

2021-09-16

The Weekly Challenger : 2021 : 09 : 16

The Weekly Challenger, et al

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/challenger>

Recommended Citation

The Weekly Challenger, et al, "The Weekly Challenger : 2021 : 09 : 16" (2021). *Newspaper collection*. 1288.
<https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/challenger/1288>

This is brought to you for free and open access by the The Weekly Challenger at Digital Commons @ University of South Florida. It has been accepted for inclusion in Newspaper collection by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ University of South Florida. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@usf.edu.

The Weekly Challenger

KEEPING YOU CONNECTED TO YOUR COMMUNITY

VOL. 53 NO. 02

SEPTEMBER 16 - SEPTEMBER 29, 2021

50¢

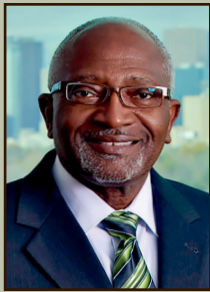
IN THIS WEEK



PAGE 4
COMMUNITY NEWS
Making an impact



PAGE 7
COMMUNITY NEWS
Isay Gulley honored



PAGE 8
COMMUNITY NEWS
Town Hall conversation

INDEX

COMMUNITY
NEWS

PAGES 2 - 11,
14

CHURCH NEWS
PAGES 12 - 13



Mayor candidate Ken Welch said his unique perspective and upbringing distinguish him from other mayors or candidates and would play heavily into his administration's focus on making sure everyone shares in the progress.

Ken Welch's vision for St. Pete

BY OSCAR PIVEN
Staff Writer

ST. PETERSBURG – As a self-described “kid from the Gas Plant” turned county commissioner turned mayoral candidate, Ken Welch has seen both the good and the bad sides of progress.

He grew up on the south side of St. Pete along 16th Street, where his grandfather's woodyard operated until it was razed to make way for the interstate. A couple of blocks north, their church was displaced in the pursuit of baseball, and his grandfather's home would give way to the 16th Street Middle School expansion.

“So, I've lived a totally different life than any mayor,” said Welch. “Those are the things I bring to the table, and everybody's a product of their experiences.”

Welch said his unique perspective and upbringing distinguish him from other mayors or candidates and would play heavily into his administration's focus on making sure everyone shares in the progress. He also plans on making himself available to talk to in the same neighborhoods that helped raise him.

“I grew up riding my bicycle all around south St. Pete, and that won't change,” said Welch. “I want to be a mayor that folks can see and talk to.”

When it comes to distinguishing his administration from the current one on policy, Welch said, “it depends on the issue.” He mentions affordable housing as the first area that he would give “more of a focus and sense of urgency.” Specifically for those that make \$19 an hour or less. Welch points out that when he was chair of the county commission, it created the Housing Trust Fund, adding that “to this day, developments are being built using those dollars.”

Welch said he wants to focus on getting more of those developments built while also partnering with organizations

See **WELCH**, page 2

Outsourcing education in Pinellas County



Goliath Davis

BY GOLIATH J. DAVIS, III, PH.D.
Contributor

ST. PETERSBURG – Rick Davis, president of COQEB (Concerned Organizations for the Quality Education of Black Students), has embarked on a series of site visits to schools in the Transformation Zone at the invitation of Dr. Wobbly. I am sure tours are offered as part of a public relations campaign to provide alternative perspectives to the recent news surrounding “The Miracle at Lakewood Elementary.”

I recently read two of a three-part series by Mark Parker in the St. Pete Catalyst that speaks in glowing terms about the “A” grade and the pathologies of the scholars and neighborhoods surrounding Lakewood.

Outsourcing is a Republican strategy touted as a means of reducing the size of government and saving money. Although I do not embrace it as a panacea for the educational issues confronting us, I wonder why the Republican members of the Pinellas County School Board are not advocating outsourcing as a solution to the district's issues.

For the sake of debate, why not outsource education in Pinellas County, given what appears to be a long-standing district failure to educate all of its scholars?

According to published reports, the miracle at Lakewood is real. It is attributable in large part to the partial outsourced work of LSI (Learning Sciences International). The district has yet to announce a strategy or timeline for replicating Lakewood's success at the other schools in the Transformation Zone.

If LSI led the initiative, what was Dr. Wobbly's role? Should we retain her position and LSI? If Dr. Wobbly is retained, can she replicate LSI's success? If the answer is yes, why didn't Melrose, Campbell Park, Maximo, Fairmont Park, and other Transformation Zone schools realize the same degree of success attributed to Lakewood?

Additionally, inasmuch as Lakewood's principal during the transformation has been promoted and transferred, is the miracle at Lakewood sustainable? And why wasn't she, the miracle worker, assigned to oversee and guide the Transformation Zone? Why not allow her to repeat her magic? All of the questions above have been posed to me and I

See **EDUCATION**, page 5

St. Pete father hopes his son's murder can spark change

BY MARK PARKER
STAFF WRITER

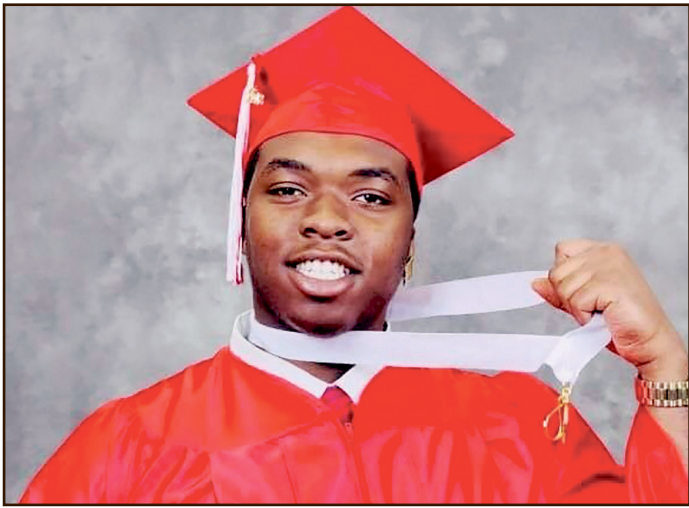
ST. PETERSBURG – After his youngest son was murdered, Maress Scott decided to make it his mission to prevent other families from having to endure the indescribable pain of losing a child.

On Sept. 17, 2019, Marquis Scott was shot and killed while riding a bicycle around his grandmother's neighborhood. After coming out of a year-long fog, Maress Scott realized his son “would expect us to do something.”

On the first anniversary of his son's death, what his family calls his “angelversary,” they decided to bring some attention to the tragedy, honor God, memorialize their son, and take a stand against gun violence.

Maress Scott decided to retrace his son's last fateful steps, from Scott's mother-in-law's house to Marquis Scott's friend's house around the corner. That is where Quis For Life was born.

“We didn't want people to forget him,” said Maress Scott. “So, we decided to start a nonprofit.”



The Annual Stop the Violence Walk in honor of Marquis Scott will begin at 7 p.m. on 19th Avenue and 24th Street South this Friday.

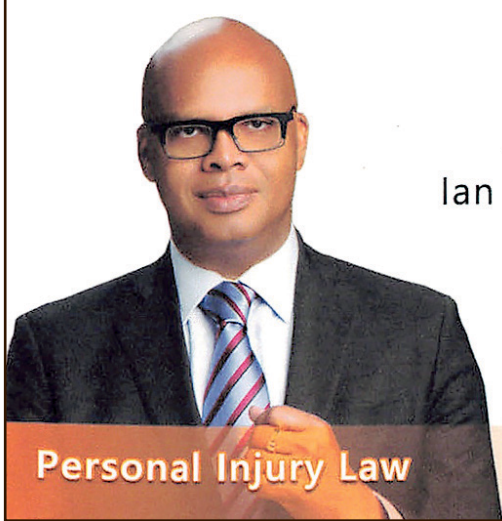
He and his wife began to speak at different events and started to combine their efforts with other programs that aim to reduce gun violence, such as Not My Son, Enough is Enough, and Hidden Voices. Scott said they were able to complete their paperwork to register as a nonprofit this year and are now waiting on final confirmation.

However, the attention brought by Scott's attempts to

memorialize his son and prevent other families from experiencing the same heartache was not all positive. He said the people that murdered his son began to taunt them through social media and rap songs. A street sign the family made in which the street name of Queensborough was changed to Quisborough was stolen, and a picture was posted of someone pointing

See **SCOTT**, page 11

We Value *Diversity* | We Value *Education* | We Value *History*
www.TheWeeklyChallenger.com • 727-896-2922



Ian Stanislaus Gómez, Esq.

2037 First Avenue North
St. Petersburg, Florida 33713
(727)895-7932
(813)877-8181

isgomez@gbyassociates.com
www.gbyassociates.com

Personal Injury Law



Are you interested in being a radio guest?

Radio Personality Princess Denise Wright of Matters of the Heart Radio Ministry is looking forward to you being a guest on her global radio broadcasting network on 99.1 FM JAMS. Matters of the Heart Radio

Ministry has been broadcasting for the past 16 years locally and internationally, all the way into Jamaica. For additional information about scheduling a guest interview or promoting your business, book, music CD or non-profit organization, please call 727-488-8818 or email princessdenise.8818@yahoo.com

Phillis Wheatley Rise to Read Campaign

GOLIATH J. DAVIS, III, PH.D. Contributor

ST. PETERSBURG – During the swirling controversy surrounding what I called “The Miracle at Lakewood Elementary,” I have been asked numerous times: Who is Phillis Wheatley, and what is the Phillis Wheatley Rise to



Read Campaign? In no small way, the question is an indictment of the Pinellas School district’s failure to provide an adequate inclusive education for its scholars.

Phillis Wheatley was a prominent Black poet, brought to American colonies at age 6-7 from the Senegal/Gambia region of West Africa and sold to the John Wheatley family in Boston.

Within 16 months of her arrival, she could read the bible and the Greek and Latin classics. She was the best-known poet of the 19th century and the first published Black female in America.

The Phillis Wheatley Rise to Read Campaign is an initiative named in honor of the distinguished scholar in recognition of her laudable accomplishments as a student and poet. A slave at age 6-7 from the African Continent reading Greek and Latin classics is not just inspirational but a testament to what is possible if the will, determination, commitment and focus are present.

The Rise to Read Campaign is not a new reading method or technique. Instead, it is a deliberate, coordinated community

initiative designed to bring a strategic laser community focus to the issue of African American literacy. It is a response to the negotiated Bridging the Gap plan developed by the Pinellas School District in concert with the Bradley and Crowley defense teams.

It is rooted in the African proverb “It takes a village” and the movie “Akeelah and the Bee,” starring St. Pete’s own Angela Bassett.

During Maria Scruggs’ tenure as president of the St. Petersburg Branch of the NAACP, a comprehensive assessment of the Pinellas District FSA literacy scores was made and revealed only 25 percent of our more than 10,000 scholars were reading on grade level. Based upon this finding and the 50 plus years of district failure, the question was asked: What can the African-American community do to improve the performance of Black scholars?

The answer was, develop a literacy campaign utilizing a collective impact strategy to coordinate community resources and programs to focus on improving the literacy of African-American scholars

specifically and community literacy in general.

The approach was modeled in “Akeelah and the Bee” when the student preparing for the spelling bee lost her coach and teacher, and her mother (Angela Bassett) encouraged her, noting she had an entire community’s support. Consequently, everyone from business persons to the man on the street answered the call and assisted with her training.

The Phillis Wheatley Rise to Read Campaign epitomizes “it takes a village.” Utilizing the collective impact strategy, it provides the total community with a deliberate, effective approach to supplement district efforts and does not require anyone to abandon existing programs. Rather, the objective is to partner with established literacy initiatives to heighten the awareness of the importance of literacy to achievement and prosperity.

It is a comprehensive, collaborative campaign that identifies any and all existing programs, provides opportunities to network and observe best practices, modify and improve practices based



Goliath J. Davis

upon collaborative observations and discussions, and infuses literacy throughout the community — sports programs, cheerleader camps, barbershops, and beauty parlors, etc.

The Phillis Wheatley Campaign is not designed to compete with any existing approach. Its focus is to amplify literacy and all who are committed to improving it for the ultimate benefit of black and brown scholars. It is a facilitative initiative for the explicit purpose of ensuring our African-American scholars can do what Phillis Wheatley did — master literacy and read and comprehend the Latin and Greek classics.

WE ENCOURAGE LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

‘Inclusive progress for all:’ Ken Welch and his vision for St. Pete

WELCH, from front page

such as Habitat for Humanity to provide homeownership opportunities. He is looking at ways to acquire land and turn that into affordable housing with rentals and ownership.

