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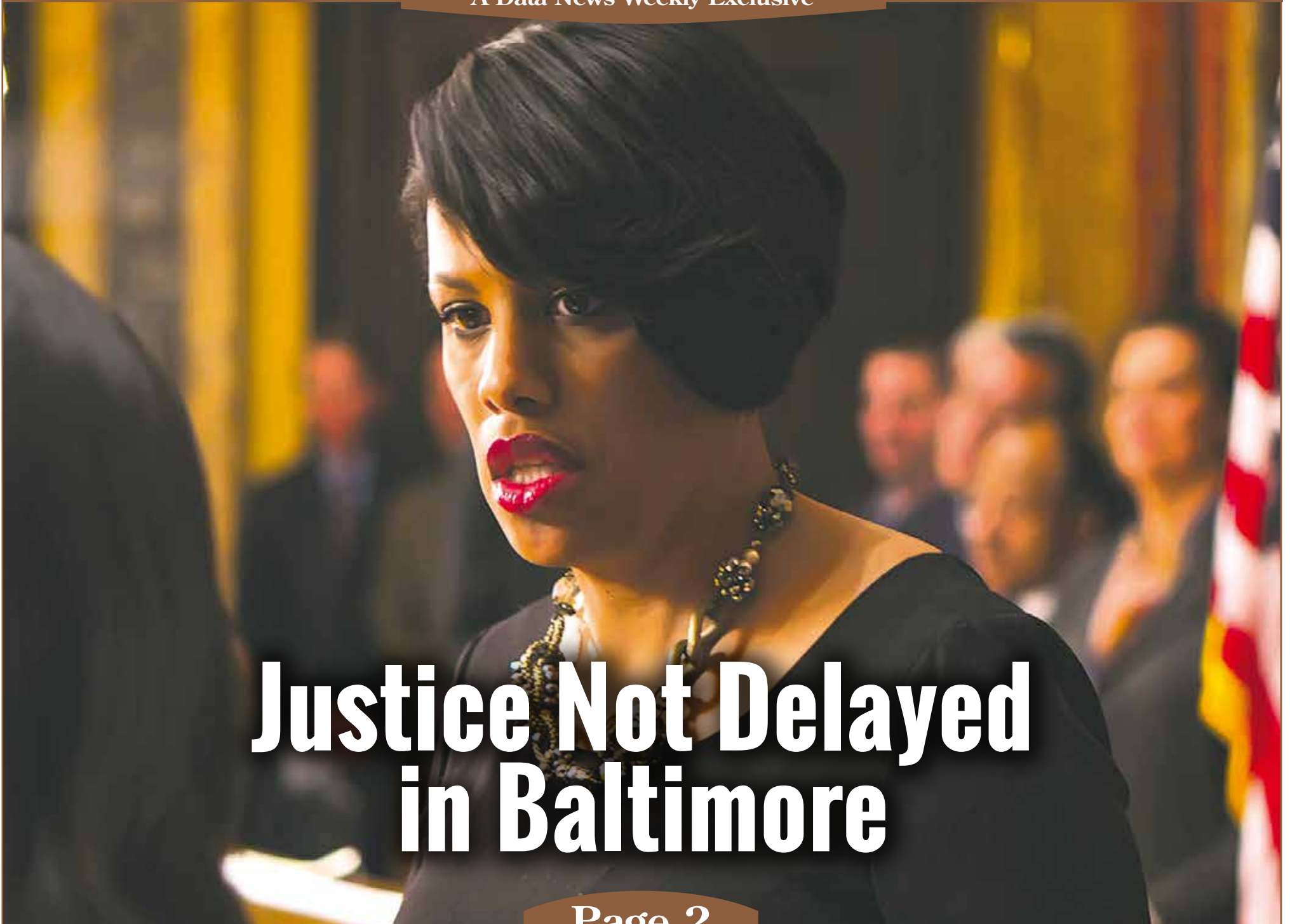
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A Data News Weekly Exclusive



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Justice Not Delayed in Baltimore



Above and on the cover, Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake of Baltimore, Md., speaks to a staffer during a swearing in ceremony earlier this year. (Courtesy Photo/Office of the Mayor)

By George E. Curry

WASHINGTON (NNPA) – Three extremely qualified African American women are at the forefront of making certain that Freddie Gray’s death at the hands of police in Baltimore will not go unpunished.

Loretta Lynch began her first day as U.S. attorney

general by focusing her attention on Baltimore and offering the assistance of her department. Within hours of receiving a report from the medical examiner that Gray’s death had been ruled a homicide, state attorney Marilyn J. Mosby promptly announced the filing of charges against six Baltimore cops in connection with Freddie Gray’s death. A couple of hours later, Mayor

Stephanie Rawlings-Blake followed up with a strong warning to rogue cops that her administration would not tolerate racism.

Mosby summed it up this way: “If, with the nation watching, three black women at three different levels can’t get justice and healing for this community, you tell me where we’re going to get it in our country.”

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Baltimore residents came together after the riots to calm the situation and work to clean up the damage.



Marilyn Mosby, Baltimore state's attorney, announces criminal charges Friday against all six officers suspended after Freddie Gray suffered a fatal spinal injury while in police custody. (Alex Brandon/AP)

One legal maximum holds that justice delayed is justice denied. If that's the case, early indications are that there will be no delay in justice in Baltimore in connection with the death of Freddie Gray, who was arrested and placed in a police van without a seat belt on April 12. He fell into a coma en route and died a week later as a result of injuries to his spinal cord.

