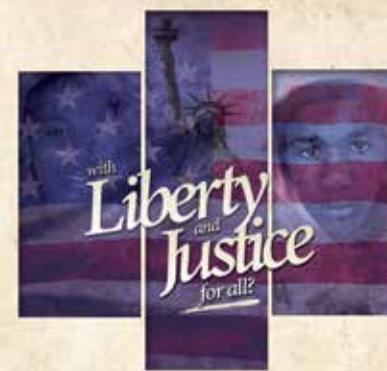


ALC Daily

SATURDAY

Official Daily Newspaper of the CBCF Annual Legislative Conference



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Bearing Injustice: Black Women and the Criminal Justice System

BY SHRITA STERLIN-HERNANDEZ

A capacity crowd assembled Friday morning for a presentation by the Sojourner Truth Legacy Project entitled, *Black Women and the Criminal Justice System: We, Too, Sing America*. The lively and impassioned panel discussion, co-sponsored by the Prudential Insurance Company of America, was moderated by Dee Marshall, founder, *Girlfriends Pray*; Major Charlene Hinton, chief of staff, Petersburg (VA) Bureau of Police; Natalie Jackson, managing partner, *Women's Trial Group*; and Brenda Smith, project director, the *Project on Addressing Prison Rape*.

The session began with a leader/audience recitation of a "Litany of Truth," a series of affirmations and responses written and led by Dr. Barbara Williams-Skinner of the National



Dee Marshall, left, and Rep. Brenda Lawrence share the stage during the CBCF-Sojourner Truth Session: "Black Women and The Criminal Justice System: We, Too, Sing America" on Friday.

African American Clergy Network and the Skinner Leadership Institute. This was followed by introductory remarks by Michele Green, Prudential's vice president and chief diversity officer for corporate human resources.

An impromptu address was given by Rep. Yvette Clarke (NY), who summed up the importance of the session: "Black women bear the burden of all the injustice that takes
Please see "SOJOURNER TRUTH" on page 12

Making Inroads: The School to Prison Pipeline

BY TIM PULLIAM

An impassioned panel explored the issue of the "school to prison pipeline" Friday morning, bringing to the table first-hand experience not only in Congress, but also behind bars.

The standing-room-only session widely considered recidivism; privatization of prisons; suspensions as early as preschool; racially disproportionate discipline; prisons as economic engines for rural communities; racism and anti-blackness; and the dehumanization of inmates as the "other." There was even the story of an A student at a charter high school who was expelled for 45 days after challenging a white teacher for describing the Black Panthers as dangerous and militant.

But that student, Anita Sewell, went on to college and became a youth leader for *Racial Justice NOW!* And Glenn E. Martin, her co-panelist who spent six years in the N.Y. prison system, went on to become a national leader in criminal justice reform. He founded *JustLeadershipUSA*, aimed at cutting the number of people in U.S. prisons in half by 2030.



Anita Sewell, third from left, is all smiles as she shares her personal story during "Reversing the School to Prison Pipeline for African Americans and Minorities" on Friday.

Not all stories turn out so well. The panel—moderated by radio host/TV commentator Mo Ivory—presented a startling picture of how many African-American children are not given the support they need from early in life and end up being dismissed, expelled and eventually locked up as a result. According to the U.S. Department

of Education, African American students currently are being expelled and suspended at three times the rate of white students. In addition, African American students represent 16 percent of student enrollment, but 27 percent of students referred to law enforcement and 31 percent
Please see "SCHOOL TO PRISON" on page 8



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High school students listen to HBCU alumni during the HBCU College and Career Fair.



Angela Burt-Murray, left, Lance Gross, Dr. Ivory Toldson and Meagan Fitzgerald contribute to a panel discussion that included prominent HBCU alumni and companies invested in working with HBCUs to create a skilled and diversified workforce during Friday's HBCU College and Career Fair.

HBCUs Offer Opportunities for Excellent Education

By TATIANA NOBOA

Historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) are successful in their missions. But sometimes it's a matter of getting that story out.

That was the theme of a panel discussion that kicked off Friday's HBCU College and Career Fair. The panel, moderated by comedian and talk show host Sheryl Underwood, included Rep. Alma Adams (NC), co-founder of the Bipartisan HBCU Congressional Caucus; Angela Burt-Murray, co-founder of Cocoa Media Group and former editor-in-chief of Essence magazine; actor Lance Gross; NBC reporter Meagan Fitzgerald; Nielsen's Angela Talton; and Dr. Ivory Toldson, deputy director of the White House HBCU initiative.

"Advocacy on your part helps us with what we do on Capitol Hill," Toldson said. "About \$5 billion goes from the federal government to HBCUs every year. That money can go up when the best and the brightest of HBCUs is underscored. When you're out there demonstrating the best and the brightest of HBCUs and when they can see it in social media and popular media that HBCUs are a valuable commodity not just to African Americans, but to all of America, it makes it easier to do what we do."

It also makes for an easier sell to corporations to recruit and hire students from HBCUs, Burt-Murray said. "When students can get internships and start their careers, then they'll have the opportunity to give back to their institutions. We don't

give enough to our HBCUs as well."

Rep. Adams pointed out the work that must be done to allow students to attend HBCUs. "We've got to do something about the interest rates and loan forgiveness."