Welch thinks there is a place for up zoning (NTM-1) but thinks “it has to be done in conjunction with a concentrated effort for truly affordable housing.” He points to places like Chicago and Minneapolis, where it has shown to increase the cost of housing for people making the area median income (AMI) or a little above. Welch points out that the AMI is around \$49,000 and said NTM-1 zoning targets a person that makes between \$50-\$60,000.

He added that there is a need for what they call workforce housing – but that it does not address the problems faced by many people that make well below the AMI.

Welch said that translated to dollars per hour, \$49,000 a year comes out to about \$23 an hour.

“We’ve got to get housing on the ground for folks making that \$23 an hour, \$19 an hour, \$15 an hour,” said Welch. “Those are the folks that work in our schools, work in our hospitals, and we need to make sure we do that at the same time.”

Another area he wants to focus more strongly on is addressing the problems with the city’s youth. Welch said young folks have confided in him at private summits that they do not see any path to opportunity. That is why he feels that if you increase the economic opportunity, you will also increase neighborhood safety.

He wants to transform the city’s community centers into what he is calling Empowerment Innovation Centers. These centers will offer educational resources such as STEM



learning along with technological devices and digital access. It will also provide a safe learning place at night and on weekends, where the youth can be mentored and even receive nutrition.

“Really make it a hub for the community and young people, and that augments their education when they’re out of school.”

Welch credits the work of people such as Arthurene Williams for their focus on early childhood development and

plans on making sure they have the support they need “so that our kids are ready when they get to kindergarten.”

“So many of our young people, particularly from the south St. Pete CRA, are behind when they get to kindergarten,” explained Welch. “I want to concentrate and make sure we’re filling that gap as a city to help kids be prepared for school, and then also have that out-of-school support area.”

Welch points out that the South St. Petersburg Community Redevelopment

Area was the first CRA ever created to address poverty, and he wants to make sure that is where the money is going.

“That has been a concern from the start,” he stated. He said that if he is elected mayor, there will be a renewed focus on making sure those dollars are going toward poverty reduction and wealth building.

“That means job training, education, housing, and new services,” asserted Welch. “Even code enforcement helping folks clean up their properties and their homes so they can stay in their homes. That’s what I want to make sure we are focusing our CRA dollars on.”

Welch said he does not want to “start from scratch” on the Tropicana Field redevelopment plans. He believes that “good groundwork” has been establishing the “21 principles” for the site. He

notes that housing, transportation, proper recognition of the Gas Plant neighborhood, meeting space, convention centers, and green space were all addressed in the current proposals, which cost several groups “quite a bit of money.”

Welch would first like to come to an understanding with the Rays, “so we know which direction we are going in.” He wants to get the city council back involved and said he has met with every council member to discuss the issue. He adds that the county commission also has to be a part of the discussions because bed and hotel taxes “play a significant part of any baseball stadium, and paid more than \$100 million for the Trop.”

Welch will face Robert Blackmon in the Nov. 2 General Election as he vies to be the next mayor of St. Petersburg.

The Weekly Challenger

Home Delivery to South St. Petersburg for \$50 yearly

First Class Mail Subscription Cost: \$80 yearly

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone No: _____

Email Address: _____

New Subscription _____ (or) Renewal _____

Date: _____ Amount Paid: \$ _____

Cash _____ Check _____

Make Checks Payable to: The Weekly Challenger

Mail this form & payment to:

The Weekly Challenger,

P.O. Box 35130, St. Petersburg, FL 33705

Email: editor@theweeklyphallenger.com

Phone: (727) 896-2922 • Fax (727) 823-2568

RATE REDUCTION SPECIAL!

CONNECT WITH US

f

You Tube

Twitter

The Weekly Challenger

is distributed in the following cities:

St. Petersburg ■ Clearwater ■ Largo

Tarpon Springs ■ Dunedin ■ Safety Harbor

P.O. Box 35130, St. Petersburg, FL 33705

Phone: (727) 896-2922

Fax: (727) 823-2568

Email: editor@theweeklyphallenger.com

www.theweeklyphallenger.com

Ethel L. Johnson

CEO/Publisher Emerita

Lyn Johnson

Publisher/General Manager

Advertising

Advertising Dept. 727-896-2922

advertising@theweeklyphallenger.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:

Send all address changes to:

The Weekly Challenger

P.O. Box 35130

St. Petersburg, FL 33705

NO PAPER?

If you have not received your paper during delivery, call (727) 896-2922

DEADLINES

All news items, advertising copy and related art submitted for publication on Thursday must be received no later than 4 p.m. Monday.

COLUMNIST'S DISCLAIMER

The views expressed by The Weekly Challenger columnists/ advice columnists do not necessarily reflect the views of The Weekly Challenger. By publishing such columns, The Challenger is not advocating the following of any advice or suggestion expressed.

SUBMISSIONS POLICY

Submissions to The Weekly Challenger may be edited for reasons of space, clarity or for considerations of liability. All submissions become the sole property of The Weekly Challenger. The Weekly Challenger reserves the right to run all or part of any submission at a later time. Some submissions may take precedence due to timeliness or newsworthiness.

THE BLACK PRESS

believes that America can best lead the world from racial antagonism when it accords to every man, regardless of race, creed or color, his human and legal rights. Hating no man, fearing no man... the Black Press strives to help every man in the firm belief that all men are hurt as long as anyone is held back.

VERIFIED

FLORIDA PRESS ASSOCIATION

ST PETE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE PROUD MEMBER

Volume 53 ■ Number 02

Published Thursday, September 16, 2021

14 pages ■ 1 section

© The Weekly Challenger

All rights reserved. No portions of this periodical may be reproduced without expressed consent.

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF DARLINGTON

Frank Alford, Jr.,

Plaintiff,

-vs-

Jessica Ann Griggs and Jerry Raynor,

Defendants.
In Re: L.R.R., a minor under the age of 12,

IN THE FAMILY COURT

CASE NO. 2021-DR-16-

21DR160289

SUMMONS FOR RELIEF
COMPLAINT SERVED

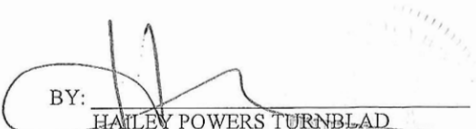
FILED
2021 MAY 24 A 11:04
SCOTT B. SUGGER, D.
CLERK OF COURT/RMC
DARLINGTON COUNTY, S.C.

TO THE DEFENDANT(S) ABOVE-NAMED:

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and required to answer the Complaint in this action, of which a copy is herewith served upon you, and to serve a copy of your Answer to the said Complaint on the subscriber at her offices in Florence, South Carolina, within THIRTY (30) DAYS after the service hereof, exclusive of the day of such service; and if you fail to answer the Complaint within the time aforesaid, the Plaintiffs in this action will apply to the Court for the relief demanded in the Complaint.


Dated: March 31, 2021

EVANS & TURNBLAD, LLC
607 S. COIT STREET
FLORENCE, SOUTH CAROLINA 29501
TELEPHONE: (843) 536-4495
FAX: (843) 799-5976

BY: 
HAILEY POWERS TURNBLAD
Attorney for Plaintiff

TRUE CERTIFIED COPY,
Scott B. Suggs,
CLERK OF COURT/RMC
DARLINGTON COUNTY, S.C.


WWW.THEWEEKLYCHALLENGER.COM




PICK OF THE WEEK!
17 33 28

CASH 3
590 238 119

DOG DAYS



6-4	1-3
2-5	8-7
3-6	6-1



BIG DREAMS. BOLD FUTURE.

DIGITAL MARKETING MANAGER

Department Name/Number: 0-0662-000 / WUSF-FM
College/Division: UCM-Broadcasting
Salary Plan: Administrative
Hiring Salary/Salary Range: \$62,500 - \$74,000

Organizational Summary: WUSF Public Media is a comprehensive public media organization that operates an NPR news and jazz radio station and an all-classical music radio station, and provides digital content online, through newsletters, podcasts and social media and serves a weekly audience of greater than 350,000. It is a department of the University of South Florida, with 70 employees and a budget of \$11 million and provides internships to students. WUSF Public Media's main studios are on the USF Tampa campus, with a broadcast and music performance studio on the USFSM campus and an office and news production studio on the USFSP campus.

Position Summary: The Digital Marketing Manager oversees the digital services department along with assigned digital projects of moderate to high complexity originating within the organization and as collaborations and partnerships with entities outside the organization. This position is responsible for marketing, brand campaigns, assembling the project team, assigning responsibilities, and managing schedules and resources to ensure timely completion of assigned projects. While the Digital Marketing Manager may or may not be the direct supervisor of all the staff assigned to a project, he or she is responsible for the effective management and direction of those staff when their time is allocated to a project under the Digital Marketing Manager's supervision. Project scope can include: brand marketing strategies, graphic design, copywriting, website design, website conversion, social media campaigns, email marketing campaigns, Mobile App and Smart Speaker strategies and podcasts.

Responsibilities:


- Develop a project schedule and plan to ensure timely completion of the project. Must be able to manage multiple projects simultaneously. Apply project management tools and tracking systems to manage and report on all aspects of project progress.
- Assemble the project team, identify competencies, and assign resources to development tasks appropriate to each individual's knowledge, skill, and abilities. Communicate project goals, monitor project progress, and adjust resources as necessary to keep the project on track.
- Utilize project resources and serve as an individual contributor to analyze user experience and digital asset performance, determine and evaluate potential solutions, provide copywriting and edit copy from others, develop system/process specifications and requirements, and design brand awareness campaigns that meet our user's needs.
- Additional duties as assigned.

Minimum Qualifications: This position requires a Bachelor's degree in communication, marketing, public relations, technical writing, digital media, or related field, with 4 years of experience in related positions; or a Master's degree in the fields listed above and 2 years of experience.

Preferred Qualifications: General knowledge of WordPress, Google Analytics, Google Ad Manager, Basecamp, Adobe Creative Cloud, HTML and CSS. Understanding and experience with utilizing email marketing platforms, social media platforms and other digital marketing tools. Graphic Design skills a plus.

USF Tampa
Information for Applicants
This position is subject to a Level 1 criminal background check.
Job Opening Number: 28255 **Location:** Tampa, Florida
Posting Date: 08/27/2021 **Posting End Date:** Open until filled


For full description and to apply, please go to **Access Careers@USF** at <https://www.usf.edu/work-at-usf/careers/> and enter **28255** under Search Jobs.



UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA

USF is an equal opportunity, equal access academic institution that embraces diversity in the workplace.

WE ENCOURAGE LETTERS TO THE EDITOR!



NOTICE OF PUBLIC WORKSHOP

The Florida Department of Transportation is hosting a statewide Toll Rate Rule Development Workshop to provide the public an opportunity to review and comment on proposed amendments to Rule 14-15.0081, Florida Administrative Code. These amendments include the addition of two new facilities (Gateway Expressway and Suncoast Parkway between US 98 and CR 486) and five new interchanges: Braddock Road on the Polk Parkway, NW 8th Street on the Sawgrass Expressway, Ridge Road on the Suncoast Parkway, and at NW 170th Street and Sand Lake Road on the Turnpike Mainline.

The rule amendments set toll rates for the Ticket System upon conversion to All-Electronic Tolling (AET), consolidate the Northern Coin, Ticket System, Southern Coin, and Homestead Extension of Florida's Turnpike systems into one "Turnpike Mainline" rate table and update the mileposts of toll gantries relocated due to AET conversion. The proposed amendments also include the addition of TOLL-BY-PLATE rates to the Alligator Alley, Pinellas Bayway System and Sunshine Skyway Bridge rate tables, and the new Winter Lake Plaza on Polk Parkway and updates the Beachline West Expressway plaza toll rate.

The workshop will be held on:

DATE: Wednesday, September 29, 2021 TIME: 6:00 p.m.

The workshop will be conducted as a hybrid meeting, offering both remote (via webinar) and in-person attendance options. Registration for the webinar is required. Registration and additional information can be found at:

<https://floridasturnpike.com/toll-rate-rule-development/>

A site access location is also available for those persons without computer and/or internet access at the following location:

**Florida Department of Transportation, District 7 Auditorium
11201 North Malcolm McKinley Drive
Tampa, FL 33612**

Public participation is solicited without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability or family status. If you have any questions, please contact Ivette Ruiz-Paz, Communications Manager, at Florida's Turnpike Enterprise, 1-800-749-7453. Persons who require special accommodations for the meeting under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1991 or who require translation services (free of charge) should contact Justin Hannah at Florida's Turnpike Enterprise (407) 264-3822 at least seven calendar days prior to the meeting.



Let's be honest, it's hard out here for a parent!

If your child is skipping school, displaying signs of anger, depression and other problematic behaviors Bethel Community Foundation can help.