Mosby, a descendant of five generations of police officers, surprised the public last Friday by how quickly she filed charges against six police officers.

At the news conference, she said: "To those that are angry, hurt or have their own experiences of injustice at the hands of police officers I urge you to channel that energy peacefully as we prosecute this case I have heard your calls for 'No justice, no peace,' however your peace is sincerely needed as I work to deliver justice on behalf of Freddie Gray."

Mosby is a graduate of Tuskegee University, a historically Black institution in Alabama. At 35 years old, she is believed to be the youngest chief prosecutor in the nation. And she clearly aligned herself with the young people who had protested Gray's death.

"...to the youth of the city. I will seek justice on your behalf. This is a moment. This is your moment.

Let's insure we have peaceful and productive rallies that will develop structural and systemic changes for generations to come. You're at the forefront of this cause and as young people, our time is now."

In a statement to the media that lasted less than two minutes, Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake warned: "To those of you who want to engage in brutality, misconduct, racism and corruption, let me be clear: There is no place for you in the Baltimore City Police Department."

On Friday, President Obama said, "It is absolutely vital that the truth comes out on what happened to Freddie Gray. And it is my practice not to comment on the legal processes involved; that would not be appropriate. But I can tell you that justice needs to be served."

When strong sisters take strong stances, invariably there are vocal opponents.

Rawlings-Blake was repeatedly criticized for not requesting the National Guard and heavy military equipment earlier to curb the violence that flared after Gray's death. But, as she repeatedly explained, she wanted to avoid the over reaction that Ferguson had undergone, which only incited

more street violence.

Speaking at Gray's funeral, Rep. Elijah Cummings (D-Md.) declared, "I've often said that our children are the living messages we send to the future we will never see, but now, our children are sending us to a future they will never see. There is something wrong with that picture," he said "I'm in the twilight years, but I am telling you we will not rest we will not rest until we address this and see that justice is done."

To the surprise of no one, the Fraternal Order of Police asked Mosby to step down as prosecutor.

Gene Ryan, president of Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 3, wrote: "I have very deep concerns about the many conflicts of interest presented by your office conducting an investigation in this case. These conflicts include your personal and professional relations with Gray family attorney, William Murphy, and the lead prosecutor's connections with members of the local media," he wrote. "Based on several nationally televised interviews, these reporters are likely to be witnesses in any potential litigation regarding this incident."

The FOP is raising money for the accused police officers, but

must find another site after GoFundMe, the crowd funding site, took down the site.

According to public records, Murphy donated \$5,000 to Mosby's campaign and served on her transition committee.

The Baltimore Sun quoted Rochelle Ritchie, a spokesperson for Mosby: "State's Attorney Marilyn Mosby has been elected by the residents in Baltimore City to uphold the law in every neighborhood including her own, regardless of if her husband is the councilman within the district where numerous crimes occur. Hundreds of people donated to her campaign. There is no conflict of interest surrounding Billy Murphy. He is representing the family in a civil case which has nothing to do with the criminal case."

In an interview with the New York Times, Mosby said her life experiences made her uniquely qualified to prosecute this case.

Mosby, whose husband serves on the city council, would later tell a reporter, "I've had experiences as an African-American woman where I've been harassed by police, or my husband has been pulled over and harassed by police. Does that give me a perspective? I think it does."



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Lemonade Day 2015

Giving Young People the Tools to be Successful in Life

By Edwin Buggage

Saturday May 2, 2015 was a day that had a lot going on. People were going to the polls to vote along with the second week of Jazz Fest; but what was also going on was the next generation of youngsters all over the state was taking part in Lemonade Day. In its 5th year it has provided over 50,000 youth across the state opportunities to be entrepreneurs for a day in addition to them getting a lesson in giving by donating a portion of their profits to a local charity.

All over the City young people along with adults providing supervision and support went out and participated in Lemonade Day 2015. As I walked along the busy thoroughfare of Magazine Street I saw a group of young people from the Youth Empowerment Project working tirelessly selling from their table two varieties of lemonade and homemade cookies.

"Every year we participate in Lemonade Day, the kids learn about entrepreneurship and how to run a business. In addition to that the monies go to helping fund our program, we do renovations with it, and we also buy recreational equipment for the youth center. We feel this is a great opportunity for the kids to learn and our program also benefits from it," says Ronald Vige, the Director of the Youth Empowerment Project.

He and his staff are working with young people in various capacities teaching them the things they need to be successful in life. On this day they are learning lessons in business basics and serving those less fortunate.

