



## Should We Endorse?

You don't have to visit a barbershop or hair salon to know that there has never been a shortage of opinions in the black community on just about any topic you can name. We have opinions on just about every topic you can think of, and just for fun, we invent stuff to argue about.

By way of contrast, what  
*Continued on Page 9*

## New Business Chamber debuts Nov. 10



Michael Obi, chairman of the new Presidents Council Business Chamber.

By R. T. Andrews  
EDITOR

There has not been an effective voice for black businesses in Greater Cleveland since the demise of the Cleveland Business League in the late 1990s. The Presidents' Council LLC, an organization of some of the

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### CLEVELAND

## Community Police Commission holds First Public Meeting



About 150 Greater Clevelanders attended some portion of the Oct. 14 meeting of the Community Police Commission

By R. T. Andrews  
EDITOR

The first public meeting of the Cleveland Community Police Commission, held October 14 at St. Paul's Community Church, 4427 Franklin Blvd. on the city's near west side, likely raised more questions than it answered. Close to 150 people attended.

Mayor Frank Jackson appointed the 13-member commission in September pursuant to the consent decree the city negotiated with the US Department of Justice following a two-year investigation into Cleveland Police Department policies and practices. The agreement calls for the commission to make recommendations to the Chief of Police and the City of Cleve-

land, including the Mayor and City Council, on policies and practices related to community and problem-oriented policing, bias-free policing, and police transparency.

The main question is whether the Commission's work will ultimately make a difference in improving the relationships between a suspicious populace that too often seems in need of protection from the police, even when their presence has been summoned for assistance.

The Commission's three co-chairs are all educators: Mario Clopton teaches at Shaker Heights High, Professor Rhonda Y. Williams teaches history at Case Western Reserve University, where she also founded and leads the Social Justice Institute, and Craig Boise is dean of the law school

at Cleveland State University.

### Citizens step up to speak

About twenty citizens stepped forward during the public comment portion at the end of the meeting. Most adhered to the three-minute time limit although, predictably, former school board member Gerald Henley was among the few who did not. Henley said he had filed two complaints of police misconduct but "never heard back". He urged psychological testing or re-testing of all Cleveland police, saying, "Some policemen are not fit to be police."

Katie, a social worker, said there should be mandatory drug testing of any police officers involved in a fatal incident. Bruce Jones, a retired social worker, inquired about cultural competency training

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### Commission Meeting Schedule

**Oct. 28,** Elizabeth Baptist Church, 6114 Francis Ave.

**Nov. 11,** Cudell Recreation Center, 1910 West Blvd.

**Dec. 3,** Trinity Cathedral, 2230 Euclid Ave.

**Dec. 17,** West Side Community House, 9300 Lorain Ave.

In addition to these meetings, which will start at 5:30p and run until 8:30p, the Commission has promised to hold other forums, town halls, as well as working group meetings. The Commission can be reached by calling 216.755.4272 or via email to 216CPC@gmail.com.

## Husband and Wife Business Partners honored with prestigious Goff Award



L to R: Connie & Kevin Johnson.

Connie and Kevin Johnson were honored with the Goff Philanthropic Service award last month. The Goff Awards are presented every other year to celebrate the spirit of the foundation's founder, Frederick Harris Goff, and to honor individuals for their service, generosity, and commitment to our community.

The Johnsons were chosen because of their benevolence and compassion in serving the Cleveland community. Among their philanthropic activities, Connie serves as co-chair of the Cleveland

Foundation's African American Philanthropy Committee and is spearheading the Committee's summit coming up in April. The Johnsons donor-advised fund at the foundation supports education and the Lamont S. Johnson Scholarship Fund, in honor of Kevin's late brother, helps undergraduates in speech pathology at Cleveland State University.

Connie Johnson is the CEO of Visiting Angels Senior Home Care. Kevin Johnson is a Certified Senior Advisor and works in a variety of business endeavors.

## Cleveland Foundation appoints Leon Wilson as new Chief Tech & Info Officer



Leon Wilson will lead the development and implementation of internal and external strategic IT initiatives to enhance the foundation's work and leadership in the community.

Wilson brings more than 20 years of senior-level technology experience to the newly created position, including most recently serving as Senior Director for Technology and Data Engagement for the Michigan Nonprofit Association. He also has held IT leadership positions with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and Minnesota, Federal-Mogul Corporation, General Mills and the Internal Revenue Service.