We offer youth mentoring, anger management sessions, life skills classes and individual/family counseling all free of charge!

www.bethelcommunityfoundation.com



2901 54th Avenue South
St. Pete, FL 33712
727-866-2747
Contact Lena Moody or Sheana Binns for more information

Making an impact

BY DEXTER MCCREE
Feature Writer

ST. PETERSBURG – The impact of African-American teachers, administrators and coaches in the educational system has immeasurable effects on the development of Black youth. Children of color identify more with people they see in their neighborhoods when taking instructions in the classroom.

Native son Jalen White knows this for a fact and plans to become a high school principal and make a difference in Pinellas County Schools.

For now, he is an imposing college basketball player who knows his way around the court and the classroom. His achievements vary from senior class president at Lakewood High School to being a two-time debate winner in the AKA AKAdemy's Great Debate program.

He's also taken part in benefit basketball games to impact positive change in the St. Pete community.

White was nine years old when his father, David White, began coaching him. No slouch himself, David White was a McDonald's and Parade All-American stand-out at The Boca Ciega High School and State Champion in 1986.

In the beginning, young Jalen didn't take basketball seriously; however, the light switched on in middle school. The relationship with his father allowed him to grow into loving the game, along with the

encouragement of his mother and older siblings, who presented competition that helped him develop.

Now, White, or Big J Boogie, has taken his talent to the University of North Carolina-Greensboro Spartans and looks forward to playing at home at the Jersey Mike's Classic held at Eckerd College from Nov. 18-21.

After graduating from Lakewood High in 2019, he attended Texas A & M University, Corpus Christie on scholarship, where he played two years of basketball before transferring to the University of North Carolina-Greensboro.

When White arrived in Corpus Christi, he was excited about the area. The beautiful beaches reminded him of home in St. Pete. The breeze from the ocean made it comfortable to walk while exploring the area. He took notice of the hospitality of the natives who welcomed his presence. Being a star basketball player gave him additional notoriety.

Then things got challenging. First, the impact of COVID-19 shut down the season. Once play started back, several key players were injured, forcing Jalen to play out of position, which he did admirably.

Then, the head coach announced that he was retiring. By his high school standard of success — 2019 Florida Association of Basketball Coaches, 6-A Player of the Year, and 2019 Source Hoops 6A Most



Jalen White
Outstanding Player — the season was unsuccessful.

"Once coach finally came and talked to us in the gym to let us know that he was going to move on, I knew I needed to at least make sure I knew what options were out there."

The University of North Carolina Greensboro was the perfect fit.

"I hope to be able to get more involved with extracurricular activities and create more opportunities outside of athletics," expressed White. "I want to encourage students to value education and prepare for college so they will learn the language of admission officers, counselors, and financial aid sponsors. I aim to influence men and fathers to have better relationships with children and be involved in the community."

White hopes to return to Pinellas County and become an influential administrator who will impact the community that helped raise him. For now, the community will have to settle for a chance to see him on the court at Eckerd College during the Jersey Mike's Classic in November.



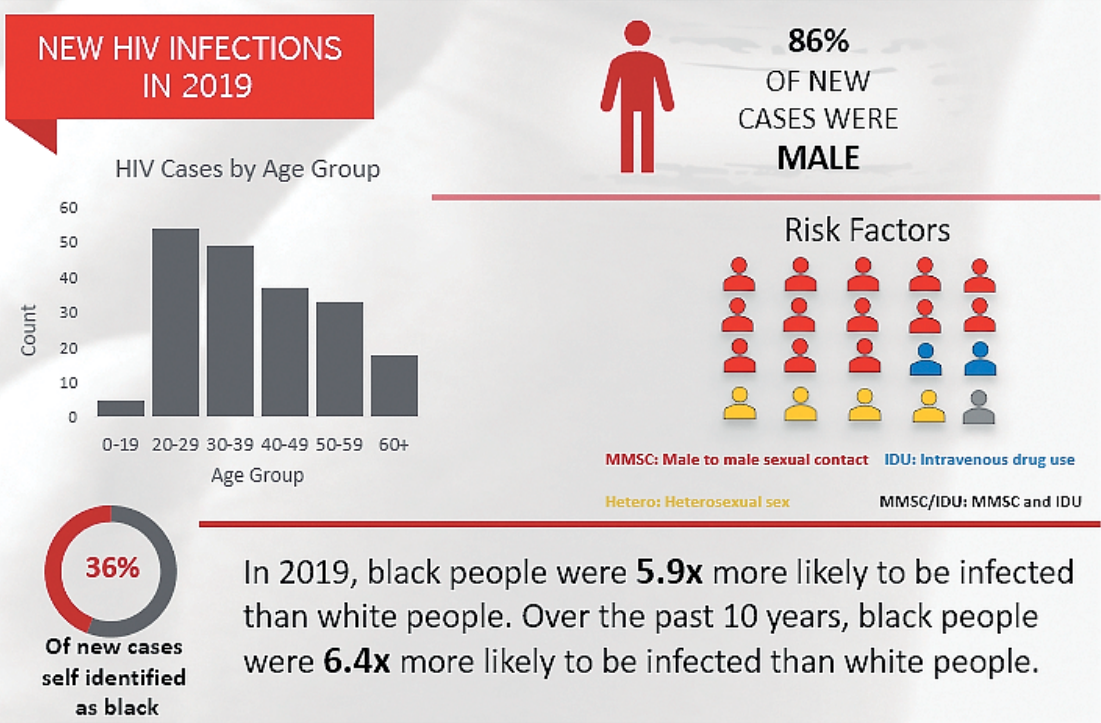
“Take a stand for Health Justice: Have the Conversation”

Dr. Katurah Jenkins-Hall

“We have to promote education. We have to promote testing. But most of all, we have to allow the space for someone to come forth without shame to say, ‘I'm HIV positive, and I need my family, I need my community, I need my church.’”

Ending the HIV Epidemic

Pinellas County



- 2019 Data Summary**
- **20-29 Age group** continue to lead the new HIV cases.
 - **86%** of all new infections were **Male**.
 - **MMSC** is the highest risk factor for new HIV cases.
 - Black people made up **36%** of new HIV cases in 2019.
- Data Source: www.FLHEALTHCHARTS.com

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority celebrates Breast Cancer Awareness Month

ST. PETERSBURG – During Breast Cancer Awareness Month, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated will increase awareness worldwide during its observation day events held Oct. 4. Please join the ladies of the Zeta Upsilon Omega Chapter in St. Petersburg in partnership with Advent Health as they offer convenient mammograms through the Advent Health Mobile Mammography Bus from 8-1 p.m. at the Enoch Davis Center.

Breast cancer is the second leading cause of death among women in the United States. However, early detection through mammogram screenings improves the survival rate of diagnosed women. Under the international program theme entitled Exemplifying Ex-

cellence Through Sustainable Service, the Women's Healthcare and Wellness committees focus on breast cancer awareness and prevention in African-American women by encouraging regular mammograms.

Take advantage of this convenient way and location to get your annual mammogram. Please schedule today at AdventHealthMobileMammography.com or 813-601-1925. Walk-ins are welcomed, but advance registration is preferred. Proof of insurance is required.

About Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. is an international service organization comprised of more than 283,000 members in 988 graduate and under-

graduate chapters abroad.

The local chapter, Zeta Upsilon Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, founded in December 1955, established the Youth Development Foundation of Pinellas County Inc., a 501(c) 3, non-profit organization. The foundation's mission is to enhance the quality of life for targeted youth and families in Pinellas County through programs and services.

For more information on the local chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority and its programs, visit www.zuochapter.org. For additional information on the Breast Cancer Awareness Month event, please contact Paya Forde at afb-forde@aol.com or Lynette Buchanan at lynette.buchanan@stpete.org.

College football is its own fraternity



USF alumni and fraternity brothers Ty DeBique, Ed Narain and Cedric McCray savored the opportunity to reunite while supporting their Bulls.

BY DEXTER MCCREE
Feature Writer

TAMPA – Tampa Bay lives for the South Florida Bulls. Last Saturday, the University of South Florida at Raymond James Stadium was packed full of fans as the USF Bulls faced the historic University of Florida Gators.

UF began its football program in 1906. That's more than a century of football experience with national championships, while USF is a fledgling program in its 25th year of the gridiron tradition, playing its inaugural season in 1997.

Although USF is an up-and-coming program, the game offers opportunities for fellowship and enjoyment on Saturday afternoon. It is a welcomed outing considering COVID-19 brought about a flagrant foul to an entire country.

Fans were relegated to their home locker rooms to remain for more than a year. For the Bulls, the competition against the Gators would not have the most favorable outcome. However, it certainly beats staying at home and not having football games to watch for the fans.

The return of college

football also provides an avenue for alumni and colleagues to fellowship. USF alumnus and fraternity brothers Ty DeBique, Ed Narain and Cedric McCray savored the opportunity to reunite while supporting their Bulls.

"It was great seeing friends who I haven't seen in over a year. The atmosphere of college football rejuvenates the spirit of fellowship and fraternizing. Ty and Ced are two good brothers, and we had a great time catching up at the game," said Ed Narain, vice president, External Affairs - AT&T.

DeBique is managing director of Truist Wealth, and McCray is the community redevelopment manager for the City of Tampa. The three formed a bond joining Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity in 1996 at USF.

For the announced attendance of 66,646, there was plenty for the South Florida hopefuls to be dismayed. Perhaps given up 35 points in the first half was a little disheartening. Maybe allowing multiple long plays and missed tackles felt overwhelming. Then the moment to cheer arrived. USF got on the scoreboard with a 25-yard field

goal from Spencer Shrader.

If Saturday's outcome was the result of overmatch traditions, then the upcoming week may prove to be more favorable for the South Florida Bulls. The Florida A & M University Rattlers from Tallahassee will face South Florida.

FAMU is also rich in history and tradition. The Tampa Bay area is accustomed to seeing Florida A & M in the Florida Classic versus Bethune-Cookman University, which was played in the Tampa stadium

for many years.

The locals are looking forward to FAMU's famous Marching 100 as they perform their world-renowned moves. The USF Bulls will counter with the Herd of Thunder Marching Band, undoubtedly presenting a different flavor than the Rattler high-steppers.

College football is back, and the fun of Saturday afternoon has resumed. The Bulls did outscore the Gators 17-7 in the second half. A small victory for an up-and-coming program. Sometimes you win, and sometimes you lose, but it will always be a memorable experience.

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated - Zeta Upsilon Omega Chapter
in partnership with Advent Health

3D Lifesaving Mammograms
No additional fee
Most major insurance plans accepted

Monday, October 4, 2021

Get on the Bus

Women
Ages 40 and over - no prescription or referral needed
Ages 35- 39 physician prescription required

Click here to schedule your Mobile Mammogram
AdventHealthMobileMammography.com
813-601-1925

Must present insurance card
Walk-Ups Welcomed
Appointments have priority

October 4, 2021
Breast Cancer Awareness

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated
Zeta Upsilon Omega Chapter
Breast Cancer Awareness Day Event
Enoch Davis Center
1111 18th Avenue S, St. Pete
8:00am - 1:00pm

CONNECT WITH US

Outsourcing education in Pinellas County

EDUCATION, from front page

must admit, they've crossed my mind as well.

Make no mistake, I am not advocating for another Republican favorite: charter schools. I believe taxpayer dollars are intended for public school education and should be spent there.

However, the issue of accountability looms large and begs the question: Is Pinellas capable of educating its Black and Brown scholars, and is Dr. Wobbly the right person to lead the Transformation Campaign?

Why has she been allowed to assemble an all-white team to address the needs of a highly diverse population? I am not suggesting white educators cannot educate Black and

Brown scholars. However, does the team's all-white composition suggest there aren't culturally appropriate and competent African-American educators and coaches capable of the task?

I am sure COQEB and the NAACP are as interested as I am in ensuring all Pinellas District scholars are afforded a quality education. Additionally, the educators and staff involved in the education of Black and Brown scholars deserve all of the assistance and support possible. The community has a role to play and given the importance of literacy, the Phillis Wheatley Rise to Read collective impact campaign warrants atten-

tion.

All of us have been challenged by the pandemic. However, one of the points touted by those involved with the miracle at Lakewood Elementary is their ability to achieve significant gains despite COVID-19. So, in the words of the Staple Singers, "Let's Do It Again."

Although I am not from Missouri, in this case, I embrace their motto —SHOW ME. Can Dr. Wobbly get it done, or should we outsource the remaining Transformation Zone schools to LSI as well?

My battle cry is a simple one: Let's Replicate and Sustain!

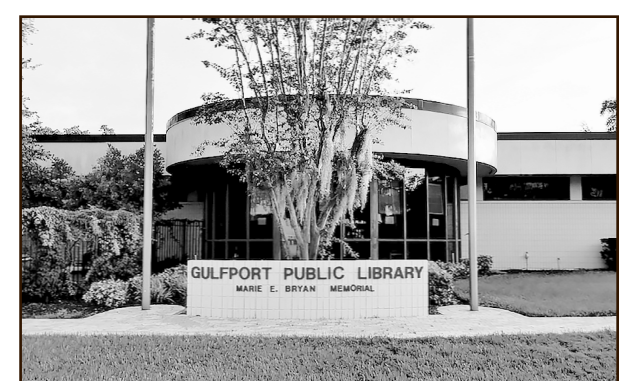
WE ENCOURAGE LETTERS TO THE EDITOR!

Free Medicare counseling offered to Medicare beneficiaries

GULFPORT – Medicare beneficiaries, their caregivers, and family members who have questions or concerns about Medicare and related health insurance topics have a new place to turn. The Area Agency on Aging of Pasco & Pinellas County will be partnering with Gulfport Public Library to provide Medicare counseling through the SHINE (Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders) Program.

On Wednesday, Sept. 22, at 1:30 p.m., specially trained volunteers of the SHINE Program will begin offering a Medicare 101 presentations at Gulfport Public Library located at 5501 28th Ave. S, in Gulfport.

SHINE is a free program of the Florida Department of Elder Affairs that empowers elders to make informed decisions about their health care coverage. The volunteer counselors through the



Guidance is now available for Medicare beneficiaries at the Gulfport Public Library

Area Agency on Aging of Pasco & Pinellas County provide free, unbiased information and counseling at sites across Pasco & Pinellas counties and will now also help elders at the new Gulfport location.

SHINE volunteers answer questions about Medicare, Medicaid, prescription assistance, long-term care planning, and more every day. The new Gulfport partner site will allow the program to reach more community

members who may be unaware of SHINE and the benefits the program offers.

SHINE volunteer counselors can even assist eligible Medicare beneficiaries in finding programs that lower prescription drug costs or provide prescription drugs at no charge.

For more information, you may also call 1-800-96-ELDER (1-800-963-5337), (727-217-8111) or visit us online at www.floridashine.org.

Tampa Bay's Virtual HBCU College Fair

What: The 5th Annual HBCU College Fair Virtual Information Session

In its fifth year, Jack and Jill and its partners host the Tampa Bay Area's only HBCU College Fair. During the virtual college fair, attendees will have the opportunity to speak to alumni and admissions reps from colleges and universities, as well as to talk with dedicated experts about general college-related topics including the college admissions process, financial aid, scholarships, Greek life, and more.

The virtual event is followed by an in-person meet and greet with sponsor organizations on Sunday at Lake Vista Park. Attendees will receive a free HBCU swag bag.

Who: Jack and Jill of America, Inc. - Suncoast

HBCU VIRTUAL COLLEGE FAIR
Spirit Weekend Celebration

Featuring **DJ Vince Adams**

THURSDAY SEPT 16 7PM
THE HBCU EXPERIENCE
Register and learn more about preparing for the HBCU experience.

SATURDAY SEPT 18 7PM
USF VS. USF
USF STADIUM (TAMPA)

SUNDAY SEPT 19 4PM - 8PM
SWAG BAG GIVEAWAY (DRIVE-BY)
LAKE VISTA PARK
1401 62nd Ave. S. • St. Petersburg

REGISTER TODAY
<https://HBCUWKND.eventbrite.com>

Hosted by Suncoast Chapter of Jack and Jill of America, Inc.

Chapter in partnership with Flynn Law Firm, Northside Hospital, Kenzi's Korner, members of the Divine Nine, The

Links, Incorporated - St. Petersburg Chapter, Mt. Zion College Prep 101, and Shorecrest Preparatory School

When:
Virtual College Fair - Thursday, Sept. 16 from 7-9 p.m.
In-person Meet &

Greet and Giveaway Opportunity - Sunday, Sept. 19 from 3-5 p.m. Attendees are encouraged to wear masks when social distancing is not possible.

Where: Virtual College Fair - Online via eventbrite.com
Register at [www.HBCUWKND.eventbrite.com](https://HBCUWKND.eventbrite.com)

Meet & Greet and Giveaway Opportunity - Lake Vista Park 1401 62nd Ave S, St. Petersburg

Why: Supporting and promoting HBCUs is a critical component of Jack and Jill's mission of education and leadership. As in 2020, this event will be held virtually to maintain the health and safety of the community amidst concerns for COVID-19.

About Suncoast Jack and Jill of Amer-

ica, Inc.

Jack and Jill of America, Incorporated is an African-American organization of mothers who nurture future leaders by strengthening children through chapter programming, community service, legislative advocacy, and philanthropic giving. The mothers believe every child, with proper guidance and opportunity, can be a leader.

The Suncoast Chapter of Jack and Jill of America is composed of 31 dedicated mothers and 86 children between the ages of 2-18 years old. The chapter is uniquely positioned and committed to making a difference in the lives of families residing in Pinellas, Manatee, and Sarasota Counties. For more information, visit JackandJillSuncoast.org.

The Phyllis Wheatley Rise to Read Campaign aims to close the achievement gap

BY MARK PARKER
Staff Writer

ST. PETERSBURG — The Phyllis Wheatley Rise to Read Campaign (PWRTRC) aims to be the solution to closing the literacy gap between Black and white students in Pinellas County.

The literacy campaign began in 2018 due to the St. Petersburg Branch NAACP's efforts to strategize the best way to close the ongoing achievement gap. St. Petersburg College paid for a facilitator from Cornell University to conduct a two-day discussion on how the African-American community should approach the issue.

Then-president Maria L. Scruggs, who oversees the campaign, said it became apparent the focus should be on reading and mental health. When Scruggs received a report stating that only 25 percent of Black children were reading at or above their grade level, she knew the status quo was not working, and something else needed to be done.

Scruggs told the *Challenger* that the NAACP decided to investigate how

much tax-payer money was going to fund literacy programs in Pinellas County that were clearly underperforming. Public records requests were sent to the county government, the Juvenile Welfare Board, and the school district.

Scruggs said they found an estimated \$43 million had been spent on literacy programming — with unacceptable results. She added that a public records request was sent to the City of St. Petersburg but was not obtained after the city sent back a bill for \$2,000 to produce the records.

"We're spending over \$43 million of public money on literacy programming, and Black children still can't read," said Scruggs. "That is a problem."

Scruggs said it is important to note that PWRTRC is not competing with the school district. In fact, they realize they cannot achieve their goals without the school district. However, she said the district cannot close the gap without the community's help, either.

"We need each other to accomplish this goal, and the mission of PWRTRC is to ensure that African chil-

dren are reading at or above grade level in this generation and beyond."

The campaign draws inspiration from the critically acclaimed 2006 film *Akeelah* and the *Bee*, specifically the scene where Akeelah (Keke Palmer) is worried about losing her coach. Akeelah's mother (Angela Bassett) tells her daughter not to worry because she has a whole community of coaches.

"That is what the African culture and African way is all about — the village," said Scruggs, noting that hometown shero Angela Bassett is a childhood friend.

Unfortunately, Scruggs believes that African-American institutions have been "diluted or decimated" and that community pride in education has been lost. That is why the campaign focuses on an organized community change system that starts with the youngest children and works from the "bottom-up."

PWRTRC takes academic instruction and support where the children in the community are. This includes homes, churches, sports practices, juvenile justice programs, and

many other areas. The campaign wants reading to be seen as "cool" in the Black community.

Scruggs said the reason it is called a campaign is because the marketing aspect is so crucial. She said many times when the African-American community attempts to bring about social change, the program receives a lot of money and a large social media presence, and Blacks people are hired to pass out flyers, but no real change ever occurs.

In the instance of the reading gap, she said the proof of this is in the reading scores and metrics. PWRTRC partners with trusted literacy programs that they feel can bring about real change.

"The idea is to help build the capacity of those literacy partners ... to go wherever children are to give them the support they need," she explained.

Scruggs also recognizes the importance of having proper strategies to ensure the programs are working and shared outcomes are being met.

"We've been funding a lot of programs, and we don't know what the outcomes are tied to," said

Scruggs, who feels it hasn't been tied to the FSA scores because only 25 percent of Black children were reading at or above their grade level.

Improving reading and test scores is fundamental to PWRTRC, and Scruggs believes that will also serve as an economic engine. She explains it is essential to draw the link between literacy, education, and economics, as they are directly linked.

"If our babies can't read, the chances of them being able to go on to a vocational program or a college ... are slim to none," asserted Scruggs.

While FSA scores and getting children to read at their grade level is important to Scruggs, she wants to see Black children proficient in reading and comprehension and exceed that basic standard. This aspiration ties into the campaign's namesake, Phyllis Wheatley.

Wheatley was an enslaved young girl who taught herself to read with the help of her enslavers. Wheatley did not just learn how to read, however.

She had her first poem published when she was



Maria Scruggs

just 12 years old. In 1775, she wrote a poem for George Washington, who praised her work. In 1776, the two would meet. She would become the first Black woman and the first enslaved person to publish a book in the American Colonies.

"Our thought process was if a slave in the 18th century can teach herself how to read, how are our African children not able to read in the 21st century," asked Scruggs. "With all of these great federal programs ... we really are not making any kind of substantive advances in the basics when it comes to reading."

To reach Mark Parker, email mparker@theweekly-challenger.com

Ralph Wimbish brings heroic stories to St. Petersburg

BY NICOLE SLAUGHTER GRAHAM
Staff Writer

ST. PETERSBURG — Next Thursday, Sept. 23, at 7 p.m., Ralph Wimbish, son of Dr. Ralph Wimbish and C. Bette Wimbish, will join Tombolo Books to discuss his most recent book, "Heroes: Stories of Sports, Courage and Class."

The event is the latest

in the Community Conversations series between the bookstore and the African American Heritage Association. This month, the Deuces Live also joins as an event sponsor.

The son of prominent civil rights activists, Wimbish is credited with integrating St. Joseph's Catholic school in the sixth grade and the Lake Maggiore Little League.

"The 60s were quite the time to be growing up," the longtime journalist said.

Though integrating the school and Little League were mainly due to the time and his parents' equity activism in St. Petersburg, Wimbish went on to blaze his own way as a journalist, retiring after a 40-year career in the field. Though he spent much of his time ed-

iting, Wimbish also had the opportunity to write many stories.

His work, Wimbish said, provided unique, often rare opportunities to meet and interview some of the people he — and much of the country — admired. Those interviews make up the bulk of his third book's contents.

"About a year ago, during the pandemic, my wife and I moved into a new

house in Calabash, N.C., and I was looking at my old clippings. I started filing and organizing them and realized I had enough to put into a book."

Many of the names included in the collection will be recognized by most: Jackie Robinson, Bill White, Magic Johnson, Tiger Woods, and yes, Dr. Ralph Wimbish and C. Bette Wimbish.

Before taking up the pen, Wimbish was no stranger to big names. Interesting figures graced the kitchen and hallways of his childhood home often.

"Elston Howard stayed in my room when I was a kid," he recalled. When I was 11, I stayed for a week with Jackie Robinson."

Growing up around such influential people — and being raised by two of them — partly influenced Wimbish's love for telling the tales of others.

"When I went into the newspaper business, I had some stories to tell because of my upbringing and who my parents were."

More than just prominent figures in sports and history, Wimbish said the people chronicled in his newest work all have a common thread: heroism.

"These are good stories about good people and what they've achieved in life," he said.

Intertwined in the stories of others is a bit of memoir as well, as Wimbish tells of his career in journalism, where it took him (Michigan, New York, Italy), and who he met along the way.

Wimbish will be joined by Deuces Live Vice President Jonathan Tallon, who will facilitate a Q&A with the author.

The event will be in-person in Tombolo Books' courtyard. It will also be streamed on the bookstore's Facebook page for those who cannot attend.

Further event details can be found on the Tombolo Books Events Page.

To reach Nicole Slaughter Graham, email nslaughtergraham@theweeklychallenger.com

Heroes
STORIES OF SPORTS, COURAGE AND CLASS

Ralph Wimbish
FOREWORD BY PHIL MUSHNICK

HEROES: Stories of Sports, Courage, and Class
An Evening with Ralph Wimbish and Jonathan Tallon at Tombolo Books
In partnership with the African American Heritage Association and The Deuces Live
September 23rd @ 7pm

Isay Gulley, towering figure in Clearwater revitalization, honored

BY J.A. JONES
Staff Writer

CLEARWATER – Isay Gulley received the key to the city of Clearwater upon her retirement from Clearwater Neighborhood Housing Services, Inc., surrounded by colleagues, friends, and family this past June.

The presence of Clearwater’s Mayor Frank Hibbard and the late long-term City Manager Bill Horne, co-workers, former employees, board members, family, and other well-wishers at the surprise key ceremony was only one testament to Gulley’s impact on the city.

Days later, a drive-by celebration for Gulley was held. City officials and old friends drove by honking while fire engines and police cars flashed their lights in Gulley’s honor. Cars wrapped the blocks, as well-wishers went by to celebrate a legend. The carloads held the lives and memories of decades of Clearwater residents impacted by the work Gulley did for more than 40 years at CNHS.

To the many people driving by to honor her that day, Gulley symbolized one empowering thing above all else: a home community.

W. Pearl Johnson has served on the CNHS board since 1984. “CNHS has been the soul of Isay Gulley. She has helped many people, not just in housing,” recalling Gulley’s efforts to take on issues including crime in Greenwood as just one additional area she strove to improve during her tenure.

Johnson recalled watching Gulley train three directors for the organization before deciding enough was enough.

“She trained three directors, that didn’t work out. I was board president

at the time, and I said to the board members, ‘I will not ask this woman to train another person. If she’s capable of training, she’s capable of running this organization.’”

While management might have been a daunting task, Johnson said, “When Isay took it over, she made it look like a cakewalk.” And Gulley’s finesse in her role was obvious to many, noted Johnson, who recalled going to workshops and housing organization meetings with national organizations where “everybody wanted to get to Isay Gulley.”

“She is well known throughout the housing organizations,” Johnson added, hailing Gulley’s expansive knowledge of housing regulations as one of the many qualities that made her a valuable asset to many.

“This woman retains knowledge like no one I had ever come in contact with. She could answer questions right off; if someone asked about a specific regulation, she knew it. If we were having breakfast, they would come in and apologize for interrupting her, but they would still ask a question. She would stop eating and give them an answer.”

Gulley recalled several jobs she held before going to Clearwater Neighborhood Housing, including working as a family counselor for five years before hearing about a nonprofit that was starting in South Greenwood.

She was already a Coast Guard Reservist, the first

Black woman recruited in the area, and serving in the Coast Guard Base in St. Pete when Clearwater Neighborhood Housing came along. She served for 22 and a half years before retiring in 1999.

Gulley was debating whether she should enlist to serve full time in the Coast Guard, but the thought of being away from her family for even more extended periods was a negative — and when she was told she could choose her position and create her title by the-then director of CNHS, she made the decision.

“Knowing that this organization was in a low-income neighborhood, and from my childhood experience with the house, I wanted to make sure that the income-challenged, or the individuals that may not have known anything about these kinds of services didn’t get taken advantage of.”

When Gulley speaks of her childhood experience, she is referring to the farmhouse her mother was forced to flee from in Shorter, Ala., in the 50s. White men came threatening to burn them out if they weren’t gone within 24 hours. Gulley’s mother took her and her sister and fled to a cottage. The girls chopped cotton to help pay the bills. For Gulley, it was a life-impacting lesson.

So, when the opportunity came to work in housing in South Greenwood,



City officials, old friends, and family sent Isay Gulley off into retirement with a bang! On June 15, Isay Gulley was presented the key to the city of Clearwater with her family, friends, and coworkers in tow. Seen here with her husband, Donald R. Gulley Sr., and the late City Manager Bill Horne in the back row.




Clearwater’s Mayor Frank Hibbard presented Isay Gulley with roses and the key to the city on June 15 at Clearwater Neighborhood Housing Services, Inc.

Gulley recalled that given the ability to choose her own title and role, “I started as an outreach person. And I would go out and make people aware of what the program had to offer.” Which at the time, said Gulley, was assistance to repair homes and keep them up to code.

Starting in community outreach, she became the first minority staff member. “It might have seemed like it was the lowest position, but it’s the most important one because I was in the field, talking to the people. And that was just where I needed to be.”

She joined CNHS in 1980, and with a small staff,

See **GULLEY**, page 9



CHOOSE A
PHYSICIAN
WHO

CARES
&
LISTENS

GUIDES

Find the answers you’re looking for from the primary care providers at Bayfront Health St. Petersburg. We offer a full-range of healthcare options with online scheduling, as well as same-day, next-day and virtual appointments.

Experience the difference at BayfrontStPete.com/MedicalGroup

BAYFRONT HEALTH
St. Petersburg

Medical Group
Internal & Family Medicine

THREE CONVENIENT LOCATIONS IN ST. PETERSBURG

STRAZ Center debuts second season of BIPOC-centered discussions

BY NICOLE SLAUGHTER GRAHAM
Staff Writer

TAMPA BAY — When the world watched as George Floyd was murdered last May, America was plunged head-first into a long-overdue reckoning with the damage that continues to plague industries, communities, and individuals as a result of systemic racism. The performing arts community was no excep-

tion. Fred Johnson, STRAZ Center for the Performing Arts' community engagement specialist and artist-in-residence, said the local institution wanted to take immediate action. "The immediate commitment STRAZ made was to look at what we could do better and how we could be more deeply committed to our community," he said. First and foremost, the company wanted to en-

sure it could "fully articulate antiracism and inclusion and diversity and equity and accessibility." A top-down approach, including a commitment to hiring a more diverse leadership team and ensuring the board better, resembled the Tampa Bay area community, was part of the commitment to that vision, Johnson said. Additionally, the internal staff hired professional implicit bias consultants to hold workshops.

However, improving the accessibility of the performing arts and listening to the wants and needs of the community are just as important, Johnson said, which is how the Voices of the Community Town Hall discussion series came to be. With a focus on the performing arts, the Town Hall series illuminates the impact of local Black and Brown artists and performers, discusses the culture's influence on music and performance, and highlights the opportunities the performing arts provide in terms of employment, enrichment and education. But Johnson stressed, the series is about more than what's seen on stage. "It's about manifesting change. It's not just about talking. We want to create an opportunity for everyone in our community. We want to help others recognize the scourge of racial discrimination. This is an opportunity and responsibility to be committed to the change." He also noted that these discussions are geared toward all of Tampa Bay — not just the city of Tampa — and he hopes to see many people from across the area par-



Fred Johnson

ticipating in the discussions held virtually. Johnson hopes the town hall discussions will also inspire people to attend the STRAZ's Arts Legacy Remix, a monthly live, outdoor performance on the river that's free to the public. "Arts Legacy Remix celebrates the rich cultural tapestry of Tampa Bay," Johnson said. "Spanish, European, African Diaspora, Caribbean culture — it's all celebrated through this live experi-

ence." A Black man and artist, Johnson said that right now, he sees and feels the commitment to change in a way that he hasn't in the past, and the STRAZ's commitment to equity and antiracism shines a light on that change. The new Voices of the Community season starts Thursday, Sept. 23, and continues through May 26, 2022. Each session starts at 8 p.m.

Full Schedule:

Sept. 23 — Giving Voice: The evolution of the dynamic artistic and social power of spoken word, hip hop and its Caribbean elder, reggae.
Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83745518504>

Oct. 28 — Behind the Curtain: A conversation about the careers and job skills needed to make the magic happen on stage.
Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85234216792>

Jan. 27 – HBCU's and their Cultural Impact: A conversation with way-makers from several historical Black colleges and universities.
Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85488926672>

March 24 — Meet the Creators: An evening with regional composers, playwrights, choreographers, film makers and designers.
Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83745518504>

April 28 — An Evening of August Wilson: Celebrating the great American playwright. Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83745518504>

May 26 – BIPOC Voices in the Media: A deep dive into the ever-changing media landscape. Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83263993950>

For more information about the Straz Center for the Performing Arts and its upcoming events, visit www.strazcenter.org



Town Hall conversation to address climate resiliency in south St. Petersburg as part of annual iCAR workshop

ST. PETERSBURG – Florida communities are already experiencing the effects of climate change, from sunny-day flooding to more powerful and unpredictable hurricanes. And experts predict people from diverse and vulnerable neighborhoods will continue to be disproportionately impacted. Now researchers from the University of South Florida are partnering with organizations from south St. Petersburg to hold conversations about climate justice and how

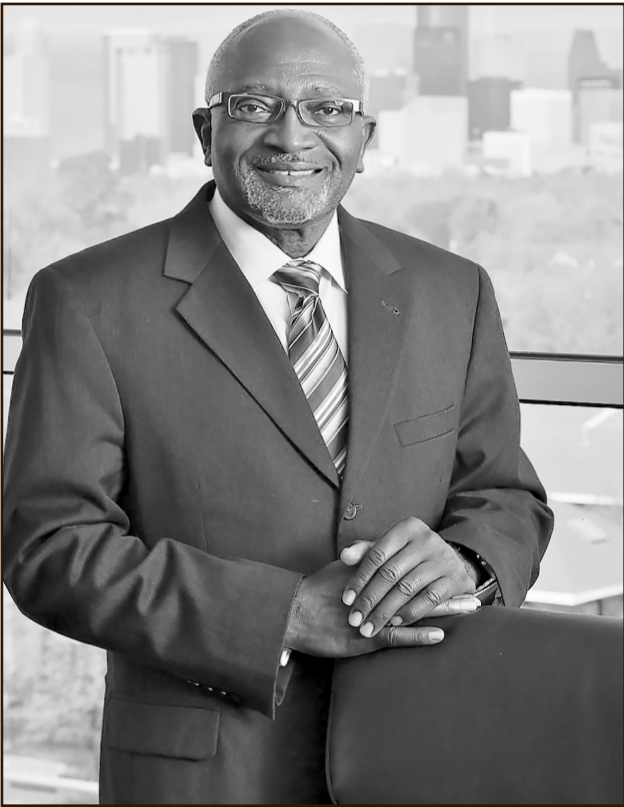
residents can start building greater resiliency within their community. Residents will also have the rare opportunity to learn from renowned scholar Dr. Robert Bullard, one of the premier national experts on environmental and climate justice issues. The events are tied to the annual Initiative on Climate Adaptation and Resilience (iCAR) Workshop, which is titled Climate Justice, Social Networks, and Equitable Resilience this year. In its

seventh year, iCAR is based at USF's St. Petersburg campus and aims to help the local community prepare and become more resilient to future environmental changes. The first event will be a town hall meeting in the Carter G. Woodson African American Museum garden, 2240 9th Ave. S, from 10-1 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 25. Free food and drinks will be provided, and there will be a crafts table for children. Participants will also be provided with a digital link or QR code to access information from their smartphones to help prepare and recover from a major storm. The purpose of the meeting is to engage the community in identifying the most pressing climate-related issues they face, from lost wages as a result of hurricanes to air quality to street flooding, said Rebecca Johns, associate professor of geography and co-director of iCAR. "One of our goals has always been to leverage the resources of the university to make those more accessible to marginalized communities," Johns said. "We know there's a big divide between academia and poor, Black and working-class communities. We've been trying for years now to try to break some of those walls down and make some of these re-

sources available." The input gathered from the town hall will be communicated to Bullard, the keynote speaker for the annual iCAR workshop. He'll be delivering a virtual presentation on Oct. 20 at 7:30 p.m. titled "Confluences of Environmental and Climate Justice: Bringing Diverse Partners Together for Community Resilience." Bullard's presentation will be held on Wednesday, Oct. 20, at 7:30 p.m. Participants can watch online through Zoom or join a watch party at the USF St. Petersburg campus waterfront. More information and a link to RSVP is available at bit.ly/iCARworkshop. Bullard, who is often referred to as the father of environmental justice, is currently the distinguished professor of Urban Planning and Environmental Policy at Texas Southern University. He is an award-winning author of eighteen books that address sustainable development, environmental racism, urban land use, industrial facility siting, community reinvestment, housing, transportation, climate justice, disasters, emergency response, community resilience, smart growth, and regionalism equity. Bullard is also co-founder of the Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Climate Change Consortium.

Bullard's presentation is an important step forward in involving the south St. Petersburg community members in creating a plan to combat the effects of climate change, which has been a priority for iCAR since its inception. "This ties back to the original mission of iCAR," said Barnali Dixon, executive director of iCAR and professor of geographic information systems and remote sensing. "We wanted to foster equitable resiliency based on informed decision making. The data and information, and research should guide the policies. But at the same time, we want to develop the research agenda from the grassroots." According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, environmental justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income regarding the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. A recent example would be the situation in Flint, Mich., where the community's drinking water was contaminated by lead. Minorities and low socioeconomic classes were disproportionately affected because they could not leave the area or find alternative water sources.