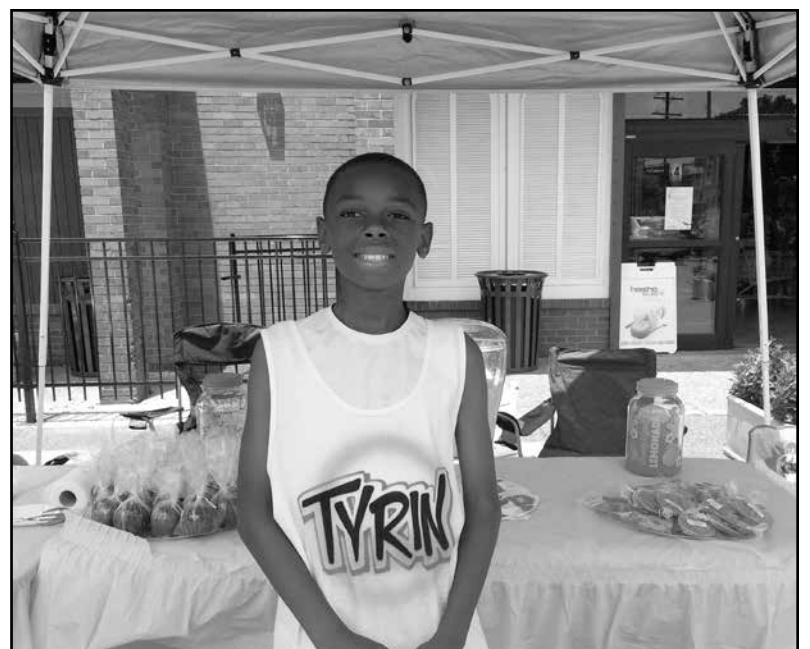
"We are out here to help the New Orleans Mission, because I feel it is important that all people in our City should not have to go hungry," says Markell Foy, a student at Esperanza Charter School in New Orleans.

He is a young man full of energy and ambition, when talking about the plans for his future he says, "I want to be a veterinarian when I grow up. I love animals, especially dogs. I have a hamster and a dog at home."

Another one of the young people with the group is Senoj Patton who attends Warren Easton Sr. High School. He is a very articulate young man who was very likeable and showed great skills as a salesman as witnessed by him getting



Markell Foy, Youth Empowerment Project Director Ronald Vige, Data News Weekly Editor, Edwin Buggage and Senoj Patton at Lemonade Day 2015.



12 year old Tyrin Wiltz was last years Regional winner of Best Business Plan.

passersby to purchase lemonade.

"We are out here because it teaches us about how to run a business, but it also teaches us to give back. We are giving five percent of our profits and donating it to help with the homeless problem in New Orleans. It feels good to learn about how to be an entrepreneur and help people in need in my community."

He says of his future plans, "I

want to be an actor and a lawyer because I love to debate and I would like to be an actor because you can become someone else and interpret how you see them."

New Orleans is a City filled with so many young people with talent. One of them is Tyrin Wiltz, who is a 7th grader who last year won last year best business plan in the region. Surrounded by his family

he says, "We sell things my grandmother makes and my mother makes the lemonade we sell. Last year we won best business plan in our region. I am glad my family is here for me and helps me during Lemonade Day."

Speaking of his future as his parents and grandfather looks on he says, "I want to be a professional basketball player, but if that doesn't

work out I want to own my own business in something dealing with computer technology."

Lemonade Day 2015 was again a success and it is something that inspires young people to reach higher and make their dreams come true and Data News Weekly was glad to be one of the sponsors of such a great event that encourages young people to strive to be their best.

Data News Weekly Publisher, Terry Jones to Receive 2015 Asante Award



Data News Weekly Publisher, Terry B. Jones

The Asante Foundation has announced that one of this Year's Salute to The Mass Media Profession will award recipients will be Terry Jones, Publisher of Data News Weekly Newspaper. Terry B. Jones grew up in the newspaper business that his father created in 1967. Mr. Jones worked every position in the company from writer, photographer, and gofer before becoming Business Manager of Data News weekly in 1977. One of his many innovations was the creation of the Data Doll program to lift the self-esteem of young African-American women. That program ran for a ten-year period. Now at the helm of Data News Weekly as Publisher and C.E.O. for the last three decades, Terry Jones has moved the operation forward increasing distribution by 20,000 issues and broadened the scope of information from mainly entertainment to sports, national news, local news, and politics. He created the Trailblazer program to recognize unsung heroes in the community, and established the JMJ Education Fund providing scholarships for sophomore students majoring in business and journalism. He also created an annual fundraiser for JMJ Foundation.

Terry B. Jones has held the position of Convention Committee Chair for the National Newspaper Association (NNPA) handling site searches, negotiating pricing and making recommendations to the board since 2011. He has also been a board member of NNPA, also served two terms as first Vice-president, and two terms as second vice-president.

In 2006 Mr. Jones was the winner of the First National Ethnic Media Award for Exceptional Communicators. Also in 2006 he received the Daimler Chrysler Award for Katrina-related journalism.

2015 marks the Sixth Anniversary celebration of The Asanté Foundation Festival and Awards. The organization is using it's platform to say Asanté to individuals who work in all facets of the mass media profession in New Orleans, LA. Award categories vary widely from book publishers, news reporting, marketers, cartoonist, and researchers to ancillary services administrative, editors, producers, camera operators, graphic artist, public relations, and meteorologists.

**For ticket information
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Remembering Travis "Trumpet Black" Hill



Travis "Trumpet Black" Hill

All of New Orleans was saddened to hear the news that on Sunday evening, friends were notified that Travis "Trumpet Black" Hill was admitted to a hospital in Japan after complaining of having trouble swallowing and feeling feverish.

The sadness deepened when the news spread Monday that he died from the infection spreading to his heart. Travis had visited the dentist before departing for Japan, and un-

fortunately the infection he sought to contain led to his death.

On Saturday, trumpeter Travis Hill posted photos on his Facebook page showing himself onstage in Tokyo. "I love Japan," he wrote. "It's my home outside of New Orleans."

In a news release sent by his publicist it is reported that Travis died at 2:15 p.m. Tokyo time on Monday.

Hill performed with the New Birth Brass Band on the Congo

Square Stage at the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival on April 24, the first day of this year's festival.