Toldson agreed: "78 percent of all students in HBCUs are eligible for the Pell Grant. We know that our students need financial resources.... We are all playing a part. Not just the government, but also the schools that are increasing tuitions and not making the best decisions with the money coming in."

Talton noted that Nielsen has doubled the number of HBCUs from which it recruits. "We go and work with students on resume writing and interviewing skills. It is that important to our business and that important to our clients."



@AfAmEducation
@drakeshahir having never had a Black teacher asks how he can reignite his internal interest in STEM #CBCFALC15

@_TylerTheTyler_
We all stand as role models for our youth whether you know it or not. #CBCFALC15



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Match Fair Connects Small Businesses with Contracts



Landing government and corporate contracts can be the lifeblood for a small business. Ensuring that the door is opened for minority- and women-owned businesses was the goal of the third annual Meet and Match Procurement Fair, which puts businesses in touch with leaders in the public and private sectors. “They are all prepared to not just shake your hand,” said Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (TX), honorary co-host of the event. Some 30 contractors—ranging from Shell to the U.S. Postal Service—were on hand for mini-meetings with business owners, pictured above. “The CBCF has accepted that the economic engine of America is all of you,” Jackson Lee said. “And you can dig into communities with high unemployment rates when you get business.” For those in attendance who weren’t quite ready for government contracts, Jackson Lee suggested they spend the next year “getting your financial house in order,” through business and financial planning. “And come here next year ready to do business.”



Gary Bartz, 2015 Jazz Legacy Award honoree, shares insight during the 30th ALC Jazz Issue Forum on Thursday.

CBCF Commemorates 30 Years of Celebrating Jazz: America’s National Treasure

By KERLINE JULES

Commemorating 30 years of celebrating and educating the public about the “national American treasure” of jazz music, the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, Incorporated (CBCF) hosted its annual Jazz Issue Forum and Concert on Thursday.

With Rep. John Conyers, Jr. (MI) as honorary host, this year’s concert showcased the connections and reciprocal influences of modern jazz and Afro-Cuban music. The evening concert featured Cuban saxophonist and educator Yosvany Terry and the Afro-Cuban Roots: Ye-Dé-Gbé ensemble, which included percussionist and lead vocalist Pedrito Martinez;

bassist Yunion Terry; pianist Osmany Paredes; drummer Eric Doob; percussionists and vocalists Roman Diaz and Diosvany Valladares; vocalist Jadele McPherson; and dancer Stevie Insua Ruiz. Also on the program: the legendary Baltimore-born saxophonist and educator Gary Bartz with pianist Barney McAll; guitarist Paul Bollenbeck; bassist James King; and drummer Greg Bandy.

“We come together each year to promote awareness of this art form, jazz, which has achieved preeminence throughout the world as an indigenous American music and art form, bringing to the United States and the world a uniquely American musical synthesis and

Please see “JAZZ” on page 14

President Obama to Keynote Phoenix Awards Dinner Saturday

Rev. Dr. William Barber II, Fred Gray, Juanita Abernathy, Dr. Amelia Boynton Robinson and Alpha Phi Alpha to receive CBCF honors.

President Barack Obama will serve as the keynote speaker for tonight’s 45th Annual Legislative Conference (ALC) Phoenix Awards Dinner.

“We welcome President Barack Obama’s participation in the Phoenix Awards Dinner, particularly at this critical time for African Americans,” said A. Shuanise Washington, president and chief executive officer of the CBCF. “As a former member of the CBC, and throughout his presidency, Mr. Obama has taken action to rectify the civil and social injustices experienced by black Americans. We deeply value Mr. Obama’s commitment to our mission to eliminate disparities in underserved communities.”



President Barack Obama

Dr. William Barber II with the CBC Chair’s Award; **Fred Gray** will be honored with the ALC Co-Chair’s Award; Civil rights activist **Juanita Abernathy** will receive

the George Thomas “Mickey” Leland Award; **Dr. Amelia Boynton Robinson** will be honored posthumously with the Harold Washington Award; and the **Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Incorporated** will receive the CBCF Chair’s Award for its leadership efforts to honor Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s legacy with a memorial on the National Mall in Washington D.C.

Proceeds benefit the CBCF’s many programs and initiatives. To purchase tickets, visit the Tickets desk in the ALC Registration area in the Walter E. Washington Convention Center lobby.

The CBCF will also honor **Rev.**

ALC Daily

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STEM Jobs Offer Opportunities, But Students Must Start Earlier

By ANNE B. WILLIAMS

It might have been obvious, but Rep. Robert C. Scott (VA) wanted to make sure the connection between one Annual Legislative Conference (ALC) session and its immediate predecessor was noted.

Overcoming the Odds: STEM Education and College Completion for African Americans focused on science, technology, engineering and

“As a young person, and as a young black person in technology, there’s not many of us. Being around peers that are interested in technology and are building things in this space is so important. Being the only one is such a hard feat.”

mathematics (STEM) professions. But it was slightly delayed when Reversing the School to Prison Pipeline for African Americans and Minorities, held in the same room, ran over its allotted time.

“This workshop follows one which shows that many of our young people are headed not to good STEM education, but to prison,” said Scott, Ranking Member of the Education and the Workforce Committee. “If we’re going to change the odds,

that’s one of the odds we need to change.”