Climate justice builds on this concept by addressing the disproportionate impact of climate change on poorer and more disadvantaged communities. "We wanted to start with the grassroots," Dixon said. "The people who have the least say and the communities who do not normally have time or access to the process, that's who we wanted to reach." The iCAR workshop will also feature a presentation on the Community Resiliency Information System (CRIS), which was designed to "make smart cities smarter" by allowing residents from diverse communities to communicate their resources and information needs to decision-makers. CRIS was designed to foster transparency and communication between the government and the community. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can review the data from CRIS and provide mission-specific services, building greater resiliency. Dixon and Johns were awarded a grant from AT&T to establish a preliminary platform in St. Petersburg's Childs Park neighborhood. For more information about this year's iCAR Workshop, including a list of objectives, visit bit.ly/iCARworkshop.



Dr. Robert Bullard, one of the premier national experts on issues of environmental and climate justice.

Isay Gulley, towering figure in Clearwater revitalization, honored, part 1

GULLEY, from page 7

she spent time busy in out-reach but was always learning the other office roles.

“And I always would be prepared. If a vacancy comes up in a position that was higher than mine — that’s how I climbed.” In 1983, Gulley became the assistant director, and in 1990, director.

She would oversee the organization during its many successful growth spurts, including moving to North Greenwood and later Tarpon Springs, as it grew to offer more services, including an SBA lender arm. Gulley would famously mastermind the award-winning renovation of the blighted Greenwood Apartments’ transformation into the upscale Palmetto Park Apartments.

Horne spoke to the *Challenger* one month before his death on Aug. 14 about his long-term friendship with Gulley.

“I’ve been here since 1998, and I’ve been the manager since 2000. Isay Gulley was one of the first community leaders that I met when I was appointed to the position of city manager. Aside from her being a community leader, she was also an expert in affordable housing.”

Horne recalled that while she was running CNHS, “the city had housing funds that could be used to support affordable housing. That’s what brought us together, professionally.”

Horne saw Gulley from three different perspectives, all of which added to his esteem for her. “I saw one as a very strong advocate for affordable housing for the underserved, especially in North Greenwood. I saw her as a Coast Guard Reserve officer who spent a career doing that. And then I saw her from the standpoint of a community leader.”

Gulley, in Horne’s mind, had all of the qualities that any neighborhood community would want in its community leader: she was very well informed, very professional, and “very easy to talk about tough issues with.”

Horne noted that Gulley’s temperament, knowledge, and commitment made her a significant asset for the Greenwood community to have. “She is someone who could bring people together who have different points of view.” For Horne, she was “a role

model, exhibiting qualities that are helpful for people to witness on how to go about getting things done.”

Horne also acknowledged that Gulley played a crucial political role in a city not known for its strong work in encouraging equity and diversity.

“I saw her interact with the diversity within our community and our elected officials. As opposed to other communities, Clearwater hasn’t really had diversity within its ranks of elected officials. And so, she has been able to provide mentoring and some wisdom and advice to our council members who are really coming in many ways from a different perspective because they’re all white.”

Horne called her “a bridge-builder” and acknowledged that Gulley had worked very well with city staff.

“I really think that because of her gifts, she has been able to accomplish an awful lot in building new homes in the North Greenwood community,” Horne finished.

Gulley’s retirement leaves daunting shoes for her replacement to fill

Clearwater Neighborhood Services was founded in 1979 as a member of the congressionally chartered nonprofit NeighborWorks America. The national organization has 250 nonprofit organizations involved in community development throughout the United States and Puerto Rico.

Gulley was hired in 1979 and started in out-reach, letting homeowners in South Greenwood know about financial support available for home repairs and upgrades to code. In 1983 she became assistant director.

Gulley’s vision meant that it wasn’t enough for CNHS to just give out money for repairs. In 1983, she heard that the City of Clearwater supported an effort in St. Pete to help Black businesses. When that project shut down and Clearwater was left with the funding but no Black business project, Gulley told her board: “This sounds like something we should do.”

“We’re talking about neighborhood revitalization,” said Gulley. “The reason why people that know me call me a visionary is because you can’t trick people

by using an umbrella word and then don’t create ‘good legs’ that help you to achieve that goal. Neighborhood revitalization is more than building a new house. You got to look at the commercial corridors within those neighborhoods.”

With no one on staff to handle loans, Gulley was trained to process the business loans. She processed all the business loans from 1983 until she hired someone to do the job when she became director in 1990.

“They were small loans; the maximum was \$20,000, but a \$20,000 loan back then was a good amount for somebody that was trying to start up.”

Eventually, the organization became an SBA microlender, processing loans up to \$35,000. The program lasted until 2005, when the city decided to go another way with its commercial lending.

“[My work] has been such a fulfillment for me. Because after having lost our home from a scare tactic when I was young, I wanted to make sure that I kept open opportunities for those that were left behind. So, that’s why I’ve been an advocate, not only for Blacks, because in every neighborhood, you got left behind of all races.”

Gulley knew that whatever their lack of knowledge, it was often easy for those who would ordinarily be left behind to be blocked out of programs and products that could help them, and it became part of her mission to make sure everyone was able to access the services CNHS offered.

Former board member Sally Ruby noted that Gulley was on duty 24-7.

“Isay Gulley is the guardian angel of the area’s underserved communities. She is such an extraordinary person, working in concert with local agencies that can make concrete improvements in the lives of ordinary people,” offered Ruby.

“Whether it is one person who is in crisis or a systematic issue, Isay is there to serve as a rational, caring, and calming influence. She has uncanny abilities to address sensitive issues on a broad scale while never forgetting to bring aid to individuals who are enduring challenging times.”

Muhammad Abdur-Rahim has known Gulley since 1986 and was on the CNHS board at the time she became the organization’s director. When CNHS decided to move into the North Greenwood area, Abdur-Rahim became chair of that expansion committee. Under Gulley’s direction, said Abdur-Rahim, “We got the community involved and rallied around the fact of needing to actually have housing built, brand new, in the North Greenwood area.”

Abdur-Rahim called Gulley’s leadership outstanding. “Isay actually expanded Clearwater Neighborhood Housing Service into various areas outside North Greenwood. And that took an exceptional leadership style. Especially when she actually brokered the deal with Bank of America to remodel North Greenwood Apartments.”

The transformation of the housing project into an upscale apartment development revived the face of the neighborhood. Abdur-Rahim said the renovation



“We got the community involved and rallied around the fact of needing to actually have housing built, brand new, in the North Greenwood area,” said Muhammad Abdur-Rahim, seen here at the retirement celebration.

relieved some of the area’s blight, raised property values, and offered the area “a little bit brighter sense of belonging for the residents.”

He noted that an essential part of the initiative was ensuring that the community was engaged in the process. “Isay was all about making sure that the residents within the area get the proper training.”

Community members were encouraged to participate in the various NeighborWorks America training, emphasizing community engagement, responsibility to neighbors, and community empowerment.

Out of training like these, said Abdur-Rahim, the North Greenwood Association was born, going on to become “very powerful in its own right,” he noted.

By 1991, as director, Gulley and CNHS broke ground on their first new house through a partnership with the City of Clearwater to provide infill housing. According to Gulley, their new construction of affordable housing projects is getting ready to break ground on house number 257.

Tatishka Thomas was the first person in Clearwater to receive Warrick Dunn’s Homes for the Holidays project in a home purchased through CNSH. For Thomas, it was a life-changing experience to become a homeowner.

“[Gulley] was a great person to work with. She made the experience pleasant and easy.” Today, Thomas is new in the real estate business and credits

Gulley’s work as a “pioneer in North Greenwood” for inspiring her to consider real estate and community impact.

Gulley’s concern for community needs outside of housing led to the Hearts in the Village volunteer organization. Michelle Holmes, Gulley’s oldest daughter, helped start the organization.

“Hearts in the Village came about as an extension of Clearwater Neighborhood Housing Services, as a support to the community to reach needy families that may need food, clothing, any assistance that we could offer,” Holmes explained.

The organization began in 2015 with a homeless feeding program and has provided school and backpack giveaways, working along with other partners, including the Clearwater Police Department and United Way.

“She is a mentor,” Holmes noted. “She has natural leadership abilities because it comes from a sincere place within her heart, and she’s always trying to better anyone’s life she comes in contact with. She wants to leave them either feeling better about themselves or with more resources that they can look into.”

All who know Gulley’s impact are excited about her future endeavors and look forward to learning what her next steps will be. While a run for city council has come up, Gulley said that now, after so many years at CNHS, her family is her main priority.

To reach J.A. Jones, email jjones@theweeklyphallenger.com



Isay Gulley joined Clearwater Neighborhood Housing Services, Inc. in 1980, became assistant director in 1983 and director by 1990.



**BE SURE
TO CHECK
OUT OUR
WEBSITE!**

TheWeeklyChallenger.com

Join Our TEAM



Pinellas Education Foundation
Inspired minds transform lives

Current Employment Opportunities

Controller

This role is responsible for the management of administrative functions relating to Finance and Human Resources. This position is also responsible for managing accounting functions including, but not limited to, payroll, banking, accounts receivable, accounts payable, investments, annual audit, and maintaining compliance with, and preparing all necessary reporting for, grants and government reporting requirements.

Development Manager

This role is responsible for the planning, implementation, and management of the Foundation’s fundraising and donor events with a focus on ensuring the success of all development processes and fundraising activities.

Executive Assistant

This role is the primary point of contact for internal and external constituencies on all matters pertaining to the Office of the CEO. This role also serves as a liaison to the Board of Directors and senior management team; organizes and coordinates executive outreach and external relations efforts; and oversees special projects.

For more information about these positions, please visit:
pinellaseducation.org/careers

INVITING ALL PROFESSIONALS

Cheryl Parker-Smith

RE/MAX
Local Expert

presents

"I'm your Realtor - Welcome Home"

BUSINESS MIXER




Free Champagne Raffles Free Food Cash Bar

Toriano's Pizza and Much More
1059 62nd Street South St. Petersburg, FL

1 October 2021
6:00 PM - 10:00 PM

RSVP: Cheryl.ParkerSmith@Remax.net 727-798-5324








Jennifer Nicholson
Field Underwriter
FAMILY FIRST LIFE
THE ROGUE IMO
WWW.FAMILYFIRSTLIFE.COM

(813) 816-6698
WE'RE HIRING
(Ask Me How)

FL #W758301
OH #1374838

Term Life
Whole Life
Final Expenses
Equity Protection
Mortgage Protection
Index and Fixed Annuities

We work with several different carriers

WE ARE HIRING!

PREP COOKS EXPEDITERS DISHWASHERS BACK HELP WORK

Must be timely, reliable,
hardworking team player with
dependable transportation

CALL 727-867-3577
to schedule an interview



1136 Pinellas Bayway S., Tierra Verde, FL 33715



Experts In Life-Changing Care

By Karen Davis-Pritchett M.Ed., Empath Health Vice President of Access and Inclusion

An EPIC new place for sexual health care

Imagine a place where anyone could find the answers they need about their sexual health, free of judgment.

Fortunately for the St. Petersburg community, the new Empath Partners in Care (EPIC) Sexual Health Center combines inclusive, safe sex education with treatment and prevention services in one convenient location.

"One of the questions we frequently get is 'where can I ask questions about safe sex and get tested for sexually transmitted infections,'" said Susan Finkelstein, RN, medical and educational services manager for EPIC. "So, we decided to combine all of the different potential resources in one place."

Rates of new sexually transmitted infections (STI) are concerning, especially within the Black community. On average, African Americans are about six times more likely to become infected with an STI and account for nearly half of new HIV infections.

Currently, Florida has the highest rate of new HIV infections in the United States. In Pinellas County, gonorrhea, chlamydia, and congenital syphilis have also been on the rise for several years. The uptick in infections can be attributed to a hesitancy to seek education and treatment because of lack of economic resources, access barriers, lack of culturally responsive providers, and past experiences with discrimination.

When people are too afraid to ask questions about their sexual health, they may turn to the internet or other sources that can be unreliable. Symptoms may not be present with some STIs and can cause long-term health problems if untreated, making the need for education and testing even more important.

"The only way we're going to decrease the rate of STIs in the community is by education, rapid treatment,

and prevention of transmission," added Finkelstein. "Those are the three key goals of the program."

EPIC's Sexual Health Center prides itself on being a sex-positive environment to encourage questions and eliminate misinformation. All sexual orientations, gender expressions, relationship styles, and lifestyle choices are accepted without judgment.

"From the time somebody walks in, they tell us who they are. They tell us what they need. Then we follow up by providing those services or information," explained Finkelstein.

This includes having a conversation with the client to ensure that we are providing the best testing, treatment and education. Clients have access to rapid STI testing, including free HIV testing. Should a test come back positive, clients can start treatment in the office that day and leave with a prescription if additional doses are required.

Along with educational materials to prevent future infections, clients have access to prevention tools such as free condoms and dental dams. If HIV is a concern, the Sexual Health Center also offers prescriptions for PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis), which can help prevent infection, and PEP (post-exposure prophylaxis), which can be taken within 72 hours of potential exposure.

The Sexual Health Center is open six days a week. No appointments are necessary, ensuring it is easy for anyone to receive the care they need in a welcoming environment.

"We don't want people to be afraid to walk in," added Finkelstein. "The EPIC Sexual Health Center is a place where everyone can be safe, comfortable and receive support."

Learn more about the EPIC Sexual Health Clinic by visiting IfYouSex.org.



Meet the Team: (from left to right)
Katelyn Rosario, medical receptionist,
Kellie Bonsor, ARNP, and Susan Finkelstein, RN

PINELLAS
MYcroSchool
www.mycroschool.myway



ENROLLING NOW!

MYcroSchool is a tuition-free public charter high school from SIATech and is fully-accredited by AdvancED. MYcroSchool blends online and classroom learning. Our motivating program will help you prepare for college and a career.

Contact Us for Enrollment Information:
info@mycroschool.org (727) 825-3710
PinellasMycroSchool.org 840 3rd Avenue South, St. Petersburg
Webb's Plaza near Tropicana Field

FINISH HIGH SCHOOL FOR FREE!

NATE NAJA
ADRIAN GUNNING
Friday, Jun. 7, 8p

OUR SCHOOL FEATURES:

- Personalized, self-paced curriculum
- No referral necessary
- Rigorous and engaging activities and projects
- Technology-based experiences
- Caring teachers and Small Classes
- Serving Ages 16-21
- Tuition-free!

Orientations held weekly! Call today!

Get Back on Track to Graduation at MYcroSchool Pinellas

Annual Stop the Violence Walk this Friday

SCOTT, from front page

a gun at it. Nevertheless, he pushed on.

Scott said he was having talks at the Bartlett Park Community Center when someone gave him the idea of writing a pledge against gun violence. Coming from Chicago and being no stranger to gun violence himself, and now being a father who is expected to do something about his son's murder, Scott should be the first person to take the pledge.

"I'll take a stand positively to fight this thing and not seek revenge," said Scott. "It was my purpose to heal my family, and the way we wanted to heal was through our faith in God and love and forgiveness."

On May 1, Scott wrote the Black St. Pete Pledge with the hopes of planting a seed of personal accountability for the safety of the communities into the minds of those that are most likely to use gun violence as a means of solving their problems.

"So, I started going into the neighborhoods with the pledge," said Scott. "Anytime I see a bunch of guys gathered, anytime I saw

them out doing their deal, I went out and put the pledge in their hands. I wanted to just have that conversation with them."

Scott said the reception to the pledge "would blow your mind; it's transformed places." He added that some people are initially resistant, but the tension dissolves once they read over the card. The first weekend after the cards were made, he went out to 16th Street near a corner where many people had been shot and decided to go in the store for a drink before he began passing out the cards.

One quick conversation turned into another, which turned into another, and Scott never got that drink.

"Within 20-something minutes, I had over 37 signatures," said Scott. "I was like, 'wow,' and I got in my car and was amazed."

When Boyzell Hosey and Samantha Harris invited him to set up a booth at this year's Collard Green Festival, Scott said it "transformed the event."

"All races, all genders, it did not matter," said Scott. "They wanted to sign up

and support us."

He said the pledge has now taken on its own life, and he has been invited to event after event ever since. In the four months since he started the program, they are close to having 1,500 pledges signed, and that was only going out on the weekends and a "few hours here and there."

"We understood that if we were going to change this culture of gun violence, anytime, you're going to do a culture change, you have to go after the people that are most resistant."

Scott said that eventually, older people tend to grow out of the gun culture, and many people die from it. Either way, he realized it was important for the next group – the young kids. Scott then designed a training program meant to start a conversation between a facilitator and school-aged children. With that, 5 Keys to Ending Gun Violence Among Young People was created.

Scott said there had been talks and presentations with Academy Prep, Pinellas County Schools, and the Juvenile Welfare Department on implementing this program.

Tomorrow is the second "angelversary" of Marquis Scott's passing. Maress Scott is gathering people to retrace his son's final steps once again and appreciates the community support the event is receiving. A church has offered their parking lot, the police department is involved, and local politicians such as mayoral candidate Ken Welch, City Councilmembers Darden Rice and Deborah Figg-Sanders have also expressed interest.

Scott said that when they get to the spot where his son was murdered, his

MARQUIS' SECOND ANGELVERSARY

ANNUAL STOP THE VIOLENCE WALK

In honor of Marquis Scott

FRIDAY, SEPT 17, 2021 6:30 - 8:00pm

Walk begins at 7:00pm @ 19th Av & 24th St S. St. Pete.

Prayer/candle vigil starts at 7:30pm on Yale St & Queensboro Av S. St. Pete.

For more info, contact Maress Scott at (813) 539-6918



family and other victims of gun violence will talk about how it has affected their lives. The walk begins at 7 p.m. at 19th Avenue and 24th Street South, and the prayer and candlelight vigil begins at 7:30 p.m. on Yale St. and Queensboro Avenue South.

"Our whole aim is to honor God, to memorialize my son, and to start the healing process by bringing attention to gun violence," said Scott. "And again, to place the seed of personal accountability for the safety of our communities into each and every individual."

"But most importantly, the hearts of those guys most likely to use gun violence as a means to solve conflicts."



We are in this together and we will get through it together.

Suncoast Hospice has served Pinellas County with compassionate, expert hospice care for more than 43 years.

During this uncertain time, we want to assure you that we remain focused on our mission of providing life-changing hospice care, and those we serve are still our main priority.

SUNCOAST HOSPICE | a member of

(727) 467-7423 | SuncoastHospice.org

SHPC-21-0482

CHURCH NEWS

12 THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2021

www.theweeklychallenger.com

The Weekly Challenger



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

Sunday Worship Services.....7:45 a.m. & 10:00 a.m.
Sunday School.....9:00 a.m.
Wednesday Mid-Day Bible StudyNoon - 12:30 p.m.
Wednesday Prayer Service.....6:00 p.m.
Wednesday Bible Study6:30 p.m.
Youth Chapel Services - 921 20th Street South
Sunday Worship Service10:00 a.m.
Wednesday Small Group Bible Study6:30 p.m.

Mission Statement:
*Impact the world by equipping believers
to reach the lost with the gospel of Jesus Christ.*



Rev. Louis M. Murphy Sr.
Senior Pastor

First Baptist Institutional Church
3144 Third Avenue South,
St. Petersburg, FL 33712
Phone: 727-323-7518

Sunday School 9:30 a.m.
Praise Time 10:45 a.m.
Morning Worship 10:45 a.m.
Tuesday Night Live -
Prayer Service & Bible Study 7 p.m.

Come Worship With the First Baptist Family



REV. DR. WAYNE G. THOMPSON,
PASTOR

BETHEL METROPOLITAN BAPTIST CHURCH
3455 - 26th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, FL 33711
Telephone (727) 327-0554 • Fax (727) 327-0240
E-mail: bchurch5@tampabay.rr.com Web site: www.bmmbc.org

Sunday Worship Service10:15 a.m.
Sunday School9:00 a.m.
Teen Summit (Wednesday)7:00 p.m.
Bible Study (Wednesday)7:00 p.m.



Rev. Rickey L. Houston,
Pastor

“God’s House To The City”

BETHEL COMMUNITY BAPTIST CHURCH
2901 - 54th Avenue South
St. Petersburg, FL. 33712
(727) 866-2567



Rev. Dr. Manuel L. Sykes

SERVICES

Sunday School: 9:00 a.m.
Sunday Worship Service: 10:00 a.m.
Mid-Week Worship: Wednesday 7:00 p.m.



The Rev. Josie Rose,
Priest-in-Charge

Welcome – Bienvenidos
ST. AUGUSTINE’S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
Joyful Spirit, Joyful Jazz
2920 26th Avenue South, St. Petersburg 33712
727-867-6774
StAugustine@tampabay.rr.com

Sunday Communion and Worship Service 9:00 a.m.
Communion and Healing Service 11:00 a.m. Tuesdays



REV. ROBERT A. VINSON, JR.

FAITH MEMORIAL MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH
1800 18TH AVENUE SOUTH
ST. PETERSBURG, FL 33712
727-896-0351
FAITHMMBC@YAHOO.COM
GROWING RELATIONALLY IN DISCIPLESHIP THROUGH CHRIST
MATTHEW 28:18-20, JOHN 15:4-5

FAITH In ACTION
FAITH MEMORIAL MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

Please join us on our Zoom Ministry Line:
Meeting ID: 226-033-6850 Dial-in #: 1-929-436-2866
Sunday Prayer Service: 9:00 a.m.
Sunday Church School: 9:15 a.m.
Sunday Worship Service: 10:00 a.m.
Tuesday Bible Study: 7:00 p.m.



Rev. Wallace Elliott
Sr. - Pastor

First Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church
1121 22nd Street South, St. Petersburg, FL 33712
(727) 327-8708

Sunday Worship Services 8:00 and 11:00 a.m.
Sunday School.....9:30 a.m.
Prayer Meeting (Tuesday)6:00 p.m.
Bible Study (Tuesday)7:00 p.m.
Baptist Training Union (Sunday) ..4:00 p.m.

“The Little Church Where Everybody Is Somebody”

**YOUR CHURCH AD
COULD BE HERE!**

Contact:
www.TheWeeklyChallenger.com



**Donn & Jean
Freshler**

Victory Christian Center Church
3012 18th Avenue South
St. Petersburg, Fla. 33712
(727) 321-0911
www.Victorychristiancenterchurch.org

Schedule of Services
Sunday Worship*
10:30 a.m.
Wednesday Bible Study* -7:00 p.m.
Friday Prayer -7:00 p.m.
Intercessory Prayer - 9:00 a.m.
(except Wednesdays)

Victory Christian Center is a Word of Faith Church.
For more information about the other services and
ministries at Victory Christian Center, please call (727) 321-0911.
*Nursery and Youth Services Available



Bro. Robert Smith

**20th Street
Church Of Christ**
825 20th Street South
St. Petersburg, FL 33712
Home: 896-8006

Sunday Bible Class (All Ages)8:30 a.m.
Sunday Morning Worship9:45 a.m.
Sunday Evening Worship6:00 p.m.
Ladies Bible Class Monday7:00 p.m.
Monday Evening Bible Class7:00 p.m.
Wednesday Morning Bible Class10:00 a.m.
Wednesday Evening Bible Class7:00 p.m.

UNITY
Temple of Truth
CHURCH

Sunday Worship Service 10:00 A.M. *

511 Prescott Street South
St. Petersburg, FL 33712
727-898-2457
www.unitytemplestpete.org
unitytruth1957@gmail.com

Helping People Live Healthy, Prosperous and Meaningful Lives thru Practical Christianity

*** Live Streaming on our Facebook Page**

We pray for Afghanistan

We pray for Afghanistan’s people today: for those who are fleeing - who know they can’t stay, for those who face terror by day and by night, for those can’t leave and those whose dreams can’t take flight.

We pray for the people who dear what’s in store, for dreamers and poets who grieve a closed door. For those who are hiding so no one will see the people they are - are or hope to be.

We pray for girls facing a world they don’t know, who still long to read and to learn and to grow. We pray for young women who live with this fear: their bodies their voices, may soon disappear.

We pray for young children whose first lullabies were bombs and explosions and wounded one’s cries - and for those who served there, who see how it ends, who ponder their service, who grieve for lost friends.

We weep for the places where war leads t war. We pray for your hand there to heal and restore!! Bless all who seek justice and peace as your way. We pray for Afghanistan’s people today.

In Providence,
Rev. Pierre Loomis Williams
Chaplain, St. Petersburg Branch of ASALH and As-
sociate Minister of Mount Zion AME Church in Port
Tampa, Florida



INSPIRATIONS

BY DIERDRE DOWNING-JACKSON

‘Al’ Downing: My Father Was God’s Instrument

WHEN GOD GIVES YOU AN ASSIGNMENT, THERE IS ALWAYS JOY AND CHALLENGE FOR THE TASK TO BE DONE.

AS GOD’S INSTRUMENT, HE WANTS US PREPARED TO DO HIS WILL, HIS WAY.

MY FATHER MOVED OUT OF GOD’S WAY AND BECAME AN OPEN VESSEL TO BE USED.

DADDY WAS PREPARED FOR THE CHALLENGES, AS HE EXPERIENCED THE JOY OF THE BLESSING OF BEING USED BY GOD.

YES, IT IS A BLESSING AND WE MUST ACCEPT EVERYTHING THAT COMES WITH BEING AN INSTRUMENT USED BY GOD.

GOD MUST BE AT OUR HELM AND HE ALONE MUST DIRECT OUR

COURSE. HE MUST STEER OUR COURSE DOWN A PATH OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

AS MY FATHER TOOK THIS LIFE JOURNEY, HE WAS ENCOURAGED BY GOD’S LIVING WORD AND HIS PROMISES.

HIS JOURNEY WAS A WALK OF FAITH. HE OBEYED GOD’S COMMANDS, TRUSTED GOD’S WORD AND WOULD DILIGENTLY SEEK HIM.

MY FATHER KNEW THAT WITH JESUS AS HIS SAVIOR, HE COULD CONQUER ANYTHING.

WE MUST LEARN TO OPERATE IN THE SPIRIT. GOD TELLS US TO WORSHIP HIM IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH.

AL DOWNING WAS WILLING TO PRAISE AND PERSEVERE AS HE WENT THROUGH HIS JOURNEY AS GOD’S INSTRUMENT.

MY FATHER PRAYED FOR GOD’S GUIDANCE, DIRECTION, PROTECTION AND PEACE.

HE PRAYED FOR OTHERS AND WAS CLOTHED WITH HUMILITY.

MY FATHER LISTENED TO GOD AS HE TOLD HIM WHAT TO DO, WHERE TO GO AND HOW TO MOVE FORWARD AS GOD’S VESSEL AND INSTRUMENT.

IT WAS A BLESSING TO WITNESS MY FATHER WHO WAS WILLING TO BE USED BY GOD. MY FATHER WAS WILLING TO BE GOD’S INSTRUMENT OF LOVE.

THANK YOU LORD FOR THE EXAMPLE OF MY FATHER, WHOSE FAITH HELPED US TO LEARN HOW TO HOLD ONTO OUR PEACE.

KEEP US
SILENT BEFORE YOU LORD AND DELIVER US FROM ALL UNRIGHTEOUSNESS.

TAKE OUR HAND LORD AND LEAD US.

MY FATHER WAS TRULY THANKFUL TO BE USED FOR YOUR GLORY LORD. PLEASE KEEP US ALWAYS HUMBLE IN YOUR SIGHT LORD JESUS.

THANK YOU LORD FOR YOUR GRACE AND MERCY AND FOR A FATHER WHO LOVED YOU SO.

AMEN

“And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water; That bringeth forth his fruit in his season; His leaf also shall not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.” Psalm 1:3 KJV



CHURCH NEWS

ST. MARK MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

1301 - 37th Street South, St. Petersburg, FL

(727) 321-6631 • www.stmarkch.org

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

THE ROCK OF JESUS MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

SUNDAY SERVICES/WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

10:30 a.m. Worship Service

9:00 a.m. Breakfast (First Sunday only)

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.

Adult Choir Rehearsals - Thursday 6:30 p.m.

Van service is available by calling: (727) 327-0015

THE ROCK OF JESUS IS LOCATED AT:
3940 – 18th AVE. S., St. Petersburg, Florida

Telephone: 727-327-0015 • Fax: 727-327-0021

Email: rojmbc@knology.net

Office Hours: Tues. & Thurs. 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.



Rev. Frank W. Peterman, Jr.
Pastor

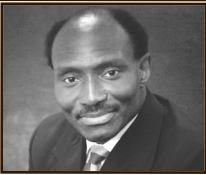
Friendship Missionary Baptist Church

3300 31st St. S., St. Petersburg, FL 33712

(727) 906-8300 www.friendshipstpetersburg.org

Email: fmbc3300@outlook.com

YouTube: FMBC The Ship



Dr. John A. Evans, Pastor

WORSHIP EXPERIENCES

Sunday Worship8:45 a.m. “The Hour of Power”

Sunday School.....8:00 a.m.

Wednesday in the Word

12:30 p.m. via ZOOM - ACCESS CODE: 599-819-6863 PASSWORD: 778769

7:00 p.m. via ZOOM - ACCESS CODE: 509-102-8823 PASSWORD: THESHIP

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.

Today's Church TAMPA BAY

ST. PETERSBURG
2114 54th Avenue North

TAMPA
5107 N Central Avenue

SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP
8:45AM Drive In Centering Service

SUNDAY AFTERNOON WORSHIP
2pm Cultural Integration Worship Experience

10:30AM CREATIVE EXPRESSION WORSHIP EXPERIENCE

WEDNESDAY NIGHT WORD
6:30 PM - COLLECTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS PRAYER

7 PM - BIBLE STUDY

WWW.TODAYSCHURCHTAMPABAY.COM

ZOOM: MEETING ID 375 007 212 PASSWORD 5107

CHURCH NEWS

St. Mark M.B. Church

Walking in the Valley– Psalm 23

In this psalm David recounts his years of shepherding. While he shepherded a small flock God shepherds the flock of the human race. We can all look to God to provide, protect, and preserve the lives we live. David had valleyed moments as we have valleyed moments to walk through. The valley is not a place for us to get stalled, stuck or sink. God says we are to walk. Walking suggest that we are surviving while in the valley. We walk through and gain a testimony that God, who led us to ‘this’, is the same God who will bring us through ‘this’, and we will survive whatever our ‘this’ may be. It reminds us that no matter how challenging, we can say with God there is no failure.

What’s needed to survive valleyed moments? David gives us the formula. From verse 1 the first point Listen to the Promise of the Shepherd. God makes promises in our valley moments, whether sad, troubled, or sick, God gives us promises and we should be listening for the promises of God. To survive we need to listen to the promises of the shepherd. What we’re going through is not meant to kill us but

strengthen, not to destroy but develop, not to ruin but to raise, not to silence but give opportunity to succeed. The shepherd has what we need and when he gives it to us, we will never want for anything else.

The second point from verses 2 and 3, Lock Into the Provisions of the Shepherd. We must realize that our survival is not predicated on what we can do but on what God alone can do. God makes good provisions for us. In verse 2 it tells us that the Lord will give us green pastures, still waters and in verse 3 the Lord is rest over lives, he will lead us to do what is right. God not only gives us bread when we’re hungry and water for our thirst but gives us counsel when we’re confused, deliverance when we’re down, peace in pain, triumph over troubles. He gives us everything we need. God will offer what we need but he won’t make us take it and if we get in trouble, we can’t blame God. God always provides. It’s up to us to lock into his provision. God knows us better than ourselves. While we think we need ‘this’, God says we need ‘that’.

The final point from verses 4 and 5 - Look for



Rev. Brian K. Brown, Pastor

the Presence of the Shepherd. Sometimes it’s not that we can’t listen to the promises of God or can’t lock into his presence sometimes we struggle in looking for God’s presence. If we look for God with the natural eye, we will miss him every time, but if we do forensics on the Lord, if we tap into the spiritual realm, if we use our spiritual eye, we find that he’s present everywhere. He woke us up, he put joy in our hearts, he’s given us a portion of health and strength. This is the presence of God. Are we giving credit where credit does not belong when we receive the blessing so God? It is God who makes a way for us, and it is he to whom we owe thanks unto.

We invite you to join us on Sunday morning in the sanctuary or through live-stream on YouTube @ St Mark MBC at 10:20 for Sunday School, worship service at 10:45 a.m. each Sunday with bible study on Wednesdays @ 7:00 p.m.

Winning in the Valley– 1 Samuel 17:3-11

The text reveals that two parties, Israel and the Philistines who were positioned to do battle, each on opposites mountains. Goliath, a member of the Philistines, goes into the valley and makes a proposition to Israel, rather than all of them do battle, he would represent the Philistines and Israel would send someone to represent them. Whoever man won, would win for his nation, and the winning nation rule over the loser.

Pastor Brown presented three points for consideration if we are to win in the valley. The first point – You cannot win without development from God. When we consider the frame of David no one really believed he could do victorious things against Goliath, but David assured the king that God had been developing him for such a time as this. David knew he could handle a battle with Goliath because God had prepared him in previous moments in life and through his leaning on the Lord. There had been a lion and a bear problem with them taking sheep from the flock and David had to go after them and the Lord gave him the ability to be a champion against the lion and the bear. As David knew God had done it, he was sure God would do it again with Goliath. He also knew that he never would have had victory over the bear if he hadn’t been successful over the lion. God develops and prepares us for the valley moments in life that lead to victory. The question for us is: have we taken the time to put the

work in so that we are developed? David does not give credit to himself for victory over the bear, lion, or Goliath. All credit is given to God, his trainer, coach, the one who pushed him, the one who encouraged him to not look at the face of the enemy but to trust in God. We only know what we know in the now, but God knows everything now. He knows what’s on the horizon so he does all he can to push and develop us so when we get to the unknown, we’ll know what to do.

David did not have to change his strategy it was the same, God gave him the power against the lion and bear and God gave him power over Goliath. God is not trying to develop our physical being but our faith, not our physical sight but our spiritual sight, not our relations with people but our relationship with him. We wrestle not with flesh and blood but against principalities, spiritual and wickedness in dark places. As we trust God, he will show us how victories are won.

The second point – We cannot win without dependence on God. Goliath showed up with three options for victory, his sword, spear, and his shield. David had to learn to eliminate options because with any option other than God, he would, and we will try the options before we trust God. Option 1, 2 and 3 were all in Goliath’s hands. We are more likely to trust what’s in our hands and our understanding rather than trust something out of our hands. Some people make God one of their options, but

David made God his only option. David did not have a sword, spear, or shield. He shows us he didn’t need options when God has been his only option. Options other than God have the potential to fail. We are to take the provisions God gives us but never trust in the provisions more than the one who made the provisions.

The third point – We cannot win without deliverance by God. The battle between David and Goliath would seem like ‘no contest’ based on their sizes alone. David does not run from Goliath but runs toward him, takes a stone, put it in his sling and flings it toward Goliath’s head. The stone lodges in Goliath’s forehead. It wasn’t the power of David that caused the stone to be lodged deep in Goliath’s forehead, it was God. Everything that happens in our lives is not because of money, influence, or education, it is because of God. For God is our deliverer, he is our help and hope, and our winning is because of him. God didn’t allow David to have a sword, spear, or shield, and in the end, David used the sword of his enemy to remove his head. Victory today is our when we trust in God and look not to the enemy but look unto God who continues to give us victory.

We invite you to join us on Sunday morning in the sanctuary or through live-stream on YouTube @ St Mark MBC at 10:20 for Sunday School, worship service at 10:45 a.m. each Sunday with bible study on Wednesdays @ 7:00 p.m.



Pray for our Country



Pastor’s Corner

BY REV. DR. DORAL R. PULLEY,
SPIRITUAL LEADER
TODAY’S CHURCH Tampa Bay

It’s all in your mind

“But he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them, every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falls (Luke 11:17).”

Your mind is the thinking part of your soul. Like seeds sown in the ground, the thoughts that you hold in mind reproduce themselves in your health, finances, and relationships. You cannot stop ideas from coming to your mind, but you can decide how much energy you give to those ideas.

Until you give an idea energy, it is simply a suggestion. You decide what suggestions to accept and what suggestions to reject. The suggestion does not become your thought until

you accept and give it energy.

The Bible says, “Pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17).” Every thought is a prayer. What thoughts consume your attention the most? Ideas focused on separation, perceived differences with people rather than your similarities?

The Kingdom Principle of Divine Nature reminds you that every person is a spiritual being and God’s beloved offspring. Prayer changes your way of thinking and empowers you to think of each male as your brother, each female as your sister, and each individual as your sibling. All people desire to be loved and accepted for who they are.

Regardless of differences, God made each of us in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26-28). Therefore, everyone is worthy of love and respect. You can grow in consciousness to the point where there is no person or a group of people that you have challenges accepting because of their age, gender, race, orientation, socio-economic status, educational level, religion, or any other aspect of their personality.

To have true fellowship, you must accept people who appear different from you because you have more in common with them than those differences. Stretch yourself to start a conversation with a person whom you feel is different from you

SEVEN TIMES SEVEN PRESENTS

SEVEN X 7

CITYWIDE

revival

CONSECRATION SERVICE

Dr. Doral R. Pulley

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

SUNDAY

SEPTEMBER 19TH @ 6P

CORNER OF 18TH AVE & 19 ST. SOUTH

ON THE GROUNDS OF FAITH MEMORIAL BAPTIST CHURCH

PASTOR MURPHY
Visionary Leader



"Bringing your best to the table."

However you do Sunday Dinner, love is shared with those who matter most.



Find inspiration at
publix.com/SundayDinner

Rogers-Givens Family
Atlanta

