time, right.’”

Ms. Corbett was a motivating and helped Trajan succeed. With her encouragement, he maintained a 3.8 grade point average in his first year of high school.

He was nominated for The Take Stock in Children scholarship, which has a minimum requirement of a 2.0 grade point average.

A few weeks being in the program he began meeting with his mentor Dr. Miller.

“Dr. Miller inspired and motivated me to do well just as my own family would. My family and Dr. Miller have encouraged me to strive for greatness and that anything is possible.”

Trajan joined the AVID program in his freshman year, which also proved to be very instrumental in his success.

In his sophomore year, he played junior varsity football and made a lot of new friends that stuck with him through his varsity years.



**Trajan Trueblood**

Trajan plans to attend St. Augustine University in the fall and major in business and engineering. He has been accepted to be a preferred walk-on at the Division II football team.

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# COMMUNITY NEWS

## As Gay as They Were Black

The Harlem Renaissance at the Dr. Carter G. Woodson Museum

BY SHEREE L. GREER  
*Contributor*

ST. PETERSBURG – June is a curious month for African Americans, particularly those who identify as members of the LGBTQ community. Consider an identity constructed of parts. I celebrate freedom and survival in remembering Juneteenth, lauding the bravery and resilience of my ancestors who contributed to my freedom as a black woman. Yet, June is also Pride Month, a hallmark of events centered on celebrating my freedom and survival as a lesbian woman.

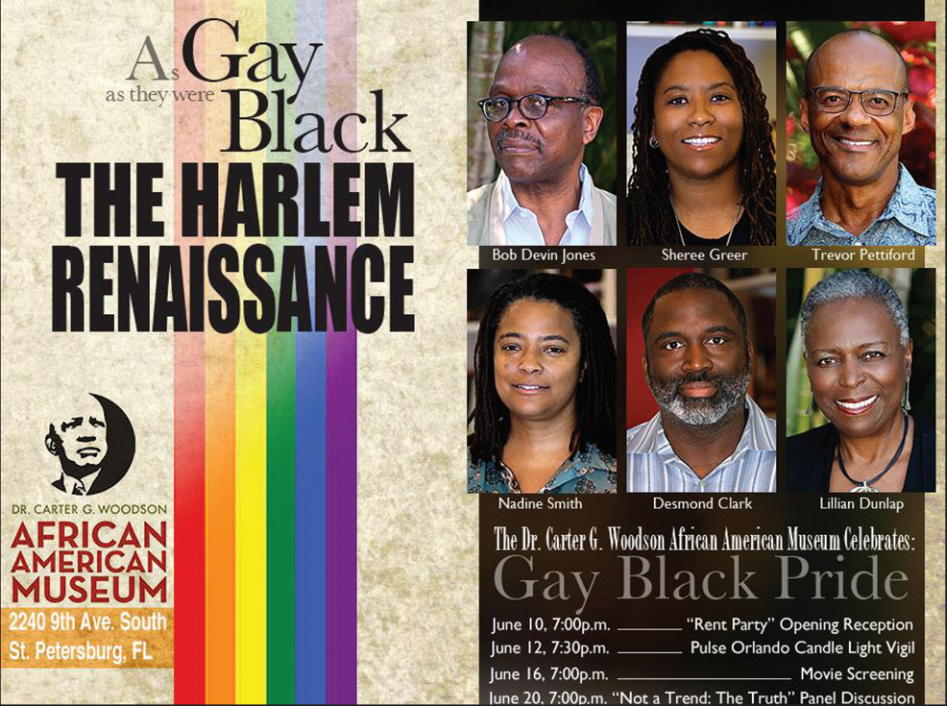
These parts are many times at odds with each other. I remember Bayard Rustin, central organizer of the March on Washington in 1963, whose sexuality was deemed a liability even as he orchestrated the hallmark protest of the Civil Rights Movement. In an interview in “American Poetry Review,” I recall Audre Lorde, famed poet, writer and philosopher, saying, “there’s always someone asking you to underline