## Michael G. Shinn Award winner announced

Kristi Andrasik, program officer at The Cleveland Foundation, is the first recipient of the newly-established Michael G. Shinn Award for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Philanthropy. The



Philanthropy Ohio Board of Trustees created the award to honor Shinn, who died earlier this year. He chaired the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee, taking on primary responsibility for guiding the organization's work in

this arena.

Cleveland-area colleagues who nominated Kristi wrote of her professional and personal commitment to making philanthropy more inclusive and equitable. Since joining the foundation three years ago, Kristi has focused on helping the Cleveland LGBT community mobilize resources and strengthen community infrastructures to prepare for the 2014 Gay Games and improve the well-being of Greater Cleveland's LGBT residents.

## ON THE MOVE

• **George Williams** has been appointed to the Mayfield Village Council.



• **Jennifer Coleman** is now Senior Program Manager for the Arts at the Gund Foundation.



• **William Tarter** is now Policy Planning Associate & Community Advocate at The Center for Community Solutions

• **Valerie J McCall**, chief of staff to Cleveland Mayor Frank Jackson, was elected Chair of the American Public Transportation Association on Oct. 3. McCall is a board member of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transportation Authority.

## Mather Spotlight Prizes awarded to extraordinary Case women

The Flora Stone Mather Center for Women at Case Western Reserve University bestowed Mather Spotlight Prize awards this year on several women from both inside and outside of the university who have made extraordinary contributions to CWRU.

Among those honored with the awards at the Women of Achievement Luncheon on Oct. 23 were:

**Jazmine Kirtland**, undergraduate student in the Department of Sociology. **Shanina Knighton**, PhD student in the Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing. **Naomi Sigg**, director of the Office of Multicultural Affairs.



Jazmine Kirtland



Shanina Knighton



Naomi Sigg



## New Business Chamber debuts Nov. 10

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

area's largest black companies, aims to fill that void with the creation of a Business Chamber.

The new organization, which began recruiting new members a few months ago, will make its public debut with an Inaugural Celebration event on Tuesday, Nov. 10 at the Museum of Contemporary Art in University Circle.

The new Chamber is affiliated with the US Black Chambers in Washington DC. The USBC bills itself as "the national voice of black business" and its new local affiliate will no doubt aspire to become a preeminent spokesperson for local black businesses.

Ron Busby, USBC's national president, will be on hand for the launch of Cleveland's Business Chamber [PCBC], which is housed inside the Presidents Council offices in the Leader Building, 526 Superior Ave. NE.

Jeanette Saunders, hired this summer as the president and executive director of The Presidents' Council, will be chief of staff for the PCBC. Michael Obi is the first chairman of the Business Chamber.

This new development in some ways marks the closing of a circle that was broken in 1996 when the biggest members of the former Cleveland Business League went off to form the core of The Presidents' Council. The Council has developed a number of significant programs over the years through its foundation, including its Emerging Entrepreneurs and PC Scholars.

But while there are a number of organizations that encourage or support



Ron Busby

minority business growth, there has not been an organization whose sole focus was to support, advocate, and represent the collective interest of black businesses, the vast majority of which have only a very few employees and typically lack sufficient resources to have an independent voice.

According to its website, <http://thepresidentscouncil.com/memberships/>, the Business Chamber will advocate on public policy issues that affect African American businesses, connect them with organizations that can assist with common business needs such as bonding, certification, raising capital, etc., promote business-to-business services and growth opportunities, and offer group purchasing discounts.

Tickets to the Celebration are \$65 and can be purchased via the website or by calling 216.771.8702.

Business Chamber membership starts at \$75 for professionals/individuals and \$100 for "solopreneurs". Members receive a discount for the Nov. 10 event.

The Real Deal Press is a charter member of the Business Council.



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Tuesday, November 3rd

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## Contracts Don't Guarantee Success

By Kirby Freeman  
RDP CORRESPONDENT



One of the best-known tickets for small business success is said to be securing a guaranteed-contract from a local, state or federal government agency. If the contract is set, and a business owner knows how to effectively supply the product or service that the government is willing to pay for, what could go wrong?

The federal government spends about \$500 billion in contracts every year, with laws requiring that 23% of that spending earmarked to be awarded to small businesses. Thousands of local and state government agencies award billions of dollars of additional business contracts to thousands of businesses. This does not include additional billions of dollars awarded by thousands of school districts across the county.

A short list of the products and services that government contracts provide include road and highway construction, building renovation, environmental remediation, school book publishing, housing demolition, office supplies, computer and information services, military supplies, as well as cafeteria and food services.