He complained of a toothache on Thursday, when he played a gig with the Treme Funktet at Vaughan's Lounge, and then flew out early Friday morning for Japan.

Hill was 28. The musician is survived by his mother, Dorothy Hill Martin, and a brother, Leroy.

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2015 Jazz Fest Wraps Up with Hot Performances

Photos by Kichea S. Burt

The 2015 Jazz and Heritage Festival ended last weekend with large crowds and hot performances. Big names like Third World, Charmaine Neville, The O'Jays, Dianne Reeves, and Jeffrey Osborne filled the stages with performances that didn't disappoint and left the audience eager for next year's festival. With all of the fun and music going on, you know Data was there.



The O'Jays



Erica Falls



Jeffrey Osborne



The Meters' Art Neville



Third World



Cyril & Lyrica Neville



Germaine Bazile



The Meters' Zigaboo



Charles Neville



Kerry Brown

Visit www.ladatanews.com for more photos from these events

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This will be a great celebration ...A 'Thank You Salute' to individuals in the New Orleans community who have steadfastly enriched and promoted the culture of New Orleans. These unsung heroes are our "Culture Ambassadors" to the world with their news reporting, rich flavor of Jazz, Art, Poetry and Movies.

Honorees includes: Sally Ann Roberts, Norman Robinson, Bill Rouselle, Brenda Thornton, Terry Jones, Beverly McKenna, Jim Hutchinson, Willie Wilson, Ty Green, Lloyd Dennis, Shanna Hartmann, Nicole Shepard, Hal Clark, Lee Hardy, Warren Bell, Monique Walker, Renette Hall, Camille Whitworth, Anthony Bean, Vera Warren-Williams, Latonya Norton, Parnell Herbert, Vince Sylvain, Monica Pierre, Roslyn Flot, Anthony Montgomery

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No Better Time to End Racial Profiling



Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.
NNPA Columnist

Freddie Gray, 25, was racially profiled and then chased down by the Baltimore police officers. He subsequently died as result of police action taken after what the mayor called an unjust arrest. But the Gray tragedy is not an isolated case. It is symptomatic of a criminal justice system gone mad with racism and bigotry.

This deadly scenario of racial profiling and the use of fatal police force against Black Americans continue to increase across America with blatant disregard for precious value of life. Yes, Black Lives Matter all the time everywhere.

Congressman John Conyers (D-Mich.) and Senator Ben Cardin (D-Md.) have once again introduced a bill designed to make racial profiling a federal criminal offense. It's called The End Racial Profiling Act of 2015 (H.R. 1933). If police officers knew that they could face federal imprisonment for committing acts of racial profiling, this law would have a definite impact toward reducing these racist practices.

The growing public demonstrations in Baltimore and across the

nation are indications that something substantive needs to change. Even with the calls for better police training and the proposed transition to more community based policing will not work effectively as long as racial profiling by police officers is openly permitted without punitive consequences.

Conyers stated, "This is a systemic issue plaguing men of color in America, stigmatizing them from youth throughout adulthood. The bill introduced by Sen. Cardin and I would make for the first time, use of racial profiling a federal offense. By ending use of racial profiling in police tactics and prioritizing community relations, we can cultivate community focused; smart policing that rebuilds trust in law enforcement."

Of course with a Republican-led Congress, it will take significant bipartisan support to get the Conyers' bill passed.

Senator Cardin represents the state of Maryland and this is the state that the whole world is now watching and waiting to see what will be the outcome in Baltimore of the Freddie Gray case. Cardin emphasized, "Tragic events in Baltimore and New York, North Charleston and Ferguson, and elsewhere around the country have shown us that federal legislation finally ending racial profiling is essential."

It has been 50 years since the infamous Watts riots in Los Angeles that were also triggered in part by racial profiling and hideous acts of police brutality. So have we learned

anything about this issue in the past 50 years? The direct answer is that our society is still in a state of denial of its racial problems that are deep seated and rooted in the systems of racial injustice, poverty and economic inequality.

The current attempts to divert attention away from the unjust racial profiling actions and deadly brutality of the police in Baltimore against Freddie Gray to speculation about whether Gray broke his own spine and crushed voice box in a so-called self-inflicted rage is a classic example of how the police always criminalizes their victims. Police officers guilty of brutality always in the aftermath attempt to demean the character of those they have brutal-

**Commentary, Continued
on page 11.**

'Thug' is in the Eye of the Beholder

By Walter Fields

A small section of Baltimore, no more than four to six blocks on the city's west side, experienced looting and property destruction after the funeral of Freddie Gray, the young man whose spine was mysteriously crushed after being taken into police custody. Gray would later die from his injuries and 'Charm City' has been in a meltdown ever since.

The anger over Gray's death should come as no surprise in a city that has had a history of questionable police tactics and where jobs and opportunity are foreign concepts for the masses of the city's Black majority.

Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake chose to call the looters 'thugs,' a conscious choice of words meant to label as criminals those involved in property destruction. President Obama also blamed the unrest on "a handful of criminals and thugs who tore up the place."

During the weekend protesters who lashed out violently were called 'outside agitators' by Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan, the same term Gov. George C. Wallace of

Alabama used to dismiss civil rights activists in the 1960s.