Sheree L. Greer

one piece of yourself—because that’s the piece they need to key into; they want to dismiss everything else.” Many St. Pete Pride events lack necessary diversity. Conversely, many black events regarding community building relegate the black LGBTQ community to the shadows, subjugating us to live “double lives” as Linda Villarosa wrote in her

2011 article “The Gay Harlem Renaissance.” Imagine then, an opportunity for black LGBTQ individuals to find solace and support in ways that acknowledge the complete us, our whole selves. As if answering a call, The Dr. Carter G. Woodson African American History Museum is creating and curating that very opportunity. The Woodson



Museum’s “As Gay as They Were Black: The Harlem Renaissance” exhibit highlights the oft-erased and ignored legacy of black, LGBTQ artists of the Harlem Renaissance and celebrates local pillars of the black LGBTQ community in Tampa Bay. The Pride month events at the museum opens with a Harlem Renaissance-themed “Rent Party” featuring local

poets and writers this Saturday, June 10 and continues with a candlelight prayer vigil for the victims of the Pulse Night Club massacre on Monday, June 12. An interactive movie night Friday, June 16 and a necessary community-based panel and conversation entitled “Not a Trend: The Truth” will round out the events Tuesday, June 20. These events will

hopefully incite conversations that are both difficult and encouraging, both public and private, but the conversations are overdue and a more expansive understanding of love and identity are needed now more than ever. Visit [www.woodson-museum.org](http://www.woodson-museum.org) or call the museum at 727-323-1104 for more information.

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# COMMUNITY NEWS

## Sister Circle gathers to bless new SPC President Dr. Tonjua Williams

ST. PETERSBURG — Just one day after the board of St. Petersburg College (SPC) anointed her the seventh president of St. Petersburg College, Dr. Tonjua Williams was welcomed into an intimate celebration with a dozen and a half women who'd been her quiet prayer warriors for months, ever since Dr. Bill Law announced his resignation from the post in November of last year.

Informally dubbed the "Sister Circle," these women knew Dr. Williams had diligently trained for nearly a decade toward the possibility of one day assuming the presidency of a post-secondary institution.

They knew she was imminently qualified for such a post.

What they didn't know was whether Dr. Williams would make it to the top of a list of dozens of candidates of like caliber, who would vie in the months-long process to select SPC's new leader.

On May 31, the sisters' prayers were answered, along with scores of others who

hoped for history.

One of the Sister Circle founders Nikki Capehart, director of the city's Urban Affairs division and long-time volunteer leader of the region's minority business community, suggested the group rally behind Dr. Williams' bid for the top job at SPC.

"So many community advocates supported Dr. Williams, and we were delighted to quickly bring together some of the women who walked the journey with her," Capehart proudly noted.

Together with Dr. Williams' church sisters at Mt Zion Progressive, members of the National Council of Negro Women, and other closest supporters, the group gathered for an elegant "blessing session" June 1 at St. Pete Beach's Hotel Zamora.

Dr. Linda Hogans of SPC offered an opening prayer sprinkled with tears of joy. Then the new president sat with sister professionals in velvet chairs arranged in a circle to share some of her personal testimony.

By the end of the two-hour fellowship, the sentiment was unanimous:

"We must continue this!" said Pinellas County School Board member Rene Flowers, who'd submitted a lengthy letter of endorsement of Dr. Williams.

"Sisters supporting sisters is an energy we need more of," said Deborah Figgs-Sanders, who recently left her role as executive director of the Childs Park YMCA to launch her own consulting firm, Personal Agenda LLC. She will take a lead in hosting the next Sister Circle session.