But ask any entrepreneur who has had a contract with a local or state government, or even Uncle Sam, and they will tell you that it's not all what it's cracked up to be.

Reimbursements and payments from government services usually are known to be "slow pays" – with collections taking significantly longer

than they do from private companies and individual consumers. This especially hurts small and minority businesses, whose workers and subcontractors usually cannot afford to wait long to get paid.

Before jumping to sign on the dotted line of that contract that promises regularly-scheduled payments, business-owners need to consider a few things:

- Exactly what is the number of days or weeks it will take from when my business provides the product and service to the time that I collect payment? Many businesses have gone under – not because they weren't profitable – but because they didn't have the cash on hand to pay their suppliers promptly. No matter how much the government pays on the contract, business owners need to make sure the timing of the payments fits the due dates of their bills.
- Pay attention to the fine print! Business owners need to closely review contract requirements regarding requirements for the amounts of goods and/or services that they are expected to provide, and how often.
- What impact will this contract have on the operation of my business?
- Very often government contracts require that a business pay workers a higher wage rate than what they otherwise would pay, or even provide higher health and safety standards. Entrepreneurs need to be aware of these stipulations.

What are my chances for renewing or extending my contract? It's important for a business owner to know what she has to do to keep a lucrative contract. Does the company have the ability to ensure customer satisfaction, and is that good enough to keep away potential competitors?

- Does my contract award only ensure that I will be one of several other suppliers considered to perform a specific project? Many contracts call for an agency to routinely rotate projects among several contractors. Small business owners need to know this before aggressively bidding for a contract.

Before getting involved in government contracts, small business owners should take time to research the specifics of their potential arrangements by attending industry-sponsored government events, or pre-bidding seminars. Government representatives answer questions about contracts at these events.

Entrepreneurs considering a government contract should also seek help from mentoring programs that are specifically offered by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA), SCORE, the local Urban League, community and/or neighborhood development corporations, or local governments.

Just as is the case before signing any agreement, wise entrepreneurs always commit the time to do their homework. Every business or contract opportunity will not fit your business goals.

## Community Bulletin Board



Courtesy of npr.org

### Ta-nehesi Coates at Cleveland State Nov. 2

Ta-nehesi Coates, a best-selling author and national correspondent for The Atlantic, will appear at Cleveland State's Waetjen Auditorium, 2001 Euclid Ave., under the auspices of The City Club, on Nov. 2 at 7pm.

Coates achieved break out prominence last year with the publication of his lengthy essay Case for Reparations, documenting the government-sponsored systemic economic oppression of America's black citizens right up to World War II. This year, he penned the equally explosive book, Between the World and Me, a Baldwin-like six-chapter letter to his 15-year-old son inspired by the shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson.

Coates will participate in a conversation on his new book that is sure to touch on such topics as the Black Lives Matter movement and the race for the major party presidential nominations.

Ticket prices range from \$8 for students with a valid ID to \$40 for non-City Club members. Call 216.621.0082 or visit [cityclub.org](http://cityclub.org) for reservations and/or more information.

### Duffy Liturgical Dance Concert at University Circle Nov. 8

Sunday, November 8, 2015

6:00 PM

University Circle United Methodist Church

The Duffy Liturgical Dance Ensemble presents "Water / Rights", a concert of Spirituals that explores the theme of "water" in songs connected to the Civil Rights Movement. The concert includes Spirituals arranged by Nathaniel Dett, Hall Johnson, Moses Hogan, W.C. Handy, H. T. Burleigh and others.

The concert will also offer a "Ball of Confusion" reflection based on Motown music of the same period.

Tickets are \$30 and may be obtained by calling 216.921.0734 or emailing [duffylit@att.net](mailto:duffylit@att.net).

## Community Bulletin Board



(l) Angela Davis & (r) Rob & G-1 of Rebel Diaz

### Angela Y. Davis to deliver Keynote at CWRU “Think Tank 2015”

Angela Y. Davis, internationally known for her work to combat oppression in the United States and abroad, will deliver the keynote lecture and participate in a moderated dialogue for Case Western Reserve University Social Justice Institute’s third biennial Think Tank—“Educating for Struggle: Social Justice, Empathy and Social Transformation.”

Davis, the Distinguished Professor Emerita of History of Consciousness and of Feminist Studies at University of California Santa Cruz, will present

at 7 p.m. on Friday, Nov. 13, in Ford Auditorium, Allen Memorial Medical Library, 11000 Euclid Ave., on the Case Western Reserve campus.