As I watched the wretched reporting of Wolf Blitzer on CNN – the Can't get it right News Network – it became clear to me that this will not be the last flash point because justice is now a commodity only available to the highest bidder or the politically connected. America

As I survey social media and see and hear on-air commentary on the eruption in Baltimore, what stands out is the rush to condemn the looters without any context. There was more concern expressed over the loss of property, most of it that should be insured, than the decades-old economic deprivation that has wiped out generations of Black Baltimoreans.

America knows the Baltimore of the Inner Harbor, Fort McHenry, Camden Yards, and the world renown Johns Hopkins Hospital. It does not know the Baltimore that exists on the corner of North Avenue and Pennsylvania Avenue, where most of the property destruction took place. The nation doesn't have a clue about Whitelock Street, in the west Balti-

more neighborhood where I lived for almost three years, or the gritty neighborhoods of East Baltimore or Cherry Hill. It is the Baltimore made famous by the gritty HBO series "The Wire" that is on edge. For many, Baltimore is just a star spangled tourist destination and its Black majority invisible... until this weekend.

Those aren't thugs you see on television. They are what social science researchers define as 'disconnected youth.' They are not 'outside agitators.' They are Baltimore youth, some teenagers and some young adults. They are the children of a city that has for some time now provided an inadequate education, offered little by way of employment and, like so many other cities, used the criminal justice system to corral youth engaged in the commerce of last resort but easy entry – crime. It is beyond disappointing to hear a Black mayor and a Black president call Black children thugs but offer little programmatically to give youth confidence that their futures will not be as bleak as their present.

What is more striking to me than seeing a CVS burning is the attempt to induce 'calm' by elected officials and the suggestion that a police force that is the source of much of the anger unleashed can somehow now be trusted to restore order. Can we have a moment of silence for the truth?

There has been an absolute failure in political leadership in cities such as Baltimore that has resulted in little or no effort to drive substantive change. Mayors, city council members, governors and state legislators come and go, and the problems persist.

What I read on social media in reference to the looting is that 'this is not the way' or 'they should vote' or 'they need to seek justice' and criticism that 'they' are burning down their own neighborhood. Let's get one thing straight: the system has failed Black people, and particularly Black youth, time and time again.

We fix this by addressing poverty, long-term joblessness and equitable access to capital and gender equity. If our neighborhoods can be devastated by the loss of a CVS

store and a check cashing establishment, it shows just how little we possess in the local economy. The dearth of small business ownership is ironic given that the late Rep. Parren Mitchell, a Baltimore legend, was a champion of small business development.

We fix this by ending the nonsensical theoretical debates on public education and incessant experimentation, driven by market forces, and start educating our children. When we push Black children out of schools by disproportionately disciplining them for similar offenses committed by their White peers, and then use their suspension or expulsion as a proxy for a criminal record, should we really be surprised by the looting? We fix this by ending the prison pipeline that is fed by the assault on civil liberties, the targeting of Black youth, and the elevation of minor offenses into criminal charges that leads to an endless cycle of incarceration, release and incarceration. What is more thuggish than systemically destroying a people?

Walter L. Fields is executive editor of NorthStar News.

Spiritually Speaking

Better Him Than Me



James Washington
Guest Columnist

Is it really possible to put your life in the hands of the Lord? To some modest extent I have experienced the effect of trying to do just that. I can't say how successful I've been but, I ask the question of you because I feel obligated to share the exhilaration. Exhilaration may be a poor choice of words, but it comes close to describing the emotion associated with an honest effort. And, honest effort is again why I ask the question. Is it possible for you to really get inside of what putting

your life in the hands of God really means? I can only share with you what I think.

The obstacles in the way of making an honest effort to embrace and step to God are at times huge and obvious. At other times they are so subtle they're practically indiscernible. For example, pride can get in the way because pride has no place in the relationship between you and God. Then the truth be told, pride has no place in your relationships with your fellow man either. To pride, you can always add envy, vanity, greed, lust, selfishness and bitterness just to name a few more impediments to an honest attempt to let God order your steps in His Word. In sports they say it's not whether you fall or fail, it's what you do after you fall and fail, because you're definitely going to do both. Time and again we fall. Time and again we fail. It's part of the reality

of life; also necessary parts of the Christian experience. The question always has been, what do you do next? Is it possible in the context of your reality to get up dust yourself off and try again to put your life in God's hands? Many of us, including me, especially me, want to hold on to our own abilities to solve our own problems, cure our own ills (sinful natures) and figure our way out of impossible circumstances by ourselves. We routinely pass judgment, think and act as if we're better than others and give God no credit for the many blessings we do have.

The positives (of life) are due to our own ingenuity and the negatives are blamed on everybody else but us. Now let's see you make the effort. Let go and let God. Submit first and then see what God has to say about your situation. Without this submission, I don't think any of us is in a position to first hear and

then listen to the Word of God. Y'all know I believe Satan shouts and God whispers. If you've ever been whispered to when you think the person speaking is saying something important, then you know your capacity to shut the world up and out. You can be anywhere and hear a whisper, just like a parent who can hear their child's voice in a sea of young faces on a crowded playground. I believe if we put forth the effort, we can hear God tell us how to give our lives to Him. There is a singularity to hearing God's Word. He is specific in what He says to you as opposed to what He says to me. That singularity becomes a plurality as we begin to understand His message, if not His words. They are intended to have the same effect on each of us. It's like an optical illusion. Once you finally see it, you can't from that point on, not see it. Once you get someone else to see

it, he or she can't-not recognize it from that point on either. It is, well, exhilarating. Failure is then only a byproduct of lack of effort. But the saved make the sincere effort. It's not always successful. But it's always there. The key is to build upon the successes of putting things in the hands of God is take it one success at a time. Do not, I repeat do not dwell on the failures one failure at a time. Therein lies the answer to my original question. You can do it and God expects it to be done one step, one day and one situation at a time. "So then dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with Him. Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation...."2 Peter 3:14-15.

May God bless and keep you always.

Commentary, Continued from page 8.

ized. Keep in mind Gray was deemed suspicious at first by the police only because of how he looked. In other words, the fact that Gray was racially profiled ultimately led to his death at the hands of police.

We must, therefore keep marching and keep demanding equal justice. We must continue without apology to shout as loud as we can that "Black Lives Matter." The case of Freddie Gray as well as all the other recent cases of racially-motivated police brutality must remain in our collective national consciousness and activism until justice is done.

We should definitely express our support the Conyers-Cardin bill. Racial profiling should not be tolerated and must be made a crime by law. Changing laws and enacting The End Racial Profiling Act, however, are the right steps to be taken, but that will not be the complete journey towards equal justice and fairness. All forms of racial injustice must continue to be challenged. The ultimate goal is to have a non-racial society and an inclusive democracy where race or ethnicity will not be a discriminating factor. We still have long ways to go.

Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr. is the President and CEO of the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) and can be reached for national advertisement sales and partnership proposals at: dr.bchavis@nnpa.org; and for lectures and other professional consultations at: <http://drbenjaminfchavisjr.wix.com/drbcfc>.

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Publisher

May 2nd

A Step In the Right Direction



Terry B. Jones
Publisher,
Data News Weekly

We at Data News Weekly would like to commend our community for making the right choices at the polls during the May 2nd election. We continue to advocate that we must do our part in investing in our City. The public libraries are a valu-

able resource that we can ill afford to lose as it is a gateway to knowledge and many other things that leads to success for our citizens.

Additionally, our Criminal Justice System needs to be fixed as well and we have to find a way to pay for it. We cannot afford to have valuable city services cut to pay for this, so to vote yes on this ballot initiative was a step in the right direction.

While it was a low turnout election we did get the result we desired, but it is important that more people get out and participate in elections whether they are local, state or national. We are at a turning point in our City

and we must be on the frontlines of the issues or get left behind. So I ask you to please vote and to be civically engaged.

It is up to us to steer our City in the right direction. We cannot any longer afford to sit on the sidelines and complain about what is going on; we must get in the game and do the things to make our City better for all our citizens. Last week we made one small step in that direction, but we must continue because we have a long way to go before New Orleans reaches its full potential as we continue to rebuild. So let's all work together to move our City forward for all of us and future generations.

ladatanews.com

Black Families Must Focus on Asset Building

By Charlene Crowell

As the wealthy few continue to prosper, the rest of the nation is caught in a financial tug-of-war between stagnant wages and a rising cost of living. In communities of color, chronic unemployment and underemployment and a host of other social ills are added burdens to an already challenging economy.

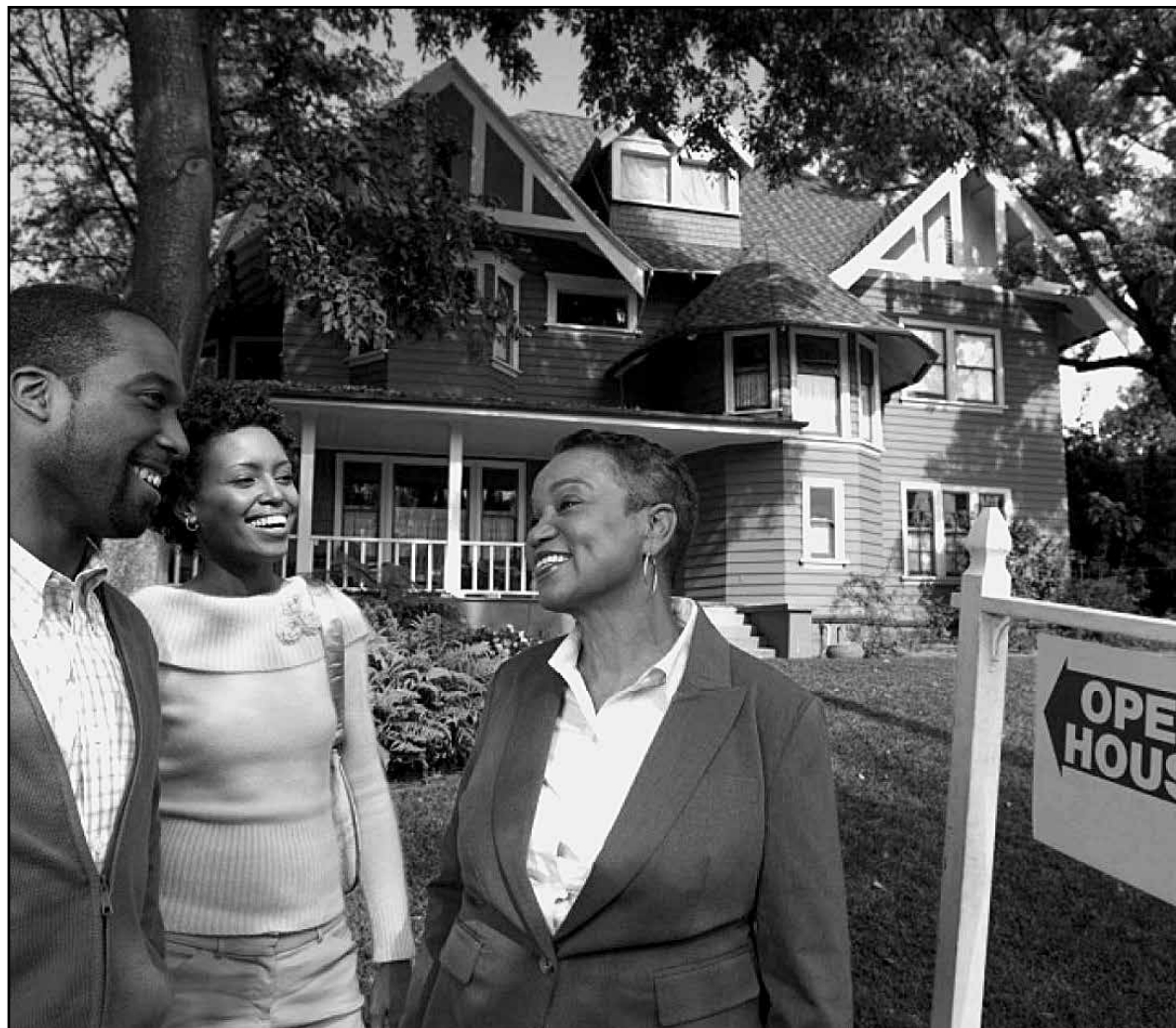
These and other disturbing trends were the focus of the recent Color of Wealth Summit, conceived and convened by a national research organization, the Insight Center for Community Economic Development and a solution-oriented social change nonprofit, the Center for Global Policy Solutions. The two-day conference engaged prominent thought leaders to propose solutions to the growing racial income and wealth divide that has come to characterize America's economy.

According to Maya Rockey-moore, its president and CEO, "Most organizations and policy makers focus on improving income and income supports such as safety net programs. While this approach is vital, it is not enough to build economic security for vulnerable families over a lifetime. To achieve true security for vulnerable families, asset building must be part of the strategy. Through wealth, families can have the financial resilience they need to sustain themselves in the event of a job loss or illness. Wealth also gives families the resources to invest in their future and realize their dreams. A truly transformational economic security strategy should focus on both income and wealth."

Recent research confirms how hard it is for families that lack adequate earnings, to make it from one payday to the next. While the idea of saving is valued, for too many consumers nothing is left once basic living expenses are met.

According to the most recent report of the Joint Economic Committee of Congress:

- Median net worth in Black households fell by more than 40 percent from 2007 to 2013. White households during this same period saw median net worth drop 26 percent;
- Median weekly earnings of Black college graduates working



By late 2014, according to the Census Bureau, only 42 percent of Black families were homeowners – more than 22 percentage points lower than that of the nation (64 percent) and 30 percentage points lower than that of Whites (72 percent). The current homeownership level is the lowest since 1993.

full-time and their White counterparts showed that the Black grads' annual earnings were \$12,000 less; and

- Overall, the Black median earnings of \$34,600, is nearly \$24,000 less than the same measure for Whites.

"The same groups of people who have historically been left behind are growing in number and population," observed Angela Glover Blackwell, a summit participant and founder and CEO of PolicyLink. "It is critical that we support asset-building programs and policies that create and protect opportunities for all families to save and invest in themselves, their futures, and their communities."

Historically, homeownership has been the gateway to building wealth and assets. Unfortunately, the nation's foreclosure crisis altered wealth-building for millions. According to the National Association of Real Estate Brokers, nearly 14.8 million foreclosure notices were filed from

January 1, 2007 to May 31, 2013.

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For Congressman Emanuel Cleaver, II (D-Mo.), a summit key-note, the discussions provided a timely connection between his work in the House Financial Services Committee and the conference's agenda.

"[T]he collapse in home values during the Great Recession hit Black households especially hard. At a time like this, we need more affordable housing and a stronger safety net," said Cleaver. "Both in the House Financial Services Committee and in the Congress as a whole, we have more work to do to increase opportunities for families around the country."

According to Cleaver, FHA's lowering of mortgage insurance premiums earlier this year, is one

example of a government initiative that will bring consumers "closer to the keys of their own home." An estimated 90,000-140,000 buyers will be assisted this year.

While most Black and Latino homebuyers have had their mortgages underwritten by government-backed programs such as FHA, VA and USDA, the greater challenge has been access to private sector conventional mortgages that over the life of a loan are far cheaper than the government-backed offerings.

The annual Home Mortgage Disclosure Act report (HMDA), quantifies by race and ethnicity mortgage lending and denials for mortgage loans. For 2013, the most up-to-date report, the data clearly reveals that while conventional mortgage originations rose slightly from 2012 to 2013, nationwide Black consumers, who are more than 13 percent of the population, received only 2.3 percent or 36,903 loans. In 2012, the same data point was even smaller, with only 26,500 such loans.

Earlier research by the Center for Responsible Lending (CRL), a summit co-sponsor, revealed that many homebuyers of color were steered into higher-cost, subprime loans – even when they qualified for cheaper ones. After analyzing 50,000 subprime loans, CRL concluded that Blacks and Latinos were almost a third more likely to receive a high-priced loan than were Whites with the same credit scores.

Additionally, research by the Center for Community Capital at the University of North Carolina found that borrowers of color and low-wealth families who received safe mortgages that were fully-underwritten during the housing crisis saw their home equity appreciate by \$23,000.

"Proving that when families receive responsible mortgage loans, they are able to build a financial safety net that they can access during challenging times," said Nikitra Bailey, a CRL executive vice-president.

"There are a number of wealth gaps that are troubling," said John A. Powell, director of the Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society at the University of California at Berkeley. "One is the gap between the very rich and everyone else. Another is the gap between people of color and their White counterparts. What is not appreciated and needs to be explored is the relationship between these gaps."

The policy answer to that keen insight will determine whether this and future generations will be able to reasonably accomplish what our parents and forefathers did – a better quality of life.

"America will be a people-of-color nation by 2042, and addressing the racial wealth gap is necessary to ensure sustained economic growth for all Americans," stated Blackwell.

Ever-widening wealth gaps are not a Black, or White, or Latino problem. Nor can the dilemma become more fodder for partisan bickering. It is an American problem that deserves a response equal to its challenge.

Concluded Powell, "Our lives, our economy and our democracy are at risk."

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New AG Meets with Baltimore Leaders, Police and Activists By Freddie Allen

By Freddie Allen
Washington Correspondent

WASHINGTON (NNPA) – Keeping her promise to ensure, “both strength and fairness, for the protection of both the needs of victims and the rights of all” in the criminal justice system, Attorney General Loretta Lynch traveled to Baltimore Tuesday to meet with city officials, law enforcement and community stakeholders to encourage closer ties between police and the residents that they are sworn to protect.

The same day Lynch was sworn-in and just a few hours after Freddie Gray’s funeral, dozens of people, most described as teenagers and students, looted shoe stores and burned local businesses and police vehicles. On April 12, Gray, a 25 year-old Black man, was chased and arrested by police officers. While in police custody, Gray suffered a severed spinal cord and a crushed voice box and died a week later. Gray’s death and viral cell phone footage of his encounter with police, sparked nationwide protests.

Last week, the Justice Department dispatched Vanita Gupta, the head of the Civil Rights Division, and Ronald Davis, the director of Community Oriented Policing Services, to Baltimore for a series of meetings with faith and civic leaders and community stakeholders to discuss the best path forward to mend the fractured relationship between Baltimore’s police force and the majority Black communities that they serve in city’s poorest neighborhoods.

On Friday, Baltimore State’s Attorney Marilyn Mosby filed charges against six Baltimore police officers that ranged from second-degree assault to “depraved heart murder.”

During a meeting with Maryland United States Senators Barbara Mikulski (D) and Ben Cardin (D) and



Attorney General Loretta Lynch speaks during her swearing-in ceremony at the Justice Department. Lynch traveled to Baltimore on May 5 to discuss improving ties between the police and Black residents. (Freddie Allen/NNPA News Wire)

Congressmen Elijah Cummings, John Sarbanes and Dutch Ruppersberger, Lynch said it was inspiring to see people come together to reclaim the city.

“We’re here to hold your hands and provide support,” said Lynch to the group that also included William H. “Billy” Murphy Jr., the Gray family’s attorney, and Rev. Donté L. Hickman, Sr., the pastor of Southern Baptist Church, whose community resource center and senior housing complex were destroyed by fire while still under construction during the riots on April 27. She also vowed that the Justice Department was there to help the city move forward and work to improve the Baltimore Police Department (B.P.D.).

Lynch then met with Police Commissioner Anthony Batts privately and then with a small group of police officers who she called the

“the hardest-working police officers in America.”

Lynch added: “To all of you on the front lines, I want to thank you. You really have become the face of law enforcement.”

Last fall, the Justice Department partnered with Baltimore officials to address concerns about abuse in the city’s police department.

“I have worked on this issue for years,” said Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, the mayor of Baltimore. “We can’t afford to fail. The relationship between police and the community is like a marriage.”

Lynch also met with Baltimore United, a community group that advocates for police reform, and others who had lost loved ones to police violence.

Earlier this year, President Barack Obama’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing made a number of recommendations that

included encouraging law enforcement officials to “establish a culture of transparency and accountability in order to build public trust and legitimacy” and to design “comprehensive policies on the use of force that include training, investigations, prosecutions, data collection, and information sharing.”

The report also recommended that police, “acknowledge the role of policing in past and present injustice and discrimination and how it is a hurdle to the promotion of community trust.”

But the letter from Gene Ryan, the president of the Fraternal Order of Police Lodge #3 in Baltimore, to Mosby may produce another hurdle to building community trust there. Ryan wrote that “none of the officers are involved are responsible for the death of Mr. Gray” and that Mosby should recuse herself from the case, because Murphy, the Gray family’s attorney, donated to her campaign and worked on her transition team.

Lawyers for Edward Nero, the Baltimore police officer who was charged with police misconduct, second-degree assault and false imprisonment, filed a motion to get a closer look at the knife officer’s found on Gray. City and state codes both contain language that say switchblades that open automatically, with some pressure applied to a button or spring, are illegal.

Rep. G.K. Butterfield (D-N.C.), chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, wrote a letter to Ryan calling his request for a special prosecutor in the case “illogical and unfounded in the law.”

Butterfield continued: “You have damaged the good reputation of your organization in writing the letter, releasing it to the media, and making accusations that amount to nothing more than propaganda intended to interfere with the proper administration of justice.”

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A close-up portrait of a young Black woman with short, curly hair, looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. She is wearing a black top and small hoop earrings. The background is dark and out of focus.

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