Octogenarian Dr. Yvonne Scruggs-Leftwich was in town for the occasion after recently taking part in the National Black Women's Leadership Conference in Washington, DC. She pressed the group to "continue doing this! Dr. Williams will need the broad-based support of community and city leaders to excel in her role." Dr. Scruggs-Leftwich attended with her St. Petersburg-based assistant Geraldina Ward.

Tahisia Scantling, CEO of Crossroads Consulting and a senior business consultant with the Tampa Bay Black Business Investment Corpora-

tion made note, "We don't often share in moments like this. I was deeply honored to be part of this network."

Also on hand for the event were Theresa Jones, retired director of Community Affairs for the City of St. Petersburg; Keisha Bell, a practicing attorney and board member with the Foundation for a Healthy St. Petersburg; Dr. Katurah Jenkins-Hall, a psychologist, president of Legacy 56, and also a board member with the Foundation; Loretta Calvin, chairperson of Impact St Pete and CEO of Monroe Strategic Business Solutions; Gwen Hicks, Dr. Williams' long-time executive assistant at the college; Dr. Faye Golden and renowned artist Ya LaFord.

Ever modest, Capehart recognized fellow Sister Circle Founders as catalysts. "Keisha Bell, Ya LaFord, Dr. Tonjua Williams and Gypsy Gallardo put their hearts into supporting the concept that 'you are us and we are you.' We want more women inspired to dream and to do it by lifting one another up."



Nikki Capehart



Dr. Tonjua Williams

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# COMMUNITY NEWS

## 2017 Head Start Advantage Awards and Awareness Luncheon

BY FRANK DROUZAS  
Staff Writer

ST. PETERSBURG – Lutheran Service Florida held its 2017 Head Start Advantage Awards and Awareness Luncheon at the Coliseum last month. Founded as a summer program in 1965 to aid children of low-income households, Head Start and Early Head Start programs today serve over a million children nationwide. They aim to provide comprehensive services to children ages and social services for their families.

Cryst Banks, national voiceover artist who has lent his talents to the National Museum of African American History and Culture, Coca-Cola and BET, served as Master of Ceremony for the annual event.

“We believe that every child deserves the best start she or he can have,” Banks said, “no matter their circumstances.”

Mayor Rick Kriseman noted that the Head Start program is one of the longest-running programs in the country that addresses poverty in communities, adding that he considers organizations such as Head Start and Lutheran Services partners with the City of St. Pete.

“That means everyone,” he said. “Not just the leadership; each and every one of you who vol-

unteers and works for these organizations, you all are a part of our city family as well.”

Wanda Minick, executive director of Florida Head Start pointed out that children “are our greatest resource,” adding that Head Start helps them reach their full potential regardless of a family’s income, race or ethnic background.

“This event is devoted to each and every one of you,” she told those in attendance, “for your continued commitment to early childhood education, helping prepare these children for a healthy, happy and successful future.”

Established in 1982, Lutheran Services Florida has refugee and immigration programs throughout the southeast and central Florida. In addition to Head Start and Early Head Start, its programs include Child Care Food, Disaster Response, Sexual Abuse Treatment, Counseling and many others.

Louis A. Finney, Jr., executive vice president of LSF and president of Florida Head Start, pointed out that one aim of LSF and Head Start is to close the achievement gap in young students. Ricardo Davis, executive director of Tampa Bay Head Start, noted that LSF acquired the Pinellas Head Start program in 2013,



which funds early childhood education for 1,600 children.

“The program serves the most underserved communities throughout Pinellas County,” Davis said. “Twenty-five centers from south St. Pete to Tarpon Springs, and more than 350 employees—most of which come from the very same communities we serve.”

In order to effectively close the achievement gap, he explained, “We must begin early. We must begin before our children get into kindergarten or the public school system.” Scholars from Jordan

Park Head Start closed the morning out with a spirited song and dance that made audience members get out their seats and cheer.