Scott noted that in the future, two thirds of jobs will require some post-secondary education. “If you’re not on the way to graduating from high school, you’re not on the way to getting a decent STEM job. We have to change the odds by changing the trajectory. The solution is not a quick fix. It’s a long-term solution.”

Make that plural solutions, as the problem is complex. In the panel discussion moderated by David J. Johns, executive director of the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans, educators, technology innovators and corporate executives tackled various strands.

Dr. Gwendolyn E. Boyd, president of Alabama State University, noted the importance of historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) in keeping students on track for STEM jobs. “We need to change the narrative and let people know that HBCUs are preparing programs that are academically rigorous. As we talk about overcoming the odds, HBCUs are that place where students feel they are at home, where they are wanted. We are preparing our young people for STEM. As long as we keep the narrative out there, we will have young people coming, participating in STEM. They’ll leave ready, competent and confident that they can do whatever it is that they are wanting to do.”

Kaya Thomas, creator of the app We Read Too, which catalogs children’s and young adult books written



Dr. Gwendolyn E. Boyd, president, Alabama State University, left, takes notes as she listens to her fellow panelists during “Overcoming the Odds: STEM Education and College Completion for African Americans” on Friday.

by authors of color, noted the importance of seeing peers in technology positions. “As a young person, and as a young black person in technology, there’s not many of us. Being around peers that are interested in technology and are building things in this space is so important. Being the only one is such a hard feat.”

But much work must be done before anyone arrives at a job. The panel, which also included Chris Emdin, an associate professor at Columbia University; Kamau Bobb, program director for the National Science Foundation; Beverly Bond, founder of Black Girls Rock!; and Ken Barrett, chief diversity officer for General Motors (GM), discussed the need for education to start much sooner. Barrett said that GM found that students who don’t take algebra by eighth grade will not be prepared to enter top-notch engi-

neering schools.

“What I’ve been hearing a lot is we get stopped,” Bond said. “I used to love math and science until I got to calculus and I couldn’t figure it out. No one helped me get through that. I got tutors, but no one helped me get through what was stopping me. It needs to start younger, especially for our kids. They are so far behind.”

Emdin suggested framing improved STEM education at the elementary and secondary levels as “a civil rights issue,” he said. “Articulating that is a necessary endeavor. It’s not just about the fact that there are STEM jobs that we can’t fill. If you’re going to identify what classes are there, where kids are pushed out of schools decide, ‘that is not for me,’ it is in science and mathematics. Kids are not dropping out of school because they don’t like art.”

The Missing Link: African-American Inclusion in Tech

By LATASHA H. LEE

Rep. G.K. Butterfield (NC) and Rep. Barbara Lee (CA) hosted a Tech Talk Thursday afternoon entitled A Blueprint for African American Inclusion. This well-attended TED Talk-styled presentation and subsequent panel discussion was focused on diversity in the technology industry and featured Van Jones, president and co-founder of Dream Corps; Andrea Hoffman, founder of Culture Shift Labs; the Rev. Jesse Jackson, founder and president, Rainbow PUSH Coalition; Angel Rich, founder of Wealth Factory Inc.; Jamal Simmons, co-founder of CRVIII Inc. (create); Harrison Harvey, a student at Head-Royce School; and Olivia Zama, a student at Eleanor Roosevelt High School.

Jones opened the session with the assertion that “there is a dirty

secret that is rarely discussed in our community when we think about power, change and the future... It is no longer being addressed in policy decisions. Rather, the future is being written in computer code in Silicon Valley.” By 2020 there will be 1.4 million new jobs in the technology industry, many of which will go unfilled.

More than two years ago, studies highlighting the paucity and near absence of people of color, especially African Americans, in the technology industry were released. While African Americans represent 13.2 percent of the U.S. population, we represent less than 5 percent of people employed in tech. Jackson stated that we are in the fourth stage of the black movement. The first movement was ending legalized slavery, then there was fighting Jim Crow, and third was gaining the right to vote. Now we are fighting to gain

access to capital. Technology is a multi-billion-dollar industry which lacks diversity. Thus, technology is not only a means by which we communicate, shop and explore the world around us, but also an opportunity for our community to fulfill Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s dream of economic equality, opportunity and prosperity for our community.

“We ... African Americans are a missing link in the tech industry,” Butterfield said. “It is not until we have inclusion that we will see America unlink its true potential.” This issue is a high priority of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) and the Tech 2020 Diversity Initiative, which Butterfield and Lee are co-leading. This initiative provides a blueprint for achieving diversity in the tech industry. It calls for change; it is not just about building the pipeline but also about keeping African Americans in the pipeline. Also

highlighted was a need for vendor diversity within the contracts that tech companies enter. Butterfield, Lee and Jackson all suggested that more companies need to produce diversity reports, and compliance with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) is needed.

The Tech Talk ended with a panel discussion of students and industry leaders sharing initiatives and programs they have either started or participated in that promote workforce diversity in the tech field. These accomplished young people and entrepreneurs are the keys to unlocking America’s innovation. In the next eight years, we can expect a 1 million person deficit in filling tech jobs. Thus, we must continue to encourage our young people to serve as this missing link by pursuing careers in tech.

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CBCF Alumni Profile

CBCF Fellowship Provides Skills With Global Impact

By TIM PULLIAM

Larcus Nicole Pickett's Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, Incorporated (CBCF) fellowship prepared and propelled her to impact the globe. The fellowship, from 2012-2014, allowed her to work on energy and environmental issues—something that first drew her interest while serving as a Peace Corps volunteer in Guinea.

It was there that she lived in a mud hut and occasionally helped her host mom, a subsistence farmer, water her garden. “Every other day she would go out and water this garden and it would take four hours drawing water from the well by hand,” she said. “If they had the infrastructure in place, she could do this in half the time. Or the way they cook, if they didn't have to build a fire or



Larcus Nicole Pickett

get wood. Things become very real when you live like that.”

While that experience drew her attention to the issues, it was through the CBCF fellowship—where she served on the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee and focused

on energy policy issues in Rep. Chaka Fattah's office—that she gained policy experience. Those two interests are combined in her current position as program officer in international programs for the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners.

“The fellowship was extremely helpful,” she said. “It gives you an upfront perspective on how policy works. Working on the committee and in Congressman Fattah's office gave me a hands-on perspective to what impacts policy and the driving factors.”

She knew that post-fellowship she would return to international work, specifically related to Africa. But a greater understanding of how the political system works—as seen during her fellowship—has had a direct impact on her current position. She works regularly with the energy regulators in Ethiopia.

“I found it to be very frustrating

because sometimes it's very clear what needs to happen, but because of politics it doesn't happen as it should,” she said. “Ethiopia has its own political issues, but I'm more aware of whether something can get done or not because of political influences. Because I understand the issues of the government, I have a better sense of how this all works together.”

While her work is largely international, she sees policies and regulations negatively impacting minority communities in the U.S. Whether the interest is at home or abroad, she sees power in the CBCF fellowship.

“It's necessary for us to have representation on the Hill and I think this fellowship gives you the perfect opportunity to do that. As you watch the news and observe the things happening in this country, our voices need to be heard.”

School to Prison

Continued from page 1

of students subjected to a school-related arrest.

“I believe firmly that people who are closest to the problem and closest to the solution are by definition furthest from power and resources,” Martin said. And yet, the panel members on the frontlines delivered hope—a constant theme was that when people come together in large numbers with a shared interest, change can happen.

Catherine Lhamon, the U.S. Department of Education's assistant secretary for civil rights, started the “Reversing the School to Prison Pipeline for African Americans and Minorities” session with both statistics and markers of success. But the crowd found her stories of racially disproportionate discipline and suspension of children as young as three particularly troubling.

“The very first message we send to our kids in what we hope is their most fundamental government relationship is that they're not worthy, that we're not prepared for them, and that we will not support them,” she said. “We cannot be surprised when they hit middle school and high school that they're not succeeding, if that's what we tell them when they're three and four years old.”

When children are suspended, they fall behind. When they fall behind, they get discouraged. And when they get discouraged, they often give up.

“The bottom line is that when kids are having trouble or misbehaving in school, the punishment should be more school,” said panelist Roy Austin Jr., deputy assistant to the president for Urban Affairs, Justice and Opportunity at the White House Domestic Policy Council. “It should not be getting kicked out of school. We have to figure out a way to make sure we are doing that, because we understand the spiral.”

That's not to say research-based solutions aren't available—they're just not yet widely adopted. Lhamon, for example, directed the crowd to the civil rights resources at <http://ocrdata.ed.gov/>, including school and district reports to help individuals become empowered with knowledge about their communities. Another panelist, Khalilah Harris, deputy director of the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans, implored attendees to start volunteering or mentoring at the closest school right away—in addition to encouraging and sharing information with students whose own parents did not attend college. And Dr. Niaz Kasravi, deputy director, Anti-Recidivism Coalition (ARC), spoke of reducing recidivism—and generational incarceration—by minimizing barriers to re-entry. That means providing a support network for and comprised of formerly incarcerated people; links to services; opportunities for mentorship, housing and education; and strong public policy.

The thing is, said longtime Congressman Robert C. Scott (VA)—not



Ronald Rice, National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, poses a question to the panelists during Friday's “Reversing the School to Prison Pipeline for African Americans and Minorities” session.

an official member of the panel but asked to share a few words—“we know what works” in terms of giving kids the support they need. He referenced programs like Head Start, summer jobs, nurse visits right after birth to reduce child abuse, and psychological interventions. Instead, however, our society continues to waste money on counterproductive incarceration instead.

“What does it really mean when you look at African Americans in particular, and you say data points like one out of three of our (male) children are going to go to prison?” Sen. Cory Booker (NJ) asked the crowd. “That is a startling reality, but behind those big statistics are story after story

after story. We know that our criminal justice system is unassailably biased against the poor. It's biased against African Americans. There is no equal justice under the law in the United States of America. That goes to every level of encounters with the law.... Even in the school system, we have to understand that this is a gross assault on American citizenry the likes of which should strike the conscience of all Americans.... The poverty in America is in large part the result of the policy in America.... If our incarceration rates were the same level as our industrial peers, we would have 20 percent less poverty in America because the criminal justice system drives poverty.”

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Moving Toward Environmental Sustainability in Black Communities

By MICHAEL DUNCAN

A distinguished panel of experts assembled on Friday afternoon for the Annual Legislative Conference (ALC) inaugural program on environmental sustainability in black communities. “There is a knowledge gap in the black community on this issue,” said CBCF President and CEO A. Shuanise Washington, “and the CBCF is working to close that gap.” The foundation, she added, is also demonstrating its commitment to environmental sustainability by running a “green” conference this year, with a marked reduction in the distribution of printed material.

The panel was moderated by Dr. Menna Demessie, CBCF vice president for policy and research analysis. Panelists included Angus E. Friday, Grenada’s ambassador to the U.S.; Thione Niang and Samba Bathily, co-founders, AKON Lighting Africa; Dr. Lisa Jackson, vice-president for Environment, Policy and Social Initiatives, Apple; Dr. Robert Bullard, dean, Barbara Jordan-Mickey Leland School of Public Affairs, Texas Southern University; Dr. Jalonne White-Newsome, federal policy analyst, WE ACT For Environmental Justice; and Ibrahim Abdul-Matin, director of community affairs, New York City Department of Environmental Protection.

Introductory remarks were made by Rep. James Clyburn (SC) and Rep. Yvette Clarke (NY), who pointed



Speakers during Friday’s “Environmental Sustainability in Black Communities” session discuss the impact of local, state and community based programs and practices that have taken an active role in the environmental stewardship of African-American communities.

out the inevitability of climate change due to the rise in temperature in the earth’s atmosphere and the current unsustainably high atmospheric concentration of carbon dioxide. Speaking of Superstorm Sandy, which devastated the Eastern seaboard three years ago, she noted that experts say an even more powerful storm could occur in the next few years. What that storm might do, no one knows. “New York City,” said Rep. Clarke, “can’t sustain a rising tide.”

A number of panelists commented that these severe weather events have a disproportionate effect on black communities. Jackson, who is from the Ninth Ward in New Orleans—and whose mother was one of the 21 percent of the population of

the city who never moved back after Hurricane Katrina—said, “The brunt of the storm fell on the Lower Ninth Ward, which is predominantly black. I don’t know if it’s a southern thing or not, but we live in the bottoms.”

Given global warming (still a matter of some controversy; Rep. Clarke noted that a number of her congressional colleagues, including some in leadership positions on environmental committees, have not accepted the idea that climate change is a result of human activity), obviously a response is called for. In addition to emergency response—the U.S. government, Friday pointed out, spent \$135 billion as a result of Katrina, \$75 billion of it on disaster relief alone—we need to make changes that will

result in environmental sustainability.

The technology to do this, a number of panelists observed, already exists: Over the past decade, a clean energy industry has moved from the experimental stage to rapid growth. According to a policy brief from DBL Investors distributed at the session, the solar energy workforce has grown 86 percent since 2010, from 93,502 workers to 173,807 in 2014. In the electric vehicle sector, Tesla grew from 250 employees in 2007 to 10,000 in 2015.

There is, panelists agreed, not only a vibrant clean energy industry taking shape, but also the foundation for a strong economy going forward. As Friday remarked, there is no need to choose between a sustainable environment and a strong economy. What matters is to make sure that the African-American community is included in the benefits both of the boom in renewable energy and the overall economy.

And there are signs that this is already happening. Clyburn noted that in his district, one of the poorest in the nation, 20 percent of the population lives in manufactured housing, which is extremely energy-inefficient. A recent program is rapidly enabling these residents to provide themselves with solar panels, offering a major savings in utility bills. And according to DBL Investors, solar installation already employs more than 4,000 more African Americans than the entire coal mining industry.

2015 African-American Prostate Cancer Disparity Summit

By OKEY K. ENYIA

Nearly 60 people attended the 11th Annual African-American Prostate Cancer Disparity Summit Friday morning, hosted by the Prostate Health Education Network (PHEN). Thomas Farrington, PHEN founder and president, provided historical context to the progress that has been made regarding the work that PHEN has pioneered

and championed. Panelists included Rep. Gregory Meeks (NY); Dr. Jonathan Simons, president and CEO of the Prostate Cancer Foundation; and Dr. Edith Mitchell, president of the National Medical Association.

Mark Kennedy, director of outreach for PHEN, shared current prostate cancer stats and outlined PHEN’s position on how to address the crisis. Knowledge is the best defense against prostate cancer, in

addition to primary care physician interaction, diagnosis, treatment and survivorship.

Kim Rogers, Ph.D., director of education programs for PHEN, discussed the national outreach activities, Father’s Day Rally, monthly meetings and survivor network. She highlighted the various ways in which PHEN has been raising awareness and partnering with churches nationwide. There has been great feedback from the participants in the monthly meetings and webcast. In addition, the Third Annual Prostate Health Education Symposium engaged 10 states with volunteer medical faculty.

Rev. Belinda McCastle, associate pastor, Ben Hill United Methodist Church, provided spiritual context to the work that is being done to change people’s lives. Juanita Jackson, chair of the church’s Care Ministry, emphasized the need for more support for men and discussed her partnership with 100 Black Men of Atlanta.

Michael Shaw, director of the Office of Urban Male Health from

the Alameda County Public Health Department, spoke about partnering with local leaders using the guiding principles of education, access to services, equity, cultural sensitivity and research. His office is now looking to expand partnerships with the Latino community and making sure that African Americans are included in clinical research trials.

According to the panel next steps include:

- Expanding to more cities;
- Increasing PHEN assets (survivor network, church and community partners, industry partners, academia, research, clinical partners);
- Local PHEN PESOs (Partnership, Education, Support, Outreach), a Boston model first used at the University of Massachusetts Medical School in June 2015 and replicated nationwide; and
- Use of monthly meetings, webcasts, local networks, facilities, computers, medical specialists, parking, food and internal promotion.



#CBCFALC15

@Fieldsy

“People will not be stopped. People will not be silenced.” AG @LorettaLynch #cbcfc15 #blacklivesmatter

@brunchandbudget

Consider not just school to prison but neighborhood to prison says former cop & violence prevention advocate @bobby_kipper #CBCFALC15

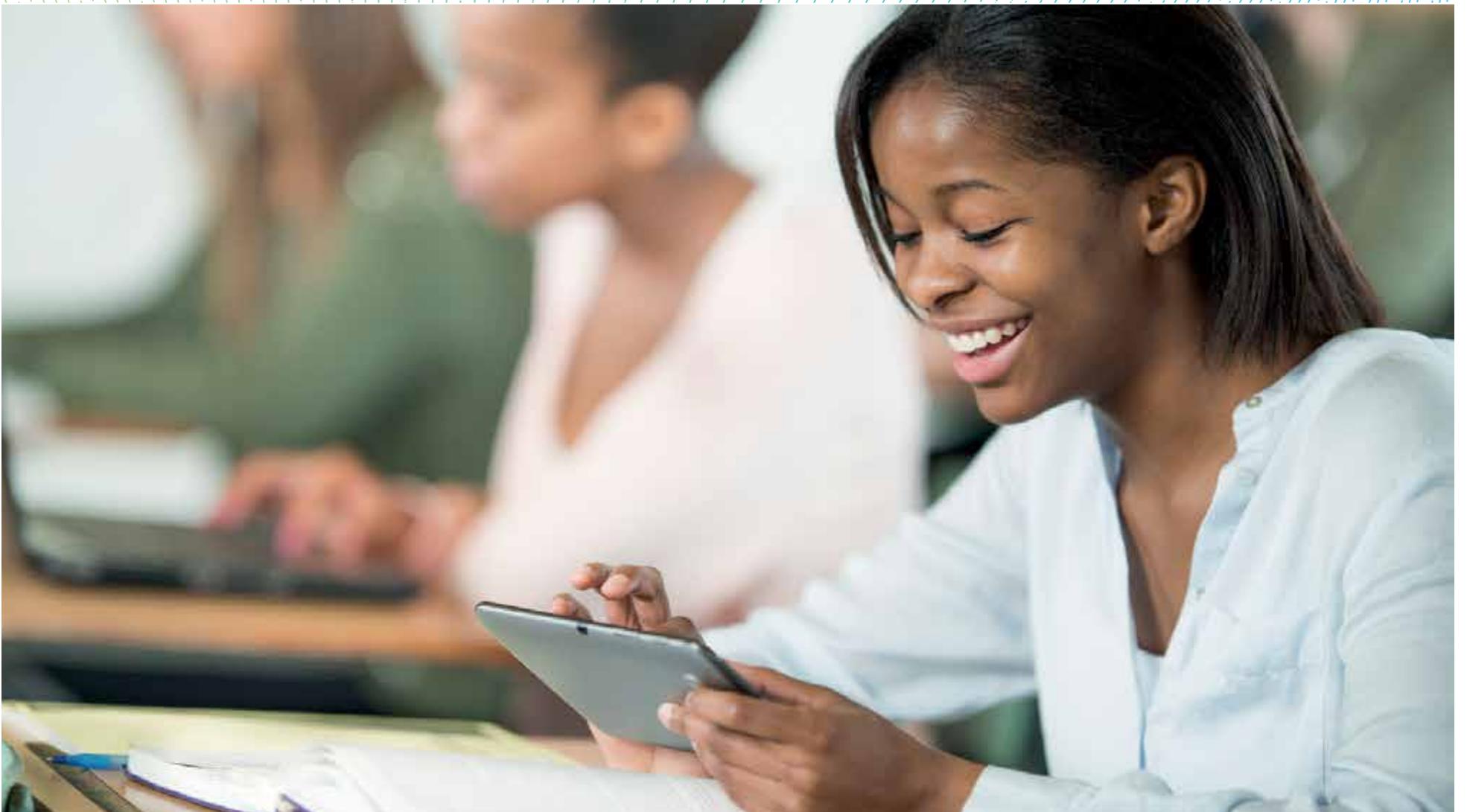
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Rep. Yvette Clarke speaks during the CBCF-Sojourner Truth Session: Black Women & The Criminal Justice System: We, Too, Sing America on Friday

Sojourner Truth

Continued from page 1

place in our communities. Whether it's our sons or our daughters who are assaulted or railroaded through the criminal justice system, it is the mothers who have to take off from work."

Marshall began the panel discussion proper by asking, "Who are the police in our community?" Hinton responded, "The police are human. They have vices, they have prejudices, they have bad days. Unfortunately, they are not always representative of the community. They don't always know how to communicate in ways that are understood by the members of that community, and that's where a lot of the problems come from."

This view was contested—or at least expanded—by Jackson. "I think we have to remember that when we're talking

about the police, we're talking about a government entity that has the right take away your life and liberty. Given the power they have, I'm not particularly interested in whether they're having a good day or not."

Turning to the subject of women in the police force, Smith noted that more women are moving into the field. "There are requirements for being a law enforcement officer," she said. "More often than not, you can't have a criminal background, you have to pass a drug test, and in most cases you have to have graduated from high school. Unfortunately, many men of color do not meet those requirements."

Hinton responded, "It's very, very

difficult to get women first of all to apply, and then to get through this strenuous test of physical agility. I would love to have a female officer on every shift, working every beat. But we just don't have them available."

Often, said Smith, the barrier isn't just the required physical agility. "It's the culture that makes it difficult for women. In a situation where you have few women, often the women you do have can be the targets of harassment, because it's such a male environment."

The cultural issue, Jackson commented, also extends to prosecutors. "It's very hard for black lawyers to get into those positions, because it's assumed that they will be biased in favor of black defendants."

Another topic addressed by the panel was the school to prison pipeline. Unanimously, they deplored the current tendency toward law-enforcement responses to what

used to be treated as normal school discipline issues. "Orange County," said Jackson, "has the highest incarceration rate of five- to 10-year-olds in the country. The vast majority of those schoolgirls are black—and we are not a black county."

There are, the panel noted, 2 million people in prison in the U.S., 100,000 of them women. Numerous solutions were suggested to the problem of over-incarceration, including better policing, more sensible prosecutors, and ending mandatory minimum sentencing and "three strikes" laws. "Educate yourselves," Marshall urged. "Educate your communities, and apply all the pressure you can to your elected officials."

"Black women bear the burden of all the injustice that takes place in our communities. Whether it's our sons or our daughters who are assaulted or railroaded through the criminal justice system, it is the mothers who have to take off from work."

—Rep. Yvette Clarke

ALC '15: Volunteer Corner

Extending Their Passion for Youth

By TATIANA NOBOA

Jeffrey and Tanya Diggs share a passion for helping today's youth—and a consistent way for the longtime couple to do so is by volunteering at the Annual Legislative Conference (ALC).

Jeffrey Diggs, a semi-retired educator, sociology professor and former dean at Sojourner Douglass College, has been working with various youth groups for 25 years; his wife, Tanya, administrator at the Redevelopment Authority of Prince George's County, Maryland, has been a member of Delta Sigma Theta for 36 years, and is "always passionate about working with their youth component." (Interestingly enough, they first became involved with each other while youth themselves in middle school.)

The ALC, then, which helps provide scholarships, internships and other opportunities for young men and women, has been close to their hearts since their first experience about six years ago. A coworker approached Diggs about the event since she knew he "liked to volunteer," he said, and ever since, he and his wife have made themselves available wherever needed. They've worked on the VIP side of the Phoenix Awards Dinner, in registration, as hosts guiding others, and in other areas.

"We tell them, 'whatever you find that nobody else wants to do, we won't give you any resistance,'" he said. "We're the team that comes in and works it. I remember one year, our first day there, Tanya broke her foot and couldn't finish. She managed to come back in one day, and said, 'Just find me

something off my feet.' She really wanted to get back in there and continue the work. I know, as we were leaving, she was in excruciating pain. We went to the doctor, and he said, 'Yes, you broke it.' But the thing she hated most was not being able to put in all the time she had planned.... Really, anything that will excite young people, that's where you'll find us."

Last year, he found himself within a few feet of President Barack Obama. He had the chance to meet him—but in consistent form, he stepped aside to let a young man take his place.

"That young man was so excited," Diggs said. "I could see the passion in his eyes.... I've always looked back and seen that the opportunities I've had in life have happened because other people have made sacrifices. I'm just paying it forward. One of my goals is to sit with the President, and it will happen. Even if not in office, it will happen.... I'd like to thank him for his service. It had to have been a tough road, but he has stayed the course, and made a difference for so many people."

In the meantime, Jeffrey and Tanya Diggs weren't sure what their ALC responsibilities would hold this year—but they knew they'd be present. In fact, Jeffrey Diggs flew in from a trip to New York then headed straight to the annual bag stuffing from the airport.

"It's a lot of work, but it's a rewarding time," said Diggs, who also leads the Mu Rho Chapter of Omega Psi Phi, volunteering some 30 hours a week with the organization. "We've made a lot of friends there, and we're all family now."



#CBCFALC15

@LottieJoiner

Atty. General Loretta Lynch says one of her top priorities is to look at the breakdown of trust between police and communities. #CBCFALC15

@andreperriedu

If sports is your thing, so is science. @chrisemdin #blacksplaining to 11th grader. #hiphoped #AfAmEdChat #CBCFALC15

@NULpolicy

African Americans and other communities of color are less likely to utilize mental health services. #MyMentalHealth #CBCFALC15



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Pass Me Not: The Black Church in the 21st Century

By OKEY K. ENYIA

The church is deeply woven into the African-American experience. Blacks tend to be more religious than the overall population. Historically, the church was the one place where slaves could gather. And

its role in the Civil Rights movement was vital.

Rep. Steny Hoyer (MD) discussed this important fact during the panel, The Black Church in the 21st Century. Despite its historical importance, though, the black church—along with the overall American

church—finds itself at a crossroads, faced with significant issues and challenges on topics ranging from homosexuality to violence to HIV/AIDS.

It is also seeing a decline in participation rates. While overall religious attendance has declined, the number of African Americans attending church has held steady. This on its face might seem encouraging, but the black church hasn't kept up with population growth.

The moderator posed a question to each panelist, who then addressed the topic. One question focused on the absence of participation in addressing black-on-black crime. Responses included fear, lack of knowledge about resources and the need to transition from doing "church" to actual ministry.

The conversation then shifted to the role of the #BlackLivesMatter

movement and the church. Panelists stated that the black church is silent on the issue of white supremacy. Several of the panelists also stated that it's important to get outside of the church walls. We need to pass down the knowledge of the past to empower future generations about what they can achieve. There was also discussion about how parents have to teach their children how to behave when it comes to law enforcement.

Another question posed was, "How does church embrace the LGBT community?" The overwhelming response was that we must embrace each other in love but also have standards to live by. Overall, the timely conversation served to advance the notion that the black church remains a critical institution, one that communities should recognize as vital to all humanity.

Jazz

Continued from page 4

culture through the African-American experience." said Janis D. Hazel, one of the concert producers.

During the concert, Conyers presented 2015 CBCF Jazz Legacy Awards to Bartz and Cuban percussionist Candido Camero. Bartz has reigned supreme as one of the most dynamic and distinct musicians for six decades. In addition to being a saxophonist and educator, Bartz is a touring and recording artist, BNY Mellon Jazz Living Legacy Award honoree and professor at Oberlin Conservatory of Music.

Known for his contributions to the development of mambo and Afro-Cuban jazz, Camero is credited with being the first percussionist to bring conga drumming to jazz. Camero has worked with the likes of Tony Bennett, Miles Davis and Dizzy Gillespie, to name a few. He's been the recipient of many awards including the Latin Jazz USA Lifetime Achievement Award and a special achievement award from the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers as a "Legend of Jazz."

Earlier that afternoon, the CBCF hosted the annual Jazz Issue Forum,

Jazz Preservation, Education and Promulgation in the African Diaspora: Cuba. This year's forum explored the historical and contemporary musical and cultural ties between American and Cuban jazz musicians and cultural workers, as well as the prospects for those connections with the context of renewed diplomatic relations.

The trailblazing panel featured Bartz; advocate, curator, researcher and African Diaspora specialist James Counts Early; founder and executive director of Cuba Skate Miles Jackson; Januwa Moja, founder and CEO of Regality Reality Arts; Terry; and Martinez.

Since 1985, Conyers has been the honorary host of the Jazz Concert and Issue Forum. Known for his patronage of the arts and his passion for jazz, as a legislator, Conyers has fought for greater recognition and funding for jazz, including the introduction of various bills, most recently the National Jazz Preservation, Education and Promulgation Act of 2015.

"Preservation of this art form, education and awareness of its origins in the black community, is at the core of our American culture," Hazel said.

Schedule-at-a-Glance

Saturday, Sept. 19

7:30 - 10:00 AM —
Prayer Breakfast

8:00 AM - 1:00 PM —
Exhibit Showcase

10:00 AM - 2:00 PM —
Returning Citizens: What Really Works in Re-entry?

10:30 AM - 12:00 PM —
• **Caregivers in the African-American Community**
• **Not For Sistah's Only**

10:30 AM - 1:00 PM —
Documentary Screening: "25 to Life"

10:30 AM - 2:00 PM —
• **Faith Leaders Roundtable: Removing the Confederate Flag is Simply Not Enough**
• **Veteran Roundtable: A Candid Discussion**

6:00 PM - 9:30 PM —
Phoenix Awards Dinner
(Ticketed event)

ALC Daily welcomes submissions from a number of guest bloggers this week.

The Media are the Messengers: Who's To Blame?

By JAY JACKSON

@MrJay_Jackson
www.mrjayjackson.com/the-transformation-hour/

Hello beautiful people! I hope each of you is enjoying this week's festivities as much as I am. My pride continues to increase as I witness thousands of African Americans gathered to effect positive change for our community. There's so much networking, professional growth and business development occurring that I get chills just thinking about it. If you're not in attendance, you're missing the action and I suggest you start

planning to attend in the near future. I profess 2016 will be epic!

As I witness the thousands of positive black images walking the corridors and participating in the educational sessions, I can't help but notice the absence of media pundits who paint negative images of a people with a ravishing heritage. They're first on the scene at the few negative events, yet absent for the hundreds and even thousands of positive occasions. I often wonder how much advance notice they receive for negative events. However, the more pressing question is, "Who's to blame for the picture they paint?"

Understanding the hate that pundits and their leaders have for

the African-American community, I comprehend why certain images are publicized while others aren't. I also know the African-American community understands this; however, I don't understand why so very few are willing to set fire to their canvases and paint a more beautiful picture. A picture of kings and queens operating in our divine image. A picture of a community operating at full capacity.

As we continue to gather this week and as we return to our homes and workplaces, I believe we must put an end to the blame game regarding the image depicted in the media. Just as we do when we take selfies, I believe we must hold ourselves accountable and take responsibility for the picture being presented to the

world. In the words of the late and great Maya Angelou, "Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better."

Therefore, I charge those of us who understand the value and possess the know-how to actively educate those who lack the knowledge of what a positive image is. I also charge those of us in the media to utilize our platforms (large or small) to shift the paradigm of the African-American community. We shall be the vision of a better future. We must work diligently to demonstrate the beauty and power of being CEOs and entrepreneurs. We must persist in our efforts to present an image of competence, integrity and pride.



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