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Southern Christian Leadership Conference  
NATIONAL MAGAZINE

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July 18-20, Atlanta



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**MAYNARD EATON** is an 8-time Emmy Award winning TV News reporter, who is SCLC's National Communications Director and Managing Editor of the SCLC National Magazine. Eaton is a former TV news reporter who is now Executive Editor of Newsmakers Live/Journal and The Maynard Report. He is also President of Eaton Media Group, and a journalism professor at Clark Atlanta University.

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Photographer: Faith Swift  
Cover Design and Layout: Monica Blood



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# SCLC

Southern Christian Leadership Conference  
NATIONAL MAGAZINE

*In Print Since 1970*

MAGAZINE MAILING ADDRESS  
P.O. Box 92544  
Atlanta, GA 30314

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# sclc NATIONAL EXECUTIVE OFFICERS



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# To crucify someone via public opinion after death is to kill them twice.

BY DR. CHARLES STEELE JR., SCLC National President & CEO

**R**ecently, we have been hearing accusations of alleged misconduct based on an old FBI file released on our revered co-founder, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. I would normally not give any acknowledgment to such heresy, but I feel I must for this particular circumstance. Let me say this, these accusations from the recently released FBI files are coming from a time in history when the director of the FBI was J Edgar Hoover (who is known to have had a vendetta against Dr. King). Here are my thoughts...

When the world heard of the assassination of Dr. King so many were completely appalled and saddened. Especially for the African-American community, we were devastated at the loss of one of the greatest leaders of our time. When I think about this time in history I see the dreams and hopes for a community, a country and a world destroyed on that night. Dr. King was a thinker and a dreamer that the world had never seen before. He had the ability to give hope to a hopeless time in history and he understood the importance of faith being the foundation for moving forward. Dr. King was not just a famous social activist and Baptist preacher of the gospel.



He was the co-founder of the civil rights organization, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) which was the catalyst for two of the three major civil rights bills in American history. Dr. King himself was a leader and trailblazer in the American civil rights movement from the mid-1950s until his assassination in 1968. Dr. King helped spearhead two of the most famous boycotts and marches in US history, the Montgomery Bus Boycott and the 1963 March on Washington. These historical times helped bring about landmark legislation namely the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Dr. King was more than just a good speech and a good march. He was a lion in the wilderness of oppression. He was hope for a future that felt lost for so many. Therefore, his death was untimely and disheartening to the world. So you see, when you disparage the legacy and life of a man

who brought so much hope to so many, you are destroying a legacy bigger than that person. It is bigger than any one person, Dr. King's legacy is our cultural history, American history and world history. When you try and tear down any leader who has passed away and has no ability to respond to accusations, you are assassinating not only his character, but his legacy at point blank range.\*



1963, Martin Luther King leading the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. Photo: Robert W. Kelly, Getty Images

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April 19, 1960, the day of the Z. Alexander Looby house bombing, thousands of demonstrators marched down Jefferson Street toward city hall in Nashville. Front, L-R: C. T. Vivian, Diane Nash and Bernard LaFayette Jr. Photo: Jack Corn, The Tennessean

## National Sit-ins 60 Years Ago

BY DR. BERNARD LAFAYETTE JR., SCLC National Chairman

**I**n 1959 James Lawson, Jr., began conducting workshops with student leaders from the various colleges and universities in the Nashville area. Some were leaders of their student bodies, campus student organizations, civil rights groups, fraternities, sororities and others. These students heard by word of mouth about these workshops and began to attend. Some joined as individual students.

James Lawson was a graduate student at Vanderbilt Divinity School who was asked by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to come south and help with the Civil Rights Movement. Rev. Lawson first met Rev. Kelly Miller Smith, Sr. He was Pastor of the First Baptist Church downtown, Nashville, professor at the American Baptist Theological Seminary, and President of the Nashville Christian Leadership Council, an affiliate of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference which was led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Lawson also met Paul LaPrad, a white student who attended Fisk University; Rev. C.T. Vivian and a few other local clergy.

Once the workshops on nonviolence got started, they began to attract students from several colleges in the Nashville area. The workshops were focused on desegregation of the downtown lunch counters, using the nonviolent approach. We studied the movements led by Dr. Martin

Luther King, Jr. such as the Montgomery Movement and the movement led by Mahatma Gandhi from India. We focused on our goal and how to reach it, by nonviolent direct action. It was a different way of learning, such as the use of role-play and social drama.

The first sit-ins we had in Nashville were not protest, but “testing”. By that, I mean we sat-in to simply see how those who surrounded us would react to our being there sitting on the lunch counter stools. We would then return to training and reenact or role-play our experiences. This training helped us learn how to control our emotions, so we would not lose it, when we had a real sit-in protest. Keeping self-control was an important part of nonviolent discipline.

We were pulled off the stools, beaten and arrested. We were convicted, bailed out of jail and returned to the lunch counters. In approximately three months, Nashville desegregated its lunch counters. That Easter weekend downtown boycott did it.

“Power is the ability to supply or withdraw needed resources,” Dr. King was often quoted.

Some of the notable student leaders from Nashville included Diane Nash, Marion Barry, James Bevel, John R. Lewis, Rip Patton, Pauline Knight, Catherine Burks, Matthew Walker, Candie Anderson, Angeline Butler, Joe Carter, Curtis Murphy, Kenneth Frazier and others.♦

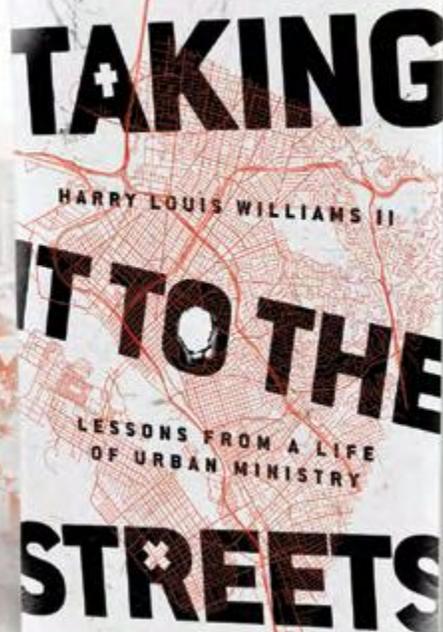
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**sclc** from the first lady



BY CATHELEAN STEELE, Founder, Justice for Girls

## **RACISM: A Problem for Black Expectant Mothers**

*On behalf of the SCLC family I am overjoyed to welcome Mr. Charles Johnson as our guest speaker for our annual Women's Empowerment Luncheon. Mr. Johnson is standing in the gap for his wife Kira who died after giving birth to a beautiful baby boy. Because of the relentless efforts of Mr. Johnson, congress passed the Preventing the Maternal Death Act (H.R.1318). This legislation was signed into law on December 21, 2018. We encourage each of you to support 4kira4moms. As we stand up for Kira, we stand for all Black women who someday may become mothers.*

**L**ately, I have been reading and hearing about the number of Black mothers who die after giving birth. This intrigued me, especially since I am familiar with the term postpartum pre-eclampsia. It is a term that I learned when my daughter was sent home after the birth of both her second and third child. If my husband and I had not had children we may not have known to rush her back to the hospital within a few hours of her discharge.

When I read about the death of Kira Johnson, I knew that we needed to focus on the issue of Black mothers dying after child birth. Why are doctors not paying attention when a Black mother complains that something is wrong? I sought to answer this question. The research boggled my mind.

According to a publication in the Harvard Public Health Magazine, "In the U.S., black women who are expecting or who are new mothers die at rates similar to those of the same women in lower-income countries, while the maternal mortality rate for white U.S. mothers more closely resembles rates in more affluent nations." Further research guided me to an article written by Dr. Allison Bryant Mantha, vice chair of quality equity and safety in the obstetrics and gynecology department of Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston. Her comments confirmed my earlier research. She stated, "Racism affects so many things before the patient even gets to the clinical encounter. Both implicit bias and structural racism affect how women are cared for in the health system."

Article after article supported the same facts. Each confirmed that the lives of Black women are undervalued in our healthcare system. Researchers have also written that in the United States, "Black women are three to four times more likely to die of a pregnancy-related death than white women, and recent studies show that up to half of all maternal deaths may be preventable."

As a Black woman, a mother and a grandmother, I encourage each of us—Man and woman of all races and ethnicities—to stand up for health equality in a nation that proclaims equality for all. •

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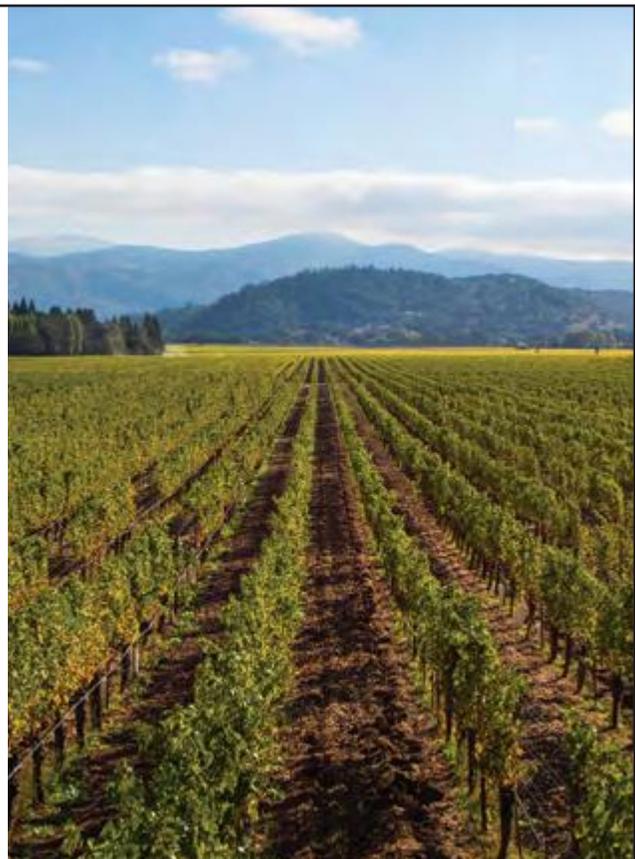
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March 4, 1968, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., president of the SCLC, displays the poster to be used during his Poor People's Campaign. Photo: Horace Cort, Associated Press

## AFFORDABLE HOUSING: The Poor People's Campaign Continues!

*Dr. Steele laments, "For poor folks throughout the world, there is a daily storm for survival, and always another one of some sorts on the way."*

BY KEISHA RAY, Executive Assistant to the SCLC President & MAYNARD EATON, SCLC Magazine Managing Editor

**T**he lack of, and the increasingly dire need for, affordable housing has emerged as one of America's most pressing problems for the poor and lower middle class. It's fast becoming a national nightmare because of gentrification and natural disasters.

The devastation that Hurricane Michael brought to the Florida Panhandle and southern Georgia has proved to be a horrific and troubling example. People of color and low-income communities saw their homes, churches and schools wiped out, literally overnight. In the aftermath of this natural disaster, another plight, one that continues to plague our country; the disenfranchisement of our poor.

SCLC President Dr. Charles Steele felt their pain and was on the ground there immediately to hear and heed their collective pleas for help and housing. "We are getting started there in Panhandle on the forgotten coast with our affordable housing efforts to help build homes and rebuild lives," says Dr. Steele.

The SCLC began receiving calls, almost immediately to help coordinate the relief efforts, specifically to focus on

helping the poor. Dr. Steele has committed to helping the area and bringing the branding and resources of the SCLC and extending our Poor People's Campaign into this area for long term and immediate relief efforts.

Steele will be reaching out to SCLC's corporate partners and chapters for an "all hands-on deck" call to action to help with these efforts. "Each of these initiatives will require volunteers, prayers and financial resources to help us ensure that the poor will not be overlooked during this relief effort," says Dr. Steele.

Through the We Build Project of the Poor Peoples Campaign, the SCLC will be working with lending institutions in the Panhandle region to address the funding crisis for the rebuilding of homes.

Nine months since Hurricane Michael's category 5 winds twisted and tormented Florida, and with the 2019 hurricane season underway, Panhandle residents and others throughout the nation are fearing and bracing for the worse.

Dr. Steele laments, "For poor folks throughout the world, there is a daily storm for survival, and always another one of some sorts on the way."•

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## STACEY ABRAMS: Spelman’s “Warrior Woman”

BY MAYNARD EATON

**A**fter nearly winning Georgia’s 2018 gubernatorial race to winning national acclaim following her historic and riveting rebuttal to President Donald Trump’s 2019 State of The Union Address, Stacey Abrams has emerged as a powerful politico and the quintessential Spelman “Sister”.

Had she won, Abrams would have become the first African American woman governor in the nation. She was also the first black woman to give the official SOTU response. From 2011 to 2017, the 47-year-old Abrams served as the first African American Minority Leader of the Georgia House of Representatives.

That’s why Abrams, a captivating 1995 magna cum laude graduate, was awarded Spelman’s prestigious Community Service Award in January. She has proved to be a politically revered voting/civil rights leader with clout and cachet.

Spelman President Dr. Mary Schmidt Campbell says Abrams has “energized and inspired” and “awakened a sense of possibility” in citizens across Georgia.

“This year we recognize a victor, she is a winner, our very own Spelman sister; our fiercely fearless, warrior woman, the magnificent Stacey Abrams,” she opined to a thunderous applause from a capacity crowd of AUC students and faculty at Spelman’s Sister Chapel.

In accepting the award Abrams robustly replied: “I mean this sincerely, we won. I may not occupy the governor’s office, but we have made our imprint and it will go stronger every single day. We won change, we won opportunity, and we have leaders that now must look over their

shoulders every day because we’re coming. We changed the narrative of what it meant to be a leader in America. I didn’t have to change my hair, my gender or my skin color to be the next governor of the state of Georgia and 1.9 million people agree. And, it’s because of you that on November 6th I refused to concede and demand that every vote be counted. It is because of you that I refused to concede, and I will never say it’s okay to steal our votes.”

During an exclusive interview with this reporter, Abrams added: “Spelman teaches women how to leverage and deploy their power. So, the framing of a ‘warrior woman’ is a beautiful notion because it understands that embedded in our sense of who we are is the responsibility to do something for others. We achieved a multi-racial, multi-ethnic coalition unlike anything Georgia has ever seen, and we were only blocked by voting irregularities.”

Soon after that Spelman speech, Abrams catapulted to national political prominence when she was selected to rebut President Trump’s SOTU. “She’s an incredible leader,” said Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer of Abrams. “She’s led the charge for voting rights, which is at the root of just about everything else. If you look at her background, she knows what working class and middle-class people go through.”

Abram’s nationally televised, prime-time SOTU response speech was arguably her highest honor to date and admittedly her “largest platform.” Pundits and politicians agree, she nailed it.

“Stacey Abrams achieved in a matter of minutes something Donald Trump failed to do in over an hour—to

embrace and give voice to the spirit and core values that make America great,” said former Vice President and 2020 Democratic presidential frontrunner Joe Biden.

“I’m grateful and honored to be a part of how we think about the future of the country,” Abrams told SCLC Magazine. “The decision to select me reflects work we were able to do here in Georgia; expanding the electorate and making sure every vote counts. Senator Schumer and Speaker Pelosi understand that about the work that I’ve done, and they want that to be a part of the conversation I have with the country.”

Abrams rise to the national political stage began when she arrived on MARTA at Spelman College in 1991. Spelman was not her first choice. “I was tricked into Spelman by my mother” she revealed. But then she met then Spelman President Johnetta Cole, and she saw Morehouse men, she laughs. Dr. Cole told her, “she expected us to be women of integrity and to own our power.”

Dr. Cynthia Spence, Director of Spelman’s Social Justice program, got to know Abrams as Spelman’s SGA President and the first Spelman finalist candidate for the renowned Rhodes Scholarship. She echoes others in calling her an eloquent, thoughtful and a star student.

“I’ve been knowing Stacey was brilliant for a very long time, and that’s rare because we’re surrounded by really smart young women all the time,” said Spence. “She should be where she is now. She is an amazing woman. Just read her resume, and it reads someone who has made very careful,

strategic decisions about where they wanted to end up. Her SOTU response is a highlight of her career that will propel her to the next level. It’s just falling right in place.”

Dr. Dorian Brown Crosby is a Spelman political scientist scholar who worked on Abrams’ gubernatorial campaign. She praises her as poised, phenomenal and passionate, whose riveting words responsibly resonate. Dr. Crosby’s parents were both “heavily involved” in Atlanta’s civil rights movement.

“Stacey is raising the awareness and sort of the calling card to the Democrat party’s base of African American women,” she opines. “I’m elated because she truly represents what Spelman itself stands for. She is really taking the civil rights struggle, that has never ended but just has a different look, to the 21st century. She’s a new warrior equipped with those historical memories.”

Abrams promises to be on the ballot again soon. On May 1st she revealed that she won’t run for the U.S. Senate in 2020, as was widely speculated, but left open the possibility of becoming a White House candidate or emerging as a hopeful’s running mate.

“I know you that you don’t have to hold elective office to transform the conversation, and that’s why I going to spend every day until I run again, running my mouth”, she vows. “Elections are moments in time, but we are on a mission. The same way Spelman opened its gates [for me], I intend to open the gates of Georgia so we can all belong.”

*“Stacey really represents the Spelman mission. She is a remarkable example of what can be done once you graduate Spelman. We’re a pathway to changing the world.”*

—Spelman Professor Dr. Dorian Crosby



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**Our culture needed  
an adult.**

**Gayle King rose to  
the challenge.**

BY ROBIN GIVHAN

*Gayle King, host of “CBS This Morning,” is having a moment – one that has been more than 20 years in the making.*

---

Photo: Chris Sorensen, The Washington Post

**N**EW YORK—The reimagined “CBS This Morning” is in the middle of a commercial break as Gayle King clippety-clops through the show’s green room doling out chipper hellos as she makes her way back to the set. She settles into the center seat between her two new colleagues. A giant yellow CBS “eye” looms over her shoulder like her own personal sun.

It’s late May and the room’s temperature is set to goose bumps. The crew is padding around in sneakers and utilitarian blah. Co-anchors Anthony Mason, 62, and Tony Dokoupil, 38, are a mash-up of baby-boomer Wall Street grays and rep stripes with a millennial skinny tie and Vince sneakers. King, 64, is the light, the energy, the heat. Her stilettos look as though they have been dipped in confetti. Her dress is cobalt blue. Caramel-colored streaks meander through her brown bob. The heart-shaped diamond necklace that twinkles in her décolletage is just large enough to make you wonder: Is that real? Yes, it is.

Getting to this moment has been a slow, steady build that suddenly lurched into overdrive. It’s been powered by upheaval at the network’s news division, by King’s interview with R. Kelly—which was Shakespearean in its drama and pathos—and by King’s basic-common-sense public persona.



**“CBS This Morning” hosts Gayle King, Anthony Mason, second from left, and Tony Dokoupil, right, interview director Ron Howard, left. King goes in for the question on every baby boomer’s mind: What about Opie? Photo: Chris Sorensen, The Washington Post**

She watched and reported as the career of her co-anchor and friend Charlie Rose unraveled after eight women accused him of sexual harassment in November 2017. A show that was once rising in the ratings was nose-diving. Keeping King became imperative; there was no one else to right the ship. In her new contract negotiated earlier this year, the network paid her royally—as King has emerged as the Tiffany Network’s biggest star.

King is, perhaps, what the culture needs right now: a soothing voice of reason, an adult who isn’t drowning in cynicism, who is still capable of being let down by her fellow humans if only because she still has faith in them. Someone who lives in this real-world “Truman Show” without feeling the need to perform.

“I think she’s the most natural person on TV today,” Dokoupil says. “She takes the [teleprompter] as a suggestion. She’s a great ad libber.”

King’s interview style is conversational. Her face doesn’t flash with skepticism. Her brow doesn’t furrow—a reflection of her control rather than a symptom of Botox dependence. She sits with charm-school posture, hands in lap. She has a tendency to repeat phrases for emphasis; and her questions can sound like a mix of therapy and parlor game: This made you feel, how?

King asks the question on the viewer’s mind—the question that’s journalistically sound but not necessarily flashy or high-minded. Her questions rarely have the side benefit of making her look uniquely informed or hard-hitting.

“Where does Opie sit with you?” she asks director Ron Howard on that May morning, when he comes to publicize his documentary “Pavarotti.” After a segment about robo-taxis, King deflates the whole story by wondering aloud: Isn’t that just another name for a driverless car? The green room erupts in a chorus of “that’s what I was thinking!”

“I think it’s okay not to act like you know something,” King says in an interview later. “I don’t think because you ask a question that it reveals, ‘God, she doesn’t know something.’

I never think that. I think there is a way to engage people and have a conversation and not feel lesser than.”

In February, King interviewed Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam (D) in the midst of his agita over a blackface photo found on his yearbook page. She listened as Northam pleaded ignorance to the full impact of blackface and then exclaimed: “But governor!” She was an appalled Everyday Jane. Her tone suggested disappointment rather than judgment.

Her R. Kelly interview in March reverberated across the culture, not for the facts it revealed but for the emotions it unleashed. King sat facing the musician, who has been charged with multiple counts of sexual assault, in a politely adorned hotel suite as he erupted.

Her makeup artist Lazarus Baptiste snapped a picture of the scene and describes the decisive moment as King sitting solemnly like “Whistler’s Mother” with Kelly towering over her with his arm outstretched like a grandiose “Hamlet holding Yorick’s skull.” King’s voice, a mellow contralto, kept repeating the singer’s given name: “Robert. Robert. Robert.”

“If there was a thought bubble, it’d be like, ‘Okay, you have to sit here and wait until he’s done with whatever he’s doing,’” King recalls. “My sole motivation at that point was, ‘Please don’t let him leave. Please don’t let him leave. Please don’t let him leave.’”

“I really did believe it was a breakdown; he was so angry,” King says. “He went from zero to a two to a six to an eight to a 12. All right before my eyes.”

“I think people were surprised that in that moment I didn’t run out of the room or I didn’t say, ‘Hey, don’t do that.’ I really did just let him be,” King says. “The fact that I just sat there, I think it was very surprising to people.”

The R. Kelly interview ratcheted up King’s stock at CBS and beyond. “It was a game-changer,” she says.

It showed that King had chops.

When people meet King, they often begin by offering what they believe to be a compliment but which is really a kind of insult: They attribute her smooth delivery on air to her being a “quick study.” They do this because they don’t



**Norah O’Donnell, Charlie Rose and Gayle King and on the set of “CBS This Morning” in March 2017—about eight months before allegations of sexual harassment by Rose were made public. CBS Photo Archive**



**When R. Kelly flew into a rage during his interview with Gayle King, she told herself not to get up: “That would say to him, this is over, this interview is over.” Photo: Lazarus Baptiste, CBS**

realize she’s had a long career of her own—for years they only knew her as “Oprah’s best friend.”

The two met in Baltimore as 20-something single women. It was King’s first job in television.

As a student at the University of Maryland, King had planned to be a child psychologist, but she had a voice for television—a low register, crisp pronunciation, speech that travels at a touring speed—and someone from the local television station suggested she apply for a job.

That was how, at 21, King ended up as a production assistant in Baltimore with an annual salary of about \$12,000. She later worked in Washington and Kansas City, Mo., and spent 18 years as an anchor at the CBS affiliate in Hartford, Conn., where she also hosted her own daytime show.

Folks presume that King has benefited enormously from her friendship: King had a talk show on Winfrey’s OWN television network; she is editor-at-large of Winfrey’s magazine.

Meanwhile, there is little consideration of this question: What does it mean to be Gayle’s friend? What does it mean to stand in Gayle’s light?

To be King’s friend is to find loyalty and discretion. King is the friend who will grab the doggie bag because of course you will want it later even if you don’t feel like dealing with it now. She is rich. And she is fun.

“The thing I learned from her is how to be nicer,” says Adam Glassman, the creative director of O, the Oprah Magazine, who has known her for 19 years.

*“If there was a thought bubble, it’d be like, ‘Okay, you have to sit here and wait until he’s done with whatever he’s doing,’” King recalls. “My sole motivation at that point was, ‘Please don’t let him leave. Please don’t let him leave. Please don’t let him leave.’”*

**Gayle King on her interview with R. Kelly.**

When King debuted on “CBS This Morning” in 2012, Rose led the hard-news coverage for the first hour of the two-hour show. King didn’t come to the table until the half-way mark—for the lighter fare.

“I can’t say, ‘God, I felt lesser than because I joined at 8 o’clock,’” King says. She knew what she was getting into. “But once they started moving me into the 7:30 and moving me into the 7, I go, ‘I like sitting up here from the very beginning. I like that.’”

She shared the stage with Rose and a third anchor, Norah O’Donnell, two colleagues who often seemed to be trying to out-gravitas each other. The chemistry seemed to work as “CBS This Morning,” stubbornly stuck in third place behind “Today” and “Good Morning America,” began to rise in the ratings. Then the #MeToo movement swept through CBS, laying waste to Rose, along with “60 Minutes” executive producer Jeff Fager and network chairman Les Moonves.

King and O’Donnell were the shellshocked anchors delivering the litany of bad news to viewers.

“I always considered Charlie a friend and I don’t believe that you abandon your friends,” says King, who remains in touch with Rose. She believes there’s room for mercy. “You have people that have done far more heinous things that

are forgiven. But come-back doesn’t mean that you get to come back to doing what you were doing before.”

Has King forgiven Rose his sins? “It’s not up to me to forgive Charlie. That’s between him and whoever. Yeah. I can’t really speak on that.”

What she will say is that for as much good that the #MeToo movement has done, it’s also been problematic.

“I’ve been in situations where people have said something that I thought was inappropriate, but it never occurred to me to call them on it. I would just sit and just let it go or not respond. But I think women coming up today, and I think men, too, will know that’s no longer cute. It’s no longer funny. So I think that’s important,” King says.

Still, she sympathizes with someone like Aziz Ansari, whose career was upended in 2018 after Babe.net published a story in which a woman accused him of taking advantage of her. Some readers felt the article, written during the height of #MeToo revelations, mischaracterized what was essentially a bad date.

“I can’t wait to go see his show. I thought what happened to him was very unfair,” she says. “I’m hoping he does come back.”

With its ratings plummeting, “CBS This Morning”



**King moderates a conversation with former first lady Michelle Obama during the book tour for Obama's "Becoming". Photo: Paul R. Giunta, AP**

added John Dickerson as a third anchor. He brought an easygoing and thoughtful presence, but he often had the distant mien of a tourist just passing through.

CBS veteran Susan Zirinsky, newly arrived to helm the network's news division, announced last month that O'Donnell would anchor the evening news; Dickerson would report for "60 Minutes." And "CBS This Morning"—or, as the network has rebranded it, CTM—is newly rebuilt around King. "She has the ability to engage people," Zirinsky says. "People want to talk to Gayle, both the accuser and the accused in the same story. That's about trust. ... I don't see anyone like her on television right now."

Zirinsky, a longtime CBS journalist who was the inspiration for Holly Hunter's character in "Broadcast News," is the first woman to lead the news division.

"I have always been proud to work at CBS, even when we were going through the s---storm," King says. But if Zirinsky "wasn't where she is, I don't think I would be at CBS. I don't think so. No I don't."

After the show, King steps onto West 57th Street, where her black SUV is waiting, and she heads to Norma's, the restaurant in the Parker New York hotel that is famous for its \$2,000 lobster-and-caviar frittata, and where King is a frequent diner. Toting multiple overstuffed bags that would break lesser women, she teeters through the hotel's bordel-red lobby and into the bright, white light of the restaurant, where the late-morning diners silently marvel at her arrival.

Do you care what King orders for breakfast? If you are one of the 682,000 people who follow her on Instagram, you probably do because her Instagram is filled with both intimate and mundane snippets of her life, including her periodic disappointment with her escalating weight. On more than one occasion, she has posted a picture of the number on the scale and, most recently, her bare feet straddled a glowing 175.2.

"I was sort of horrified about it. I'm like, 'Gayle, can you get a pedicure?'" Glassman says. "She's not afraid to show warts and all, not because it's calculated, but because that's just who she is. She'll come in and say, 'I'm doing a cleanse today,' and she'll have her green juice and in the other hand a cupcake."

Commentators have told her that she is brave to post her weight. Such transparency!

"I have a mirror. You have eyes. So to me it's silly to lie about it," she says. "People say, 'You talk about your weight; you talk about your age; you don't mind being photographed with no makeup.' I just don't have that kind of hang-up."

Well, she did once: "I was at the gym one day at the Beverly Wilshire—I like that hotel—in L.A. This guy came walking in and I thought, 'Oh God, I wish I would've put on some lipstick today,'" says King, who is divorced with two children.

King orders the quesadilla with chorizo, along with a single plain pancake. She is especially fond of the complimentary smoothie: a shot glass of whipped fruit. She has four shots.

"I always end up taking half the quesadilla home," she explains with the same focus she gave to parsing the R. Kelly dynamic. "The one time I didn't take it, I said, 'Oh, I'm not going to want to eat it later.' And then that night, I was going, 'Why didn't I take that quesadilla?' So now it's better to have it rather than kicking yourself for not taking it."

King considers these small things: the psychology of doggie bags, the design of airport bathrooms, the existential value of a free ice cream sundae. This is her skill: her easy patter about the connective tissue of life that links strangers.

She is a great broadcaster, not a newscaster, says Mason, her co-anchor. The former is able to talk about anything with anyone.

King has accumulated a lengthy list of famous friends. She pals around with Sen. Cory Booker (D-N.J.). She's chummy with Michelle Obama. She attended the baby shower of Meghan, Duchess of Sussex.

Do you say to your friend: Don't tell me newsworthy information if you don't want it in the news. Or do you say: Whatever you tell me will be off the record. Is each story, each revelation, a negotiation?

"I knew Cory was going to run [for president], but I would never have said that before he announced it," King



**Gayle King with her best friend Oprah Winfrey. Photo: Greg Allen, AP**



**King: “People say, ‘You talk about your weight; you talk about your age; you don’t mind being photographed with no makeup.’ I just don’t have that kind of hang-up.” Photos: Chris Sorensen, The Washington Post**

says. “Even at the expense of my job, I would never betray a friendship.”

She attended private events in the Obama White House. She didn’t brag about being there and refused to disclose who else was. “I do think that I’m entitled to a private life,” King says, “even though I may have some very public friends.”

But if you breathe the rarefied air of fame, it’s in your system. And so even if she doesn’t betray confidences, King still has access to valuable context.

“Sometimes, we’re reporting on something, I can go, ‘Well, that’s just not true. That’s just not true.’ And we can’t report it that way.”

By her estimation, she has never angered her bosses because she refused to share information. Even when her colleagues peppered her on air with questions about Meghan’s shower, she remained mum.

After breakfast, King goes to her office at O magazine. She slips into clogs and attends run-throughs—those fashion deliberations made famous in “The Devil Wears Prada” as the setting of an exegesis on cerulean blue.

In these sessions, Glassman is a more benevolent Miranda Priestly and King is the voice of Everyday Jane trying to understand how it is that stripes and floral patterns are an acceptable combination.

“I explain that the colors are similar and so it works. Or it’s a smaller print and a larger print so it works,” Glassman says. “She’ll say, ‘I have a blue dress; I need blues shoes, right?’ ‘No, you can wear black. ‘Can I really wear black?’”

“People relate to her. The dress may be a little too tight

or a hem twisted because she’s put on two pairs of Spanx,” Glassman says. “She has a style, but it doesn’t look unapproachable. Some people look so overly groomed; they look like a model. Gayle looks very real.”

King refuses both hubris and false modesty. Her latest contract is reportedly worth \$11 million a year. She is living in higher cotton these days, but she was already knee deep.

“My definition of success used to be being able to fly first class whenever I want to and go wherever I want to go,” King says. “I met that goal a long time ago.”

So what is her new definition? “This sounds very elitist, so I’m not going to say it.”

Oh, come on, Gayle. You’ve already told us your weight.

“For Thanksgiving, I always take my three sisters and their husbands and their kids—

so it’s a party of like 13—and we’ll go somewhere: Turks and Caicos, Anguilla, Puerto Rico. I would really like to charter a yacht so that I could take them to Europe and we just sail around for 10 days. And if you looked at yacht prices, you just know that’s outrageous.”

We have not checked yacht rentals recently. What do they run?

“You’re looking at like \$750,000 to a million dollars for one week,” King says. “I’ve been on yachting vacations. They are the best. If I could do that for my family, where I could take 13 people on a yacht to Positano, to the Amalfi Coast, Nice and Cannes. I think that would be very cool. You have to make screw-it money. I don’t have my definition of screw-it money.”

But King has something even rarer. She is an African American, female broadcaster finding her most high-profile success at what many consider retirement age. She has accomplished this feat exuding earnest curiosity rather than gravitas. With certainty in her skills and at home in her skin, King is her own best friend. •



**Robin Givhan** is *The Washington Post’s* fashion critic. She writes about fashion as a business, as a cultural institution and as pure pleasure. She is the 2006 Pulitzer Prize winner for criticism and author of “*The Battle of Versailles: The Night American Fashion Stumbled into the Spotlight and Made History.*”

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## One-on-One Interview with Director Sam Pollard

*Pollard Opines About His “Maynard” and “Missing and Murdered” Documentaries with Maynard Eaton*

**F**amed director/producer, Sam Pollard has been frequently commuting to Atlanta from his New York City home to craft and shoot a bevy of meaningful productions in Georgia and remains dedicated to continuing to ply his trade here in the future.

The celebrated 68-year-old editor/producer/director has already made his movie mark here. The widely acclaimed “MAYNARD” documentary, which recalls the life, legacy and impact of Maynard Jackson, who was the nation’s first Black mayor of a major Southern city, was robust, resonating and revealing.

Now, Pollard’s upcoming piercing and probative review of Atlanta’s traumatizing “Missing and Murdered Children Crisis” that claimed 29 young lives 40 years ago promises to be equally riveting and controversial.

These are not the seasoned and savvy Pollard’s first feature documentaries shot in Georgia. Pollard and Atlanta’s Pulitzer Prize winning author, Douglas Blackmon, won a prime-time Emmy for their documentary, *Slavery by Another Name* in 2012. He filmed the award-winning documentary, *MAYNARD* here just two years ago, and he’s also wrapped co-directing the Steven Spielberg and Alex Gibney produced six-part documentary-series, *Why We Hate*, expected to be released on the Discovery Channel in 2019.

Pollard was the esteemed editor on the Academy Award nominated documentaries, *When the Levees Broke* and *Four Little Girls* with 2019 Academy Award winner, Spike Lee. He’s won six prime time Emmy’s and is the recipient of four Peabody Awards for his documentaries. He’s also a tenured professor at the prestigious NYU Tisch film school and continues to nurture creatives from all backgrounds while also strongly supporting Georgia’s film and television industry.

“We have grown in thought, expression and execution as a result of working with Sam. Learning from him has been

an honor and privilege” opines Wendy Jackson, co-founder of Auburn Avenue Films. “My husband and partner, Maynard Jackson III and I are grateful for his expertise and guidance!”

Auburn Avenue Films will soon produce two documentaries celebrating civil and human rights with Sam Pollard directing.

Much to my delight and surprise, I was the focus of a three camera, hour plus long interview by Sam Pollard for his 2020 “Missing & Murdered” documentary. That’s because I regularly reported on that cruel crises as an 8-time Emmy Award winning Atlanta TV newsman between 1979 and 1981. “That HBO, Sam Pollard interview with me about “The Atlanta Child Murders” was an enthralling exchange about my covering and reporting on that tragic and troubling Atlanta nightmare,” I have previously expressed. “It was a dark, despicable and disturbing 22-month unpleasant episode that engrossed and repulsed the nation. I will never forget the palpable pain, coupled with the menacing and highly charged racial tensions.”

Please stay tuned for this newsman’s interview in Pollard’s forthcoming documentary, because I shared original insight, information and poignant remembrances of my news reporting during that ugly era that shocked the nation and the civil rights community.

Then Pollard agreed to flip the script and allow me to interview him. What follows is an edited version of our captivating Q&A conversation:

**MAYNARD EATON: I just want to get a sense of what brings you to Atlanta to direct this documentary? You have many notable credits to your name, why now and why this subject?**

SAM POLLARD: One of the reasons that it is attractive to me is because I just did the film on Maynard. I felt like getting into Mayor Maynard Jackson's story gave me an opportunity to understand Atlanta from way back in the 60's up to Maynard's death and now this is another opportunity for me to delve into another aspect of Atlanta even though it's a pretty painful one. When I'm doing documentaries, I'm always looking for stories that I find complicated and complex; that pushes the envelope.

The reason that this company that I'm working with got attracted to doing the story about the "Missing and Murdered Children" is because of the section I had in "Maynard" about "The Missing and Murdered Children". That gave the whole emphasis to this project. So, to me it's just another opportunity to use my documentary chops (laughing) to tell a complex story.

**ME: Has that been your calling card of late? Documentaries? Is that your storytelling favorite platform now?**

SP: Yeah, when I started in the business way back in the 70's I was an apprentice editor. I did most of my work in documentaries as an editor. I edited some low budget feature films but was supposed to be editing documentaries and then I didn't start directing until I did Eyes on the Prize 2 in 1987-88, and then right as I was finishing that in 88 that's when I met Spike(Lee) .

I did seven films for him over the next 10 years, and I really focused on features in the 90's. It's been a career where I had a great opportunity as an editor, and then I had an opportunity to work with Spike on Mo' Better (Blues) and Jungle Fever and Bamboozled, Clockers, and Four Little Girls and by the time I got to the 2000's I realized I loved doing features, but I also wanted to go back to documentaries, where I was directing more. It's been, for me, a career where I've had lots of opportunities.

**ME: But always telling stories, about our people, that seems to be the central theme and focus of your productions?**

SP: I worked with [St. Clair C. Bourne (February 16, 1943[1] – December 15, 2007) an American documentary

filmmaker, who focused on African-American social issues and themes] in the 80's and he was always telling me "Man you got to make sure you do films about our people, about our history, and culture." and that sort of got into my head. That's always been important to me from that point on to do that.

**ME: Did working with Spike give you some storytelling and creative thoughts about Atlanta's Black experience that perhaps no other place has?**

SP: Yeah you know in a way because you know having Morehouse and Spelman and Clark Atlanta and Morris Brown back then... and you know my son went to Morehouse down here in the 90's you know so you know it was always about this sort of Atlanta connection, my other son went to Tuskegee but you know it's always been important for me to be connected to you know the black experience both in Atlanta and the educational experience too for young black people.

**ME: Does Atlanta say something to the rest of America? Is that also what you're finding out through the recent documentaries you're doing?**

SP: This is a big cosmopolitan city man. It's a Black city for me, so it's a city that many of us in the film industry connect to and I've been coming so much now I really connect to it.

**ME: So, this "Missing and Murdered Children" crisis, is seemingly something you think the country will be riveted to? Does it speak to folks in Cleveland and L.A or is this just an Atlanta story?**

SP: No, I think it speaks to the communities of Cleveland, L.A, Detroit, Chicago; and other urban cities. It speaks to all [our nation's inner city] communities. Soon as you turn your television on now, and you watch the news, it's a multi-racial country. I think Atlanta was at the forefront of it and when you said that today, "Maynard [Jackson] was the Obama of this time"

"Maynard Jackson] created something that was like 'Wow!' I don't think any of us realized how impactful he was, but I know it even more now."•



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Ottawa, Ontario, January 30, 2018; inside parliament, community leaders and members of parliament stand behind Prime Minister Trudeau as he announces that the Government of Canada will officially recognize the International Decade for People of African Descent.

# UN Decade Devoted to African Descendants

BY HEATHER GRAY

**I**n December 2013, the United Nations passed a proclamation calling for a decade to be devoted to African descendants throughout the world. It was named specifically, ‘**Proclamation of the International Decade for People of African Descent**’. Below are excerpts from the 2013 proclamation:

***Reiterating** that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights and have the potential to contribute constructively to the development and well-being of their societies, and that any doctrine of racial superiority is scientifically false, morally condemnable, socially unjust and dangerous and must be rejected, together with theories that attempt to determine the existence of separate human races....*

***Acknowledging** the efforts and initiatives undertaken by States to prohibit discrimination and segregation and to engender the full enjoyment of economic, social and cultural as well as civil and political rights....*

***Emphasizing** that, despite efforts in this regard, millions of human beings continue to be victims of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, including their contemporary manifestations, some of which take violent forms...*

***Proclaims** the International Decade for People of African Descent, commencing on 1 January 2015 and ending on 31 December 2024, with the theme “People of African descent: recognition, justice and development”, to be officially launched immediately following the general debate of the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly.*

If there is any place in the United States where this important proclamation should be addressed, it is in the southern part of the US where slavery persisted and its impact has prevailed, as well, in terms of racism, racist policies and white supremacy. Yet, many of us who live in the South have

only recently become aware of this United Nations directive.

Here is a sampling of some of the suggested actions from the United Nations that all of us should consider addressing in our various cities, counties, states and regions:

## RECOGNITION

### I. The right to equality and non-discrimination states should:

- Remove all obstacles that prevent their equal enjoyment of all human rights, economic, social, cultural, civil and political, including the right to development;
- Promote the effective implementation of national and international legal frameworks

### II. Education on equality and awareness-raising states should:

- Celebrate the launch of the International Decade at the national level, and develop national programs of action and activities for the full and effective implementation of the Decade;
- Organize national conferences and other events aimed at triggering an open debate and raising awareness on the fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, with the participation of all relevant stakeholders, including government, civil society representatives and individuals or groups of individuals who are victims;

## INFORMATION-GATHERING

*In accordance with paragraph 92 of the Durban Program of Action, States should collect, compile, analyze, disseminate and publish reliable statistical data at the national and local levels, and take all other related measures necessary to assess regularly the*

*situation of people of African descent who are victims of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.*

*Such statistical data should be disaggregated in accordance with national legislation, upholding the right to privacy and the principle of self-identification.*

*The information should be collected to monitor the situation of people of African descent, assess progress made, increase their visibility, and identify social gaps. It should also be used to assess and guide the formulation of policies and actions to prevent, combat and eradicate racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.*

(**Note:** the total list of information and brochures can be found by going to the United Nations website entitled “International Decade for People of African Descent”)

### **Recognition of the UN Decade:**

There are many places in the world that have already begun to act on the directives of the proclamation, which includes Canada in our own hemisphere and some of the islands in the Caribbean. In January 2018, the Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau stated:

“Today is an important day for Canada. Our commitment to the International Decade will help us better address the very real and unique challenges that Black Canadians face, and bring us closer to a more just and inclusive country”

A US president, however, has not yet endorsed the UN Proclamation or made a statement comparable to the Canadian Prime Minister Trudeau. In fact, under President Donald Trump, the United States recently pulled out of the UN Human Rights Council. Nevertheless, as a white woman, originally from Canada, but having lived in the southern US and in many places throughout the world, I realized the importance of this directive from the United Nations. And, it is important to note that communities and organizations across the country can become engaged in activities and their own endorsement of the proclamation.

In my work with farmers across the South, when serving as the Director of Communications for the Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund, I soon learned of the African influence on southern culture altogether, including: the food farmers grow and that we eat (gumbo, for example, featured in New Orleans, is a West African term and okra, in the gumbo dish, is also from West Africa); the attitudes toward family and community; musical contributions; the sciences; in the arts altogether; religion

and religious expressions; and appreciation of family. And these are but a few examples.

Also, having lived overseas in Australia and Asia I soon discovered that two of the important musical contributions that the world recognizes as indigenous to the US are blues and jazz which are of African-American creations and inspirations.

The contributions in science and virtually every aspect of American life, thanks to those of African descent, are vast. I do need to refer to George Washington Carver, who many will wisely note that “he saved the South” through his remarkable acknowledgment that crop rotations were necessary. The cotton production in the South was destroying the soil but Carver taught both black and white farmers that this could be salvaged through crop rotation, primarily with soybean crops. And this is but one example of Carver’s brilliant contributions.

But the list of Black contributions and inventions is considerable including virtually every aspect of American life from astronomy to bioengineering to civil engineering to computer science to electrical engineering to medicine to psychology to chemistry to zoology – the list goes on and on.

The point is that these achievements and impact of African-Americans on our everyday life in America is not taught and acknowledged and they need to be.

The above is but a sampling of examples of the importance of African heritage and

influence on the America culture as the list could go on and on. Nevertheless, what is important is that this history and on-going influence be learned and taught throughout the country. It’s also way past time that the discriminatory attitudes and policies toward those of African descent end altogether. But this can only happen when we begin to acknowledge American faults, get rid of discriminatory policies and honor each other. The UN Proclamation provides an opportunity for us all to do exactly that. The time is now!•

*Heather Gray has a history of activism on civil and human rights for decades in the southern region of the United States as well as nationally and internationally. She expresses this background and activism in media both on the radio and in articles. She holds an undergraduate degree from Emory University and Georgia State University in Anthropology and a Masters Degree in Sociology from Georgia State University.*

*“Today is an important day for Canada. Our commitment to the International Decade will help us better address the very real and unique challenges that Black Canadians face, and bring us closer to a more just and inclusive country.”*

—The Rt. Hon. Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada



Firebombed Williams Chapel Church, Ruleville, Mississippi. (Charlie Scattergood in sunglasses.) Photo: Charlie Scattergood Collection

## SUNFLOWER SPIRIT

### *The Legacy and Love of Civil Rights Warrior Charlie Scattergood*

FOREWARD BY ROBIN WILLIAMS & REFLECTION BY ZELLIE RAINEY-ORR

In 1964, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee organized “Freedom Summer” and the Freedom School in Sunflower County, one of the hardest hit and marginalized parts of Mississippi. One of the main goals of Freedom Summer was to teach young people the kind of bravery and resistance that their parents were conditioned to fear. A bevy of white progressive students traveled to Mississippi to help facilitate the school and aid in the movement. A young University of Washington student named Charlie Edson Scattergood was among them.

Born May 1, 1941, in Boothbay Harbor, Maine, Scattergood cultivated a passion for the Civil Rights cause early on. He participated in sit-ins, ‘shop-ins’, and non-violent demonstrations from Seattle, to San Francisco and Berkeley, California. Scattergood quickly experienced the perils of resisting authority, even outside the storied Civil Rights battlegrounds of the American South.

“...I kept thinking they don’t just arrest peaceful picketers in the North. They did,” reflected Scattergood. “The minute they grabbed the first picket, we all went limp and locked arms in non-violence resistance. They brutally broke us apart and hauled us off by our feet with our heads bumping on the ground.”

Despite being attacked by a gang of black youth while returning from an orientation session on non-violent resistance in Berkley, Scattergood refused to press charges. He cited in a May 1964 *Oakland Tribune* article that “he could understand why some negroes may not like white men.” Undaunted by this and other negative experiences, Scattergood advanced to formalize his role in Civil Rights by becoming a SNCC field secretary. Along with a dozen other young white freedom workers, Scattergood eventually went on to play a prominent role in the “Freedom Summer” movement shortly thereafter in Mississippi. While preparing for his journey, Scattergood sensed the mounting energy and intensity of his purpose.

“... Thousands of students are getting ready for the spring and summer in the South. Hundreds of college students are joining the bandwagon, lending moral and economic support.” Scattergood emphasized, “ It’s that word that did it. I’ll sweat for it. I’ll bleed for it. And yes, I’ll die for it. The word is freedom and it’s blowing in the wind.”

Scattergood certainly did bleed in his endeavors to defend freedom for the black residents of Sunflower County. He was incarcerated, beaten in jail and dragged through the streets of Indianola. In spite of the violence he experienced,

## Area Youth May Leave Mississippi Jail Today

A 23-year-old white civil rights worker from Arlington, arrested and reportedly beaten in the Sunflower County (Miss.) Jail on Saturday, probably will be released today.

A Council of Federated Organizations (COFO) spokesman in Jackson, Miss., said by telephone this morning that \$3,000 in bond money has been raised for Charles Scattergood, and 20 others arrested during weekend demonstrations in front of a public library and the courthouse in Indianola, the Sunflower County seat.

Meanwhile, about 2,000 Negro elementary and high school students in the county stayed home from school yesterday and today to protest the arrests and what they called "extreme police brutality" and discriminatory practices.

COFO believes that Scattergood and two other prisoners were injured by police either in jail or in the process of being arrested. County Sheriff Lee Hollowell indignantly denies that anyone has been hurt.

A private general practitioner from Indianola examined Scattergood an hour after his arrest Saturday in front of the public library, according to Sheriff Hollowell, but the young man refused treatment. It is understood that the doctor recommended that Scattergood receive a tetanus shot, but it is not known why such treatment would be indicated.

Mrs. Leslie W. Scattergood of 2214 North 24th St., Arlington, was in Washington recently to testify before a hearing gathering evidence to support a challenge of the regular Mississippi congressional delegation by the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party.

At that hearing, Scattergood was highly critical of Hollowell and other law enforcement officers in Sunflower County, where Scattergood has been a civil rights worker for about a year.

Mrs. Scattergood, the wife of a marine biologist at the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, said this morning that she has heard nothing from her son since Friday night, when he called her on the telephone and discussed a demonstration held that day in an effort to desegregate the Indianola public library. The Associated Press reported a total of 20 persons arrested in demonstrations Friday and Saturday.

Yesterday, on the basis of an agreement with the Indianola Town police chief, Bruce Alexander, a doctor representing COFO attempted to enter the jail to examine Scattergood and the two others reported injured. But Sheriff Hollowell reversed the police chief's order and refused the doctor admittance, claiming that "there is nothing wrong with anybody."

COFO claims that two other



CHARLES SCATTERGOOD

May, 1964 Oakland Tribune article

he did not back down from the challenges of providing mentorship to the young men and ladies at the Freedom School. One such young teen was Zellie Rainey Orr. An aspiring writer and poet, Orr was to go on to becoming a nationally lauded historian and author. Little did she know that she would be destined to cross paths with Scattergood three decades later.

Eventually, Scattergood left Mississippi after a hard year and a half in the struggle. His time there not only impacted the people he helped but majorly shaped him as a man.

"In many ways it's a place not only where I took a big stand, but it was a place that taught me many lessons in life which were subtle, lessons of the heart, of love, companionship, and emotional intelligence," recalled Scattergood. "My departure from Mississippi never really happened. You see, I never actually left, or could leave a place that I baptized with my own blood."

## SUNFLOWERS BLOOM & LOVE GROWS

By Zellie Rainey-Orr

In mid-July 1964, the Mississippi "Freedom Summer" voter registration project expanded to include my hometown of Indianola, the county seat of Sunflower County.

When the first contingent of "Freedom Summer" volunteers, Charles Scattergood and Gretchen Schwarz (both white), and John Harris (black), were imbedded in the Indianola community, they moved into the home of an elderly black lady, Mrs. Irene Magruder, on Byas Street.

I also lived on Byas, two houses down from Mrs. Magruder.

It was a few days after their arrival, while out canvassing the neighborhood attempting to register blacks to vote, that I met Charlie and Gretchen. They stopped by our house and asked to speak with my parents.

The bravery and avid support displayed by Mrs. Magruder towards the "Freedom Summer" volunteers began the transformation of the community into an Underground Railroad. This time, it was blacks that provided the influx of primarily white college students, shelter and food. It was an exciting, but dangerous time.

I was thirteen that summer. Although I was apprehensive and afraid, I was drawn into the movement beginning with my participation at the [Indianola] "Freedom School" and mass meetings. Less than a year later, the "Freedom School", Mrs. Magruder's home and three other dwellings in the community, owned by blacks in the movement, were firebombed. Most burned to the ground due to the non-responsiveness of the fire department.

Unlike the movie, "Mississippi Burning", depicting blacks as aloof and fearful; we did not run. Instead, we organized in an effort to extinguish the fires. To this day, no one was ever arrested, nor charged with the crimes.



Historian Zellie Rainey-Orr, age 12, a year before the Freedom Summer of 1964.

I rarely saw Charlie during his year-and-a-half sojourn in Mississippi. Among the times our paths crossed were at the mass meetings and when I went with my mother to deliver home cooked meals to the "Freedom Summer" volunteers at Mrs. Magruder's.

Another, was during a protest march uptown. I was among the marchers when the police asked us to disperse. Instead we kept marching. When the police advanced we fell to our knees and using a passive tactic taught us, covered our heads with our hands. The police began to arrest some of the protesters, Charlie was among them.

While facing a wall of resistance from the white community, Charlie experienced a remarkable kinship with the people in the black community with whom he marched, protested and went to jail.



**Scattergood's widow and historian Zellie Rainey-Orr displays "Mississippi Freedom Summer Reunion, 25th Anniversary Journal". Documentary Photos: Charlie Scattergood Collection, Charles Switzer Library**

A year-and-a-half later, overcome by emotional, mental and physical fatigue, Charlie boarded a bus and abruptly left Mississippi.

Thus, it was no less divine providence when thirty-three years later, in July 1997, my and Charlie's path, some 400 miles separating us—he in Virginia, I in Atlanta, entwined.

Our relationship unfolded like a shooting star and like teenagers, we enjoyed a passionate romance filled with much love, and much laughter.

In August of 1998, Charlie moved to Georgia. The following year in our birth month of May, we were to marry.

Then the unimaginable happened.

While on his way home from work, February 9, 1999, my Charlie was rear-ended in an automobile accident, and died at the scene. I was devastated.

On November 18, 2001, "Charles Scattergood Villas," a 56-unit apartment complex in Indianola, Mississippi was named in his honor.

Now, 20 years after his death, as I complete Charlie's memoir, I am reminded of his words, "You are the one to tell the story." He was right. •

*Zellie Rainey Orr is an educator, author and historian based in Atlanta, Georgia. Orr served as the organizer Sunflower County Civil Rights and Community Reunion, Indianola in 1999. She is the founder of the Charles E. Scattergood Memorial Foundation, a member of Southern Poverty Law Center, and a Historian for the Atlanta Chapter Tuskegee Airmen Inc.*

*Author Robin Williams is an award-winning curator, cultural producer, and journalist based in Indianapolis, Indiana. Williams' arts reportage and criticism has been published in the New York Times, Louisiana Weekly, OffBeat Magazine, Gambit Magazine, Indianapolis Star, and the SCLC National Magazine.*



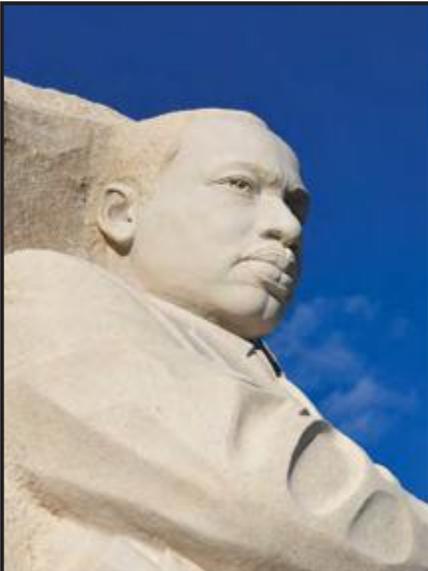
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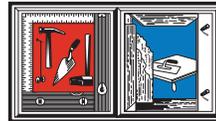
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March 31, 2019, the Fannie Lou Hamer Story play was performed at the First AME Church of Los Angeles. L-R: Byron C. Saunders, play Director; Djehuty Se Hotep, play Business Development Manager; Mzuri Moyo Aimbaye, Actress; and Pastor J. Edgar Boyd.

## The Fannie Lou Hamer Story:

*Sick and tired of being sick and tired...*

### A Tribute to a Civil Rights Legend and Activist

BY JAYLEN BROWN

*“I’ve had a lot of people tell me that after seeing the play that it has had a life changing effect.”*

That is what actress Mzuri Moyo Aimbaye says about The Fannie Lou Hamer Story; Sick and Tired of Being Sick and Tired. Many opine that The Fannie Lou Hamer Story is a must-see documentary play that introduces famed Civil Rights activist Fanny Lou Hamer into modern-day America. This projection of Hamer into contemporary relevance pays tribute to all the unarmed African American men and women who have been murdered by the police.

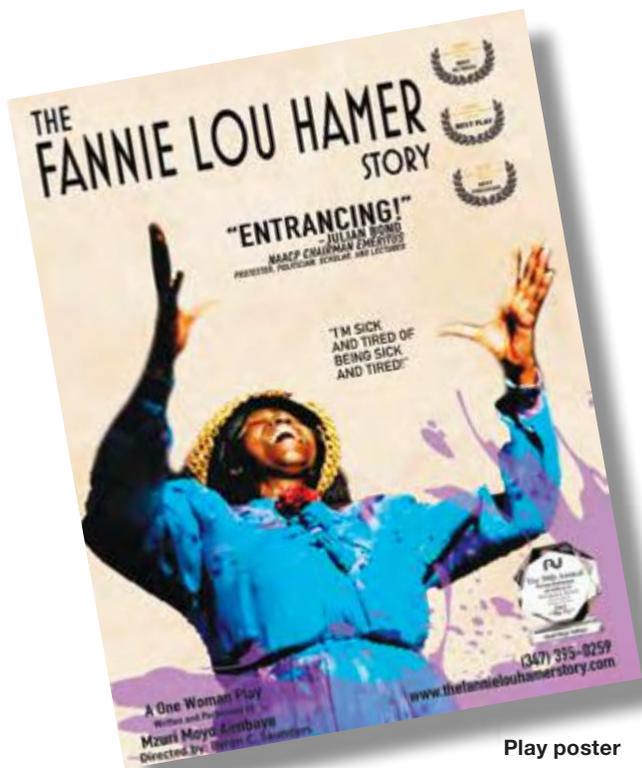
The play begins with Fanny Lou Hamer (played by Aimbaye) appearing at a rally, where she is summoned due to the senseless killings of unarmed African American men and women. After she arrives, she begins singing The Battle Hymn of the Republic, highlighting each name of the unarmed black men and women recently killed throughout the song. Aimbaye further channels Hamer as she commences to tell her life story, historically revisiting her experiences from the age of six. Her journey is underscored with a litany of good ‘ole standard Gospel and Jazz greats, carefully placed throughout the performance such as: This Little Light of Mine, Go Tell It On The Mountain, Strange Fruit, and many more. The play ends with Aimbaye singing Still I Rise, which inspires the audience to leave with a renewed sense of hope—a motivation to make a change in society.

Actress and singer Aimbaye depicts esteemed Civil Rights activist Fanny Lou Hamer like no other. With her

incredible vocal skills and amazing theatrics, audience members are able to see Aimbaye embody and become Fanny Lou Hamer. Aimbaye leads the audience with her skilled vocal capability and takes viewers on an emotionally impactful journey. She transports the audience members back to the 60’s while exhibiting venerable story-telling and artistic talent.

Aimbaye feels that the Fannie Lou Hamer story is important because it will teach African American millennials the importance of our vote, especially after learning about all of the hardships that those before us went through in order for us to be able to vote. She emphasizes, “The Fannie Lou Hamer Story; Sick and Tired of Being Sick and Tired will reignite the Civil Rights movement.” Aimbaye has received accolades for her work through awards such as The Viv... AUDELCO Awards (The Black Tony) for best solo performance, as well as endorsements from politicians across the nation. NAACP Chairman, Emeritus protester, politician, and scholar Julian Bond opined, “Mzuri Moyo’s presentation of Fannie Lou Hamer was entrancing! It was a must-see occasion. One wonders what other gems are to be released.”

The Fannie Lou Hamer Story; Sick and Tired of Being Sick and Tired is directed and lead by actor, producer, and historian Byron C. Saunders. Together he and Aimbaye (who not only acted in the one woman show but also wrote the play) brought Hamer’s compelling story to life and created something that not only teaches us the hardships that blacks encountered during the Civil Rights movement, but demonstrates how the black community is still fighting for freedom in today’s society, and how we can change that by voting.



Play poster

Saunders agrees, “We have to get our people out to vote.”

The play was recently performed at the First AME Church of Los Angeles (Congresswoman Maxine Waters Church) on March 31st, 2019. The show continued its run at an Inglewood theater April 23-26. Saunders and Aimbaye are working on a nationwide tour, which will target other large urban cities such as Atlanta to encourage the importance of voter registration initiatives for the upcoming 2020 elections. The play has received awards for Best Actor, Best Producer, and Best Play from the Atlanta Black Theatre Festival. Byron C. Saunders opines, “Of the stories that have been in films and theatre of the last 10-15 years, those that have been about a Civil Rights icon have been the most important pieces that have been acknowledged in our cultural entertainment community.”

Aimbaye and Saunders use their venerable veteran talents and emotionally driven moments to drive forward a depiction of one of the most potent and enduring characters in American history. The Fannie Lou Hamer Story; Sick and Tired of Being Sick and Tired is a phenomenal production, and a story that we need to hear. •



**Jaylen Brown** is a sophomore Mass Media Arts Major at Clark Atlanta University with a minor in Business Administration. She is originally from Jackson, Mississippi but she has resided in San Diego, California for the past 9 years. She aspires to be an actress and radio personality after college and plans on staying in Atlanta, Georgia.

Robin Williams and Byron Saunders contributed to this story.

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Sunday, May 19, 2019, graduates react after hearing billionaire technology investor and philanthropist Robert F. Smith say he will provide grants to wipe out the student debt of the entire 2019 graduating class at Morehouse College in Atlanta. Photo: Steve Schaefer, AP

## Robert F. Smith’s Impact on Morehouse Students and the Student Loan Debt Crises

BY JULIAN ALEXANDER ARRIOLA-HEMMINGS

Every May, there is a new batch of college graduates who walk across that golden stage and grab a diploma. Many of these recent college graduates have pulled all nighters and eaten an exorbitant amount of ramen noodles. Some have faced homelessness, and most have taken out thousands of dollars in student loans. The student loan debt crisis has deferred the dreams of many young people who can not purchase a home, a car, start a family, or go into the public sector. Could you imagine if Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. could not have joined SCLC because he had to pay off his loans to Morehouse College and Boston University?

Robert F. Smith, an accomplished entrepreneur and investor, grew up with parents who were deeply engaged in the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960’s. Smith says that one of his fondest memories was sitting on his father’s shoulder and listening to Dr. King speak during the March on Washington. It is almost poetic that the young child, in the crowd on that historic day, would grow up to become a billionaire and pay off the loans of a thousand young men who attended King’s alma mater.

Robert F. Smith a billionaire and CEO of Vista Equity Partners was the Morehouse Class of 2019’s commencement speaker and in a stunning act of ultimate altruism pledged to pay off that class’s student loans. However, this grand gesture is not free money...attached to it is a promise. The class of 2019 must pledge to use their gifts, talents, and abilities to

improve society; just like their most famous alum.

One of the beneficiaries of this grant is Ellis Walton, a man that I had the immense pleasure to take classes with, and was privy to his brilliance. When I asked him, “Ellis, how will you take up Robert F. Smith’s pledge to give back”. Without hesitation Mr. Walton told me, “I want to use my future legal career to help my people and liberate my community whether it is through wealth or knowledge. I always reflect on those who paid it forward for me, so it is my obligation to pay it forward for others.” Ellis isn’t the only one who is using their fuel of financial freedom to make a change. Other Morehouse Men are using their degrees to enter into the legal profession, business world, medicine, clergy, government and education to ensure that people are being treated fairly by breaking away at the walls of systemic oppression.

This summer I had the privilege of working for The Real Estate Group Partners as a Real Estate intern and as a Book editor for Dr. David M. Anderson Sr. He is a young entrepreneur who has his hand in several industries e.g. real estate, consulting, and media. With several films out on Netflix and a 15 book line up: he seems to have an unstoppable drive. Yet, Dr. Anderson Sr. is constantly reflecting on Mr. Smith’s grant to Morehouse College and what it meant to him.

“He took his equity and redirected it to black minds, and that’s what all successful black entrepreneurs should do,” Dr. Anderson opined. “That’s our obligation.”

I asked Dr. Anderson what were his plans for the future, “Well when I look at my son I see my plan for the future,” he answered. “Through a wealth strategy that I have created I have been able to pay off his student loans at Middlebury, and I want to continue this pledge through my firm for students that we take interest in that they benefit from this wealth strategy. So that they can live out dreams.” Dr. Anderson is coming out with a new book, “The Black Male Initiative” which will give Black men wealth strategies so that we can close the \$104,033 dollar wealth gap between Black families and White families. As you can see Robert F. Smith has become a transformational figure and has given entrepreneurs the impetus to fight against student loans.

As a “Man of Morehouse” seeing the impact that Robert F. Smith has been nothing short of inspirational. A Black man using his talents and his wealth to have a direct impact on the lives of a thousand Morehouse Men is something we should all celebrate. However, the nation needs to stand up and tell it like it is, “the ball and chain of student loan debt is morally abhorrent”, we have given this generation a false bill of goods. This nation can not depend on the kindness of billionaires to fix this crisis, our policy makers and our citizens need to take a good and long look in the mirror and ask, “is this kind of greed sustainable?” Young Americans who only dreamed of giving their progeny a better life are afraid of starting a family. Young Americans who dream of giving back to their country are not able to do so because their

public job will not pay them enough. In America, we talk about potential, hard work, and dreams. But what happens when our citizens with the most potential and who work hard, have their dreams deferred because of a student loan. That is why we thank Robert F. Smith because these young men will be able to fly to the highest of heights and make the change our nation so desperately needs. •

**Julian Alexander Arriola-Hemmings** is part of Morehouse



*Class of '20 and will be graduating this May with a B.A. in English with a focus on Shakespeare and Race. Julian was born and raised in the Bronx, NY to immigrant parents: his mother was born in Honduras and his father in Jamaica. As a first-generation college student and American, it is Julian's dream to use his education to ensure that every person irrespective of their race, gender, sexual orientation, and disability is treated with dignity and they are able to achieve their highest aspirations.*

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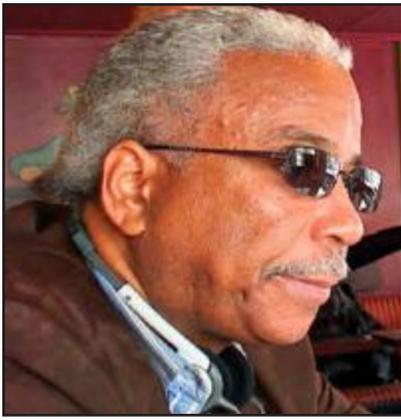
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# One man... One vision

## *Connecting the Dots of Africa and the Diaspora*

BY TAKYIA PRICE

**W**ith over 35 years of media experience, Llynn Taylor is no stranger to the world of news, radio and television. Taylor is the President/CEO of icAfricaGlobal media, AfrikVision360 and various other projects. He has helped with the development of the Jackson family television series, and has also worked and developed television productions for major network programs all over the world. In 1974 Taylor became the Managing Director of Motown Records in Africa, while there he created markets for 10 African countries. Taylor then went on to create icAfricaGlobal media. icAfricaGlobal produces various forms of programming network and television for Africa. It's most recent and primary project is AfrikVision360.

Coming from a family of pioneers, it's no surprise that Llynn Taylor would go on to create a movement as innovative as icAfricaGlobal media and AfrikVision360. Taylor's parents were the first African-Americans to own and operate a television station in the United States. WGPR-TV's (Where God's Presence Radiates) intended demographic was the African-American community in Detroit, Michigan. Similar to WGPR-TV, AfrikVision360 is a media streaming service targeted towards Africans and people of African descent all over the globe. AfrikVision360 was created in the fall of 2015 as an extension of icAfrica Global. The company's mission is to connect the countries of Africa to one another and to Africans all over the world, many of whom were displaced after the slave trade. Taylor hopes this can help Africans and those in the African diaspora to reconnect and learn more about one another. Taylor describes the culture of African Americans as a "hodgepodge" of America. With AfrikVision360 we can learn more about where we come from and see their day to day lives. AfrikVision360 integrates content from a variety of places with the help of freelance journalists. There are thousands of separate news outlets in each country but there is not a joint Pan-African news network that reports on Africa as a whole. Taylor got the idea after working in Africa and noticing the disconnect between himself and African citizens. Connecting the two worlds has been a dream of his since the 70s but the technology during the time wouldn't allow it. Most African Americans know very little to nothing about Africans in Africa

and vice versa. Neighboring African countries are also culturally detached. Many countries take the culture and or the language of their colonizing country so they are unaware of the culture of a country next to them. "9 out of 10 average Africans couldn't tell you the President of the country next door," says Taylor. The colonizing country generally reports on what they see fit. With the help of Taylor and AfrikVision360 Africans can report what they deem as important.

Not only is Taylor connecting Africans to one another but he is also combating government censorship. The African government owns 80% of broadcast operations. Journalists often have issues about their freedom of speech. Dissenting opinion is generally not tolerated. Government agencies regularly censor media content (online and broadcast) and sometimes even coerce the publisher to remove their posts. The country of Uganda has put forth an internet tax that amounts to 50 cents per day. The President, Yoweri Museveni, says "it will put an end to "gossip," (Africa's Attack). Critics have described it as a way to mute online expression that dissent with his beliefs. The tax especially harms independent journalists, activists, and anyone with opposing beliefs from the government. Many citizens of these African countries are searching for ways to work around the censorship. AfrikVision360 is a small step towards a solution for this problem. "Civil rights activists should think of this [AfrikVision360] as a catalyst to help their organizations achieve their goals," Taylor says "[we] must be careful and recognize there are stories we need to tell however the government censorship is really high."

Taylor has traveled and spoke at various universities including Clark Atlanta University as a part of his HBCU tour to promote AfrikVision360. He is actively seeking college recruits to showcase their talent and student lifestyles. "I want [students] to not only contribute their stuff but to be consumers," says Taylor. Not only is this a sharing platform but there is also so much knowledge to gain. AfrikVision360 currently airs on satellite in 30 African countries and is accessible online worldwide. It is available in French, English and soon to be Portuguese (these are all major languages spoken in Africa). AfrikVision360 is steadily growing and connecting thousands of people worldwide. Day by day distant cultures can draw closer, due to increased dialogue it creates." →

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*Takyia Price is a top-notch Junior journalism student at Clark Atlanta University in Atlanta. Price is an aspiring public relations specialist, who is already highly regarded for her news writing and story-telling acumen.*

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