### 2017 Awards

Nestor Hombrar, Father of the Year  
Cheko Carter, Unsung Hero  
Katina Boozy, Top Female Parent Volunteer  
Thomas Hinson, Top Male Parent Volunteer  
Yolanda Corey, honored for logging in more than 100 volunteer hours  
Muhammad Abdur-Rahim, honored for logging in more than 100 volunteer hours.



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# COMMUNITY NEWS

## The 2nd annual Missionary Society's Evening in Red

BY RAVEN JOY SHONEL  
Staff Writer

ST. PETERSBURG – “We are going to give God some praise,” said Sis. Janis Sanders as she opened The Rock of Jesus Missionary Baptist Church’s second annual Missionary Society Evening In Red last month. With the theme of “Women Walking in Destiny,” the afternoon saw women presiding, praying, teaching and giving God the glory.

“It’s a wonderful thing to see women in red,” said Rev. Frank Peterman, Jr., senior pastor of The Rock of Jesus. “When I think about red I think about

the blood of Jesus. I think about the blood that he shed for us.”

Held in the sanctuary at The Rock of Jesus, 3940 18th Ave. S, missionaries from churches all over the city were represented in the program such as Traveler’s Rest MBC, First Baptist Institutional, Old Pleasant Grove and United for Christ. They gathered to encourage one another to spread the Word of God.

“We are called as the daughters of Zion, as women of God to point the dying world to Jesus Christ,” said Rev. Inella Parris from All Nations Church of God by Faith. “As we do what he tells us

to do, somebody on the outside will say, ‘I want they got.’”

Rev. Parris said as Christians we are called as ambassadors of God to point people to Jesus Christ.

Rev. Dee Shepard from The Rock Of Jesus pointed out that oftentimes Christians do not focus on mission work.

“As Christians, it is the absolute cornerstone of who we are,” said Rev. Shepard. “God will have no one left behind. In order to get the message to them, He has to rely on us.”

She said giving our lives to Christ comes with a price. “It comes with a



responsibility and accountability.”

The Spirit of Tampa Bay Choir had the church swaying as they sung, uplifting the congregation. Soloist Phoebe Quarterman brought down the

house with her soulful voice and the Glorious Praise Pantomime had the whole church in unison giving glory to God.

“Missionary women and missionary men, take this word that these sis-

ters have given us and plant it in your hearts,” said Sis. Sanders. “If you don’t know Jesus then you need to get to know him. If you do know him, you need to hold on to him.”



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To learn about the Friends of Johnson Library visit www.fojbl.org

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955 20th Street South • St. Petersburg, FL 33712  
(727) 894-4311  
Email: [info@mzprogressive.org](mailto:info@mzprogressive.org)  
Website: [www.mzprogressive.org](http://www.mzprogressive.org)

Sunday Worship Services.....7:45 a.m. & 10:00 a.m.  
Sunday School.....9:00 a.m.  
Wednesday Mid-Day Bible Study .....Noon - 12:30 p.m.  
Wednesday Prayer Service.....6:00 p.m.  
Wednesday Bible Study .....6:30 p.m.

Youth Chapel Services - 921 20th Street South  
Sunday Worship Service .....10:00 a.m.  
Wednesday Small Group Bible Study .....6:30 p.m.

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to reach the lost with the gospel of Jesus Christ.*



Rev. Louis M. Murphy Sr.  
Senior Pastor

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3144 Third Avenue South,  
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Phone: 727-323-7518

---

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Rev. Rickey L. Houston,  
Pastor

Sunday Worship Service .....10:15 a.m.  
Sunday School .....9:00 a.m.  
Teen Summit (Wednesday) .....7:00 p.m.  
Bible Study (Wednesday) .....7:00 p.m.

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Sr. - Pastor

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Sunday School.....9:30 a.m.  
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Bible Study (Tuesday) .....7:00 p.m.  
Baptist Training Union (Sunday) ..4:00 p.m.

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Thursdays: 6:30 pm Prayer & Healing Service



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Bible Study 11:00 a.m. & 7:30 p.m.  
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Pastor  
Claude Williams

**Schedule of Services**  
Sunday Worship\*  
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Friday Prayer -7:00 p.m.  
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Monday Evening Bible Class .....7:00 p.m.  
Wednesday Morning Bible Class .....10:00 a.m.  
Wednesday Evening Bible Class .....7:00 p.m.

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Rev. Manuel Sykes

**SERVICES**  
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8:30 a.m.  
Sunday Worship Service:  
9:30 a.m.  
Bible Study: Wednesdays  
at 6:30 p.m.



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### Schedule of Services

**Church School ..... 9:30 a.m.**  
**Morning Worship ..... 10:45 a.m.**  
**Baptist Training Union..... 5:00 p.m.**  
**Prayer Meeting and Bible Study**  
**Wednesday 7:00 p.m.**



Rev. Brian K. Brown

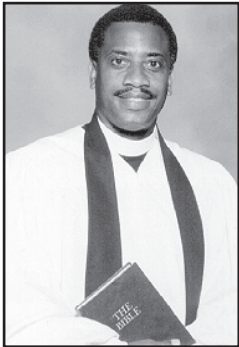
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9:30 a.m. Sunday School (First Sunday Only)  
Sunday School 9:15 a.m. / Devotion 10:15 a.m.  
Praise & Worship 10:20 a.m. / Worship Services 10:30 a.m.  
Saints of Prayer - Monday 12:00 noon  
Weekly Bible Study - Tuesday 6:30 p.m.  
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Dr. John A. Evans, Pastor

### WORSHIP EXPERIENCES

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Sunday School.....9:30 a.m.  
Wednesday .....Noonday Wednesday in the Word and Bread of Life  
7:00 p.m. Prayer and Wednesday in the Word  
7:00 p.m. Youth Enrichment

*Our Mission: Friendship Missionary Baptist Church is a family of believers in Christ, reaching out to the world, preaching the gospel to the unsaved and teaching the saved to serve by demonstrating the Love of Christ.*

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# CHURCH NEWS

## Friendship MBC

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May at the Ship  
Join US at "The Ship" at the 7:45 am or 10:45 am Worship Service, a Real place to be for these Real times

89th Church Anniversary is heading your way in June.

Pastor is asking the Adult Mass Choir and Male Chorus to serve on all Sunday Services and the Week Night Service:

Thursday, June 8 First Sunday Ushers - 7 p.m. Pastor Brian K. Brown, St. Mark MBC

Culmination Service  
Guests: June 11 Second Sunday Ushers Both Services

Sunday, at 7:45 am - REV. ROBERT A. VINSON, PASTOR, Faith Memorial MBC, St. Petersburg, FL

Sunday, at 10:45 am - DR. HENRY J. LYONS, SENIOR PASTOR, New Salem MBC, Temple Terrace, FL

June 12, 2017 thru June 16, 5:30 PM UNTIL 7:30 PM - VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL (VBS), see Sharon Wilson, Christian Education Ministry Leader.

Saturday, June 17, at 4 pm - Women's Ministry Annual "Friendship's Father's Day Dinner", all Fathers of the Ship are asked to RSVP Sign Up, which will be located in the Atrium on the Information Table, Sis. Cynthia Pierce, Ministry Leader, "Father's

Day" Appreciation will be on Sunday, June 18, during Both Worship Services, See Gale Jenkins, if you are taking out an Ad for the Annual Father's Day Booklet.

Saturday, June 24, from 12 - 4 pm - 89th Church Anniversary "Cookout" Celebration, a Church / Community "FREE" event which will be located on Church Campus.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 5, 2017 AT 7:00 PM - "WEDNESDAY NIGHT LIVE," A FULL WORSHIP SERVICE WITH COMMUNION SERVED, THE PASTOR IS ASKING THE ADULT MASS CHOIR AND MALE CHORUS, ALONG WITH THE 2ND SUNDAY USHERS TO SERVE. THE LOVE FELLOWSHIP DINNER WILL BE SPONSORED BY THE TRIBE OF ZEBULUN (JUNE), SIS. TIFFANY HENRY, CAPTAIN AND TRIBE OF JOSEPH (JULY), SISTER BESSIE DAVENPORT, CAPTAIN.

NATIONAL BAPTIST CONVENTION, USA, INC.

112TH ANNUAL SESSION - CONGRESS - ST. LOUIS, MO JUNE 19-23, 2017

WEST COAST BAPTIST DISTRICT ASSOCIATION

THE WEST COAST NEWSLETTER IS OUT, GET YOUR COPY TODAY, ALL WEST COAST CHURCHES SHOULD HAVE THEM, YOU WILL NEED TO GET ALL THE INFORMATION ABOUT WHAT IS UPCOMING AT WEST COAST.

CONGRESS - HOST

HOTEL INFORMATION: Reservation cut-off date is, Monday, June 27, 2017 - Staybridge Suites-St. Petersburg, Downtown, 940 5th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, 33705. We have secured 20 studio suites at \$119.00 per night, July 17-21, 2017. You may also call (855) 914-1821, use Booking Code WCB (West Coast Baptist Association). Minister Sharon Saulsby, Dean of the Congress. The Host Church: Friendship Missionary Baptist Church, Dr. John A. Evans, Sr., Senior Pastor/Moderator, 3300 31st Street South, St. Petersburg, Florida 33712.

"THE SHIP" won't sail without YOU! For additional information on any of the announcements, please contact us by the following methods: Friendship Missionary Baptist Church, 3300 31st St. S., St. Petersburg, FL 33712 Church Office: 727-906-8300 E-Mail: [fmbc3300@verizon.net](mailto:fmbc3300@verizon.net)

Now "Live Streaming": Visit Our Website: [www.fmbctheship.net](http://www.fmbctheship.net) Visit Our Facebook page Visit West Coast Baptist District Association Website: [www.expericencethecoast.com](http://www.expericencethecoast.com)

Need a ride to church? Call our Transportation Ministry - (727) 906-8300 - Mon. - Fri. from 9 am - 3 pm.

"Remember and pray for our men and women in uniform as well as our veterans this new year!"

## Bethel A.M.E. Church

You are cordially invited to the Mary Ann Jones Woman's Missionary Society "Morning In White" on June 11 at the 7:30 a.m. worship service at the historic Bethel A.M.E. Church, 912 3rd Ave N, St. Petersburg.

God's messenger will be our very own Sis. Odessa Banks.



## The Rock of Jesus MBC

Pastor Frank W. Peterman, Jr. along with the anniversary committee, and the entire ROCK CHURCH FAMILY EXTEND AN INVITATION TO OUR 15TH CHURCH ANNIVERSARY.

THEME: THE DES-

TINY OF THE CHURCH

Acts 2: 46-47

DATE: JUNE 11-18, 2017

The community is welcome to come and worship with the church that expresses agappa love, greets you with open arms and a smile. Help us celebrate this

decade and a half in our church life, praising God, building his Kingdom here on earth, evangelizing the Child's park community, as the Lord commanded his disciples. Need a ride, please call the church's phone 727-327-0015.

## St. Mark MBC

The St. Mark Missionary Baptist Church, its pastor, the Reverend Brian K. Brown, its official staff of Deacons and Trustees, and the entire congregation, extends to the community at large, its wish that there would be an overflowing of God's blessings upon their lives. St. Mark is grounded in a Christ-centered doctrine that has as its central core, the belief that we are a haven of hope, help, and healing for a lost world hungry and thirsty for the word of God. At St. Mark, we as a body of believers are Christians willing to work and partner in unity, praising God for the awesome gift of His son, Jesus Christ.

Events for June

Jun 11 - Celebrating Reverend Brian K. Brown's 22nd Pastoral Anniversary during the 11:45 a.m. morning worship. The speaker: Bishop B.

Franklin Browne of Hattiesburg, MS. Theme-"A Servant Worthy... Lord Plant My Feet on Higher Ground". Scripture reference: 1 Timothy 5:17.

Jun 17 - Health Care Ministry of St. Mark sponsoring a CPR and First Aide Class at St. Mark at 9:30 a.m. Class open to members and the community at large.

Jun 18 - Church Outing-Friendship M. B. C. for their Church's Anniversary. Service at 3:00 p.m.

Jun 24 - Y.A.M.S. Present Cupcakes & Conversation for all Middle and High School aged youth of St. Mark. Time: 11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

Jun 25 - Destination Graduation to honor High School and College Graduates during the 10:45 a.m. morning worship.

Sunday school held for both children and adults of

all ages. Sunday school starts each Sunday morning at 9:30 a.m. All are invited to come out and join us.

Young Adult Ministry (YAMS) Every Sunday: 9:30 a.m.

Children and Youth Ministry Meetings are held every Tuesday at 6:00 p.m. Children in the community are welcomed to join us.

Mime/Praise Dance Rehearsal on Sundays: 2:00-4:00 p.m.

Sunday School Teachers' Meeting is held every Tuesday: 7:00 p.m.

Senior Hour of Power Bible Study is held every Wednesday: 9:30 a.m.

Prayer Meeting and Bible Study every Wednesday evening: 7:00 p.m.

Children Youth Ministry Bible Study 1st & 3rd Wednesday of each month: 7:30 p.m.



## Pastor's Corner

BY PASTOR KISHA JORDAN  
City of Refuge Christian Church

### That still small voice

What a great and powerful God we serve. I give Him all of the praise, the glory and all of the honor. He is faithful and there is none like Him. Trust me when I tell you, I've searched all over, I've searched high and low and still I could not find anyone like Him. In fact, I couldn't even find anyone that even comes close to Him. He's just that good!

Again, I am sitting in my office thinking about the goodness of God. I recalled a time in my life wherein I really needed an answer from God. I was faced with a difficult decision and I really needed to hear the answer that God had for me. I did not want a man's opinion or to know what someone else would do if they were in my shoes. I needed to hear from God.

I remembered saying to myself "Maybe God will speak to me through a prophet or an evangelist or a pastor. Maybe His answer to me will be revealed in a loud voice of someone screaming, shouting or some other expressive action. Maybe His answer to me will be manifested in the quietness of the night." I was like God, "I need to hear from you. I know your voice. I'm in a very low place in my life and you alone are the lifter of my head." [see Psalms 3:3]

The truth of the matter was regardless of the method in which God would speak, I just wanted Him to speak to me. I had just

lost my best friend, my own mother. She had gained her angel wings and gone home to be with God in His home in the sky. My mother was my heart. She was my world and now that she was gone I felt broken and bewildered.

All the people that I knew, even those who are Christians that I knew, simply did not have the words that I needed to hear. Needing desperately to hear from God, I remember closing myself up and diving into His word. I knew then, just as I know now, in the word of God there is peace, comfort, guidance, and healing.

It was in this time of studying, praying and crying out to God, that God began to move. Ironically, His voice didn't come through someone preaching or yelling at me, it was a still small voice [see 1 Kings 19:12]. His voice ministered to my hurt, to my pain, to my brokenness, and it healed me. For this I give Him praise.

Dear reader, I stopped by this pastor's corner to tell you that still small voice still speaking today. It's not always in the loud noise. Sometimes it's in that small still voice. It's small, but it's mighty and it will change your life forever. Listen for the voice of God in your life.

I pray that you receive this word. Stay Blessed. Stay focused. In Jesus name, Amen.



## Pastor's Corner

BY REV. DR. DORAL R. PULLEY,  
SPIRITUAL LEADER  
Unity Temple of Truth Church

### Seeing the Sabbath from a new perspective

The Sabbath is a biblical principle that existed before the Law, during the Law and after the Law. In creation, we see a divine pattern: manifesting and making for six days and resting on the seventh day. The seventh day was a me of rest and it represented the end of a cycle of creation. One of the Ten Commandments that Moses received from God was "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy (Exodus 20:8)." The Hebrews built their lives around the observance of the Sabbath. We are now no longer under the Law but under grace and truth which came through Jesus Christ (John 1:14).

The Pharisees, who strict interpreters of the Law, confronted Jesus Christ about his disciples plucking ears of corn on the Sabbath. Jesus Christ demonstrated a higher consciousness through his response to their query. First, he gave them a biblical example of a person who did the same thing as the disciples. Just as the disciples plucked and ate ears of corn to satisfy their hunger, David ate the sacred bread from the Table of Shew-

bread to satisfy his hunger.

Secondly, he proclaimed his power by declaring that he was Lord of the Sabbath. As Lord of the Sabbath, he had a right to determine how to use the Sabbath for his benefit as opposed to his bondage. We, too, are lords of our own Sabbath and we are empowered to decide how the principles of rest and reflection best serve us (daily, weekly, etc.). How do the principles of rest and reflection incorporated in your life?

Thirdly, Jesus Christ pointed out their own inconsistencies with honoring the Sabbath by bringing to their attention that if one of their sheep were in a ditch that they would rescue the sheep on the Sabbath. Finally, Jesus Christ demonstrated the need for good works to be done, when, on the Sabbath, he healed the man with the withered hand.

It is important that we use biblical examples and spiritual principles to answer people's questions. This requires for us to study and practice these principles in our own lives so that we can be an example to others.



# COMMUNITY NEWS

## ‘Learning never stops’ *MYCROSCHOOL, from front page*

Some graduates may go to college, some may go into the military while others may go straight into the workforce, Humphries pointed out, but he stressed that no matter which path they choose to take, “learning never stops!”

In her commencement address, the Honorable Myra Scott McNary, Pinellas County Circuit Court Judge, impressed upon the graduating class the differences of the “ordinary” as opposed to the “extraordinary.”

It’s the extraordinary—the glitz, “glam” and “bling”—that people seem to latch on to these days, she said, so people live their entire lives striv-

ing for the extraordinary, yet lose sight of the ordinary.

McNary, who has held a seat on the county court for over 20 years and has won numerous professional and community awards, related her humble childhood in Alabama where she would pick blackberries and painstakingly peel entire bushels of fruits and vegetable on the porch with her grandmother in the summer and make preserves in the winter.

“But what that taught me was a work ethic,” she explained. “Meaning that we cannot despise the small things. That the ordinary always become extraordinary if you’re willing to put in the time

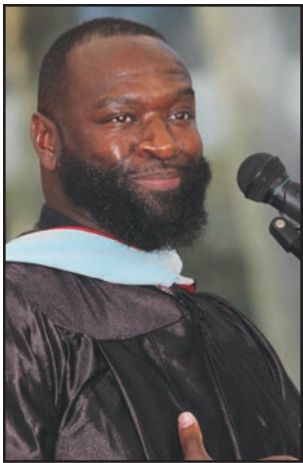
and the discipline to make it so!”

The judge also underscored the importance of making wise decisions concerning choosing one’s future companions and influences and emphasized to the graduates that they are investing in their own individual futures.

“The quality of your return,” she concluded, “will be proportionate with the investment that you put in.”

If you are a teenager or young adult looking to finish high school, log onto [www.mycroschool.org](http://www.mycroschool.org) for more information.

To reach Frank Drouzas, email [fdrouzas@theweekly-challenger.com](mailto:fdrouzas@theweekly-challenger.com)



Steven Humphries



Myra Scott McNary



Martin Humphery II