A scholar, author, organizer and activist dedicated to building communities of struggle, Davis draws on her experiences in the early 1970s, including the 18 months she spent in jail and on trial after being placed on the FBI’s “Ten Most Wanted List” for a crime she did not commit. A persistent theme of her work has been the range of social problems associated with incarceration and the criminalization of communities most affected by poverty and

racial discrimination.

On Saturday, Nov. 14, local and national thought leaders will lead three consecutive sessions on empathy, social justice and social transformation, focused on labor, LGBTQ rights, immigration and the criminal justice system.

Saturday’s closing keynote performance-talk will feature the Chilean hip-hop artists Rebel Diaz. The acclaimed bilingual crew performs internationally, using “boom-bap” traditions and hip-hop appeal to address issues of justice and provide social commentary.

Think Tank 2015 opens with a screening of the film, *Finding the Gold Within*, on Thursday, Nov. 12 at 6 pm in Strosacker Auditorium. One of the students featured in the documentary is now a CWRU student. He will participate in a Q&A following the screening.

All events are free and open to the public. Registration is requested and can be made online through the Social

Justice Institute website: [www.case.edu/socialjustice/events/upcomingEvents.html](http://www.case.edu/socialjustice/events/upcomingEvents.html). More information is available on the website or by calling the institute at 216-368-7568.

### Celebration of Human Services program Nov. 17

The First Annual Center for Community Solutions Awards for Public Service in Honor of John A. Begala will be presented to Ohio legislators Sen. Shannon Jones (R-7) and Sen. Charleta Tavares (D-15) for their bipartisan work in addressing the state’s unacceptably high infant mortality rate. The awards will be presented as part of the Celebration of Human Services in Cleveland on November 17. The program will also include presentation of the \$20,000 Anisfield-Wolf Memorial Award and MTV Awards, and an address by Ronald Richard, president and CEO of the Cleveland Foundation. Event is free; reservations are requested by Nov. 12.



## INAUGURAL CELEBRATION

Tuesday, November 10, 2015

Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland (MOCA)

5:30pm - 8:00pm

11400 Euclid Avenue - Cleveland, OH 44106

## The Presidents' Council Business Chamber - We Mean Business

This celebration marks the launch of a new era for The Presidents' Council as the collective voice for African American economic empowerment and recognized leader in providing resources for their economic development, growth, and profitability. Through a strategic system of support, inclusion, and collaboration, PCBC is the resource connector in Northeast Ohio for organizations that support African American businesses.

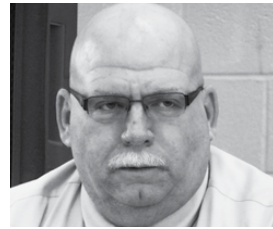
Reserve your ticket today! Call 216.771.8702 x 225 or visit [www.thepresidentscouncil.com](http://www.thepresidentscouncil.com) or email [info@thepresidentscouncil.com](mailto:info@thepresidentscouncil.com).





## Community Police Commission holds First Public Meeting

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L-R: Commission co-chairs Rhonda Y. Williams, Craig D. Boise, and Mario C. Clopton; Commission member Steve Loomis.

for police.

One of the most poignant comments came from Elaine, a ten-year Cleveland resident who said her late husband, who was mentally ill following serious childhood abuse, had regular encounters with the police, and was sometimes fixated on “suicide by police”. She indicated that these encounters were very much a mixed bag, with some officers acting with the utmost professionalism while others were clearly out of their depth in trying to handle the challenges her husband presented.

Turning to the issues of today, she spoke movingly about “the beautiful little boys who are running amok through our neighborhood” and urged the Commission to look at other societies and communities for solutions based on finding and eradi-

cating the roots of violence.

Longtime Cleveland activist Don Freeman had a two-part comment, first addressing what he calls “the Cleveland atrocity”, the still-unresolved 62 police car chase in November 2012 that ended in a 137-bullet fusillade and the deaths of two unarmed citizens, and second, how the arbitration procedures built into the disciplining of police almost uniformly result in police going unpunished for egregious conduct.

Other commenters included a cousin of Tamir Rice who asked how to hold police accountable when they violate their own rules; former Plain Dealer reporter Dick Peery who cited both the efficacy of former court orders in bringing diversity to Cleveland’s safety forces and the city’s failed process in hiring Patrolman Timothy Loehmann,

who fatally shot and killed Tamir Rice a year ago in still another unresolved case.

Also speaking was Luis Colon, a former aide to ex-Congressman Dennis Kucinich, who called for more Hispanic representation across city “entities”.

Ward 14 Councilman Brian Cummins noted how long it took for this meeting to occur following the scathing indictment of the Cleveland Police by the Justice Department last December. He urged the Commission to file an interim report after six months, provide an outline of dates and deadlines for increased public understanding, and place hard copies of all relevant documents in area libraries to supplement internet access. He also urged the Commission to look at Seattle, which he said is three years along the consent decree path that Cleveland should follow.

David Kachadourian, a history teacher at Cleveland School of the Arts, offered perhaps the most sobering of all the public comments, and the one that drew the evening’s loudest applause. He encouraged Commission members to read Chapter 11 of former mayor Carl Stokes’ autobiography, *Promises of Power*. The chapter focuses on the informal structure of the police force and the challenges inherent in trying to

professional Standards within the Safety Department, was asked to describe procedures related to his office. Despite repeated urging of co-chair Williams, Scott strayed from the agenda to say he was “dumbfounded” that the commission would begin its first public hearing by presenting what he called Dunn’s outdated study.

A second disconcerting element to the proceedings was the sight of Detective Loomis, the combative voice of the police union’s rank and file. When the detective removed his sport coat to sit, revealing the side-arm his hip, it was a disquieting reminder of police power.

After the meeting, when an attendee commented on the high degree of civility observed by the audience of 150 or so, a well-known criminal justice advocate suggested that the location of the meeting likely influenced the outcome. He went on to say that he was not referring to the church — churches are the venue of all five meetings scheduled to date — but the distance from the site of neighborhoods where police misconduct issues may be perceived as more acute. If these meetings were to be held in Glenville and Mt. Pleasant for instance, it was suggested that both the audience and the energy of the meetings would carry a different tone.

While there are many citizens whose concerns carry them all over town to participate in public forums on social justice, noteworthy was the absence of all of Councilman Cummins’s colleagues.

Clopton, one of the co-chairs, said it would be the community’s responsibility to support the recommendations once they were made to ensure official follow through. Williams, also a co-chair and the most vocal panel member during this first public meeting, echoed Clopton’s statement. She said, “The Commission is a tool that should be leveraged by the community” and that the community needs to stay encouraged in multiple ways.

“WE NEED TO  
DO SOMETHING  
ABOUT “THE  
BEAUTIFUL  
LITTLE BOYS  
WHO ARE  
RUNNING AMOK  
THROUGH OUR  
NEIGHBORHOOD”  
— A RESIDENT OF  
CLEVELAND’S WEST  
SIDE, SPEAKING  
TO THE COMMUNITY  
POLICE COMMISSION

change the dysfunctional culture it reinforces.

### Discordant Voices

A curious undertow rose to the surface early in the meeting after a presentation by CSU Professor Ronnie Dunn on his 2007 study of traffic stop data. Dunn briefly traced the history of Cleveland’s police review board, established in 1984 as one of the nation’s first. He then reviewed the disposition of civilian complaints, noting that 80% of the complainants were dissatisfied with the outcome of the process even though the majority of them had sought only moderate results, in some instances a mere apology or acknowledgment of error.

When Dunn finished, Damon Scott, a lawyer who administers the city’s Office of Pro-



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## Should We Endorse?

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there's too often a shortage of information about things that matter. Like what goes on in our city halls, with and among our political representatives and candidates for office. Or what's going on in our schools, whether down the street or in Columbus, where, in case you hadn't noticed, laws are being passed and policies implemented that are wrecking the infrastructure of our public school systems in ways that may be irreversible.

The economics of the news business in today's digital world mean that even less news relevant to where we live is getting through to us. A dwindling number of us can remember the days when Cleveland had three daily newspapers — three! — actually competing to uncover important news. Nowadays, the one 24/7 news organization in town struggles with declining editorial resources to keep up with what it deems the essential beats, meaning if you live in a first-ring suburb, your information needs get fed with more lard than protein.

Recognition of these circumstances is what in part gave rise to The Real Deal Press. Our editorial focus, starting from

when we were just a blog, has long been on those communities where news coverage has visibly receded if not already vanished. Places like Maple Heights, Euclid, Warrensville Heights, Lee-Harvard, where coincidentally or otherwise, African Americans have become the majority and only the crime beat seems relevant to television and print news editors.

So that leaves us often as the sole reporter at many city hall meetings. And it truly is there that one gets a sense of community, whether the talk is of municipal budgets, storefront vacancies, trash pickups, garden clubs or scout troops. And it is there that one observes which council people do their homework, who is lazy or likes to grandstand, which mayors are misanthropic, etc.

Our attention to these communities has given us insight, we think, as to who should be in office and who shouldn't.

Does that mean we should endorse? Maybe. Do you want us to? We don't know. Do you want just the information without the recommendation?

Recommendations are often

shallow, if not altogether hollow. The Plain Dealer endorsed a candidate for Euclid mayor and gave not a single reason why she was preferred. They did perform a valuable service in videotaping and posting their endorsement interview with the three primary candidates. We interviewed the same three candidates and observed qualities in each that could serve Euclid well. But we didn't think we knew enough to make a solid recommendation.

This election cycle we were propositioned for the first time. Somebody thought enough of our audience that they wanted to buy our editorial position. We offered them ad space but they turned it down when they saw that our editorial stance didn't come with it. These were people who want to see State Issue 3 pass. Many of the Issue 3 advocates — including some public officials — have either been paid to hype the benefits of marijuana legalization to the black community, or they are hoping to cash in one way or another if their issue becomes law.

While endorsements are sometimes about money, that isn't necessarily always the case.

Take the Black Women's Political Action Committee for instance, a group with a venerable history. BWPAC was founded in 1983 when black women, who formed the backbone of many campaigns in our community, for both black and white male candidates, found themselves disrespected when some of them wanted to run for office. It became clear that while the impressive organizing and communication skills of black women were valued in the trenches, they were still considered third-class when it came to being candidates. So they organized, raised money, harnessed assets and began to support each other.

Black women in Cuyahoga County were so successful that they have become judges, legislators, and mayors throughout our larger community. In the process the organization they built, BWPAC, became a powerful player in Cuyahoga County, sought after for their endorsements. And that was a good thing. Until their process lost first its integrity and then its legitimacy.

Today the BWPAC, like so much in our community, retains

the appearance of strength but is rotting from within. It has become a clique of politicians who too often endorse not from conviction but from a level of pettiness that is shameful. They are restrictive in who they interview, closed in their process, punitive on a personal level, and this year so screwy that they endorsed a candidate for Cleveland Heights City Council who bids fair to be called a white racist.

That said, we think endorsements can be valuable. But voters need to use them wisely. Consider the source. Consider the message.

In this election cycle, we are making one endorsement and one endorsement only. It is for Maple Heights mayor, and you can find our choice on the editorial page.

We have followed Maple politics carefully enough to feel that our endorsement brings value to voters. We want to endorse carefully, because we want our endorsement to mean something when it's given and when it's received.

We'd like to know your thoughts on whether you think we should do more of it or not do it at all.

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# Blackwell for Mayor in Maple Heights

Maple Heights brings to mind the Tolstoy opening from Anna Karenina [we haven't read the book] about unhappy families: "All happy families are alike; each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way."

Like many first-ring suburbs in Cuyahoga County, Northeast Ohio, around the state and across the country, Maple Heights is struggling with a host of economic and structural challenges, including a declining tax base, disinvestment, changing demographics, to name but a few.

The city seems worn out, and its current crop of elected officials, headed though certainly not led by the departing Jeff Lansky, is certainly worn out. At the twice-monthly council meetings, the lack of energy is palpable, no one has a new idea, and the entire gathering seems a tired parody of Waiting for Godot, as the city seems to wait for the repo man and the utility shutoff man to arrive.

The city is not without some assets that could aid in a modest comeback. Its central location is a prime asset, its proximity to all parts of the County is perhaps the best of any Cuyahoga suburb.

But what the city needs is a fresh start, new leadership. Of the two candidates, Annette Blackwell and Bill Brownlee, we think Blackwell is what the city most needs at this time.

We think very highly of Brownlee to be sure. Unlike his City Council colleagues, who detest him and resent his every utterance, we think he actually has a certain charm. He has undeniable intelligence, he's analytical, methodical, imaginative, and logical. His fellow council members saw him as so smug and cocksure, they censured him just for being himself.

And that's a problem when you are trying to govern. It doesn't matter if you are the smartest person in city hall if you can't get along

with others. Ask East Cleveland's mayor, or the recalled Richmond Heights mayor. Of course, sometimes people oppose you because you threaten their cushy situation, but there doesn't appear to be much comfort to be found anywhere in Maple Heights these days. And when hard choices have to be made, it's important that a leader know how to smooth the process as much as possible.

So here's an endorsement for Ms Blackwell whose virtues we haven't even enumerated. She's pretty smart herself, especially on matters of finance and taxation, because that's how she makes her living. And she knows enough about personal relationships to have connected with lots of parents during her years working as a volunteer in the school district. In fact it was that volunteer work that helped her connect with the voters, and to establish the lines of communication that helped her win the city's five-



Annette Blackwell

way primary by a decisive margin over her rivals.

Blackwell will need to draw on those people skills. She will also need to draw on the ideas and abilities of some of the city's best minds. We think she's smart enough to do that, and maybe even smart enough to find a place for a smart, industrious guy like Brownlee in her administration.

Blackwell is the best bet for Maple.

## Late Breaking News:



On November 12 from 5:30pm to 8pm, a conversation will take place at the Cleveland Foundation, 1422 Euclid Ave. on the opportunities and challenges that exist today in the public sector.

The discussion will also address the importance of economic development, entrepreneurship, community engagement and education for Cleveland's future. Guest speakers will include

Cleveland Mayor Frank Jackson and Dr. Mittie Davis Jones, chair of Urban Studies at Cleveland State University.

The moderator will be Angela Jones of the National Forum of Black Public Administrators [NFBPA]. The primary event sponsor is the National Urban Fellows program.

There is no charge to attend but reservations are requested by Nov. 5. Call 216.861.3810.

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for Your Community News

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# THE STOKES FAMILY SALUTES CLEVELAND: THANK YOU!

**T**uesday, August 18, 2015 was the official closing of a unique American story with the passing of my uncle, Louis Stokes. His brother, my father Carl, preceded him in death on April 3, 1996 when I was 26 years old. My father's death changed my uncle's view on how he would move forward professionally for the next nineteen years.

The City of Cleveland has changed tremendously economically, socially, culturally, and politically since its founding, but most significantly for me — while then and now one of the most segregated cities in the country — it became the cradle where two black men reared by a single, unlettered woman could come to be a mayor and a Congressman. And it saw a transformation from the Civil Rights era into the era of black politics that provided for senior level professional positions, contracting opportunities, parks and community centers to be built, economic development partnerships to be established, and much more for black people and black business owners and communities under my father's

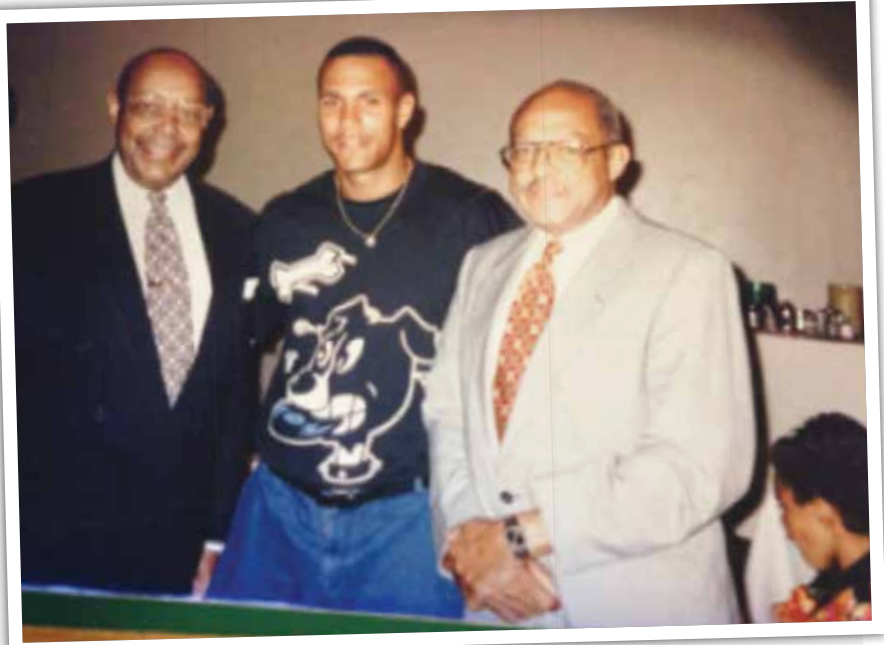
leadership.

As for opportunities under my uncle's 30-year Congressional tenure and in a post-retirement where he continued to wield his influence — including in Cleveland and many other places around the country, even Puerto Rico — veterans facilities, educational institutions, governmental institutions of all kinds, benefited from his keen insights on how to make government serve all people more effectively across gender, age and color lines. It is incredible to consider what he was able to accomplish during his time here on earth.

While much is known about their mother's heroic work raising sons as a single parent, there is an aspect to their personal journeys about which even most Clevelanders are unaware.

Both my father and uncle had full custody of their respective children. This should not be skewed as a negative against either my or my cousins' respective mothers, with whom we have all always maintained very positive relationships.

Still, you can only imagine the early days of a father rearing Carl



*My father, second from right, had just returned from the Seychelles Island in 1995 following his service as Ambassador. He died the following year.*

Jr., Cordi and Cordell for my father and Shelley, Angie, and Chuckie for my uncle [Lori was the child of my uncle and Aunt Jay], while pursuing their respective careers during those tense and tumultuous years. Now, that is courageous! Can you imagine?

The photo accompanying this article was the last time the three of us were together at the famed Vel's-on-the-Circle Party Center (That's my niece Quinn McBee, Cordi's daughter, eating off to the side).

This reminiscence is a tribute to all of Cleveland's residents for the outpouring of love and support you provided all of my family during the respective funeral services for our father and uncle. Your support provided the comfort required to endure. Whether you voted for them all the time, some of the time or never voted for them at all, doesn't matter because as a city you were there when it counted, so thank you!

Lastly, to both former Mayor Michael

White and current Mayor Frank Jackson and all of their respective staff — thank you so much for the seamless transition for our family from death to burial. Your leadership is undeniable. Our family sends our love to all of you and commits to this community our service within our personal capabilities. I will continue to see you in the community.

God bless!

*Cordell E. Stokes*

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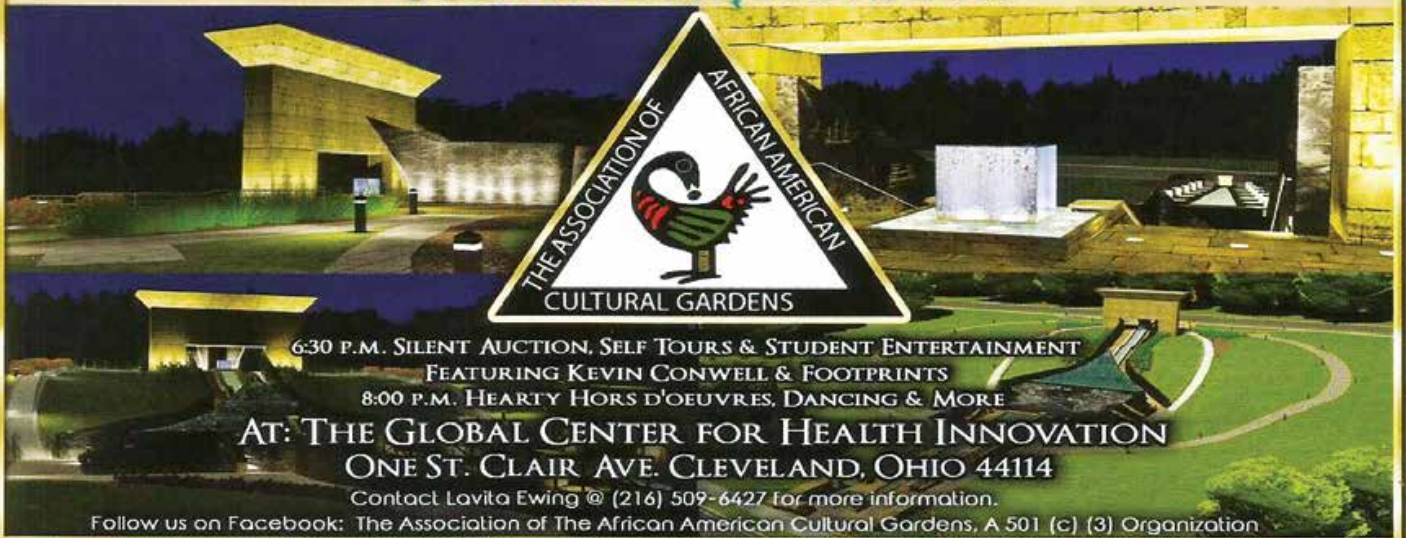
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# Motown's Smokey Robinson to receive CWRU honorary degree

Presentation opens 20th Annual Music Masters tribute concert on Nov. 7,

Western Reserve University will award an honorary degree to William "Smokey" Robinson to open the 20th Annual Music Masters Series tribute concert at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 7, at PlayhouseSquare's State Theatre honoring the lifetime contributions of the legendary R&B and soul singer-songwriter, producer and talent scout.

The honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree acknowledges Robinson's many musical and cultural contributions, which extend from enduring songs to his leadership in the music industry.

In a statement accompanying the announcement, President Barbara R. Snyder said, "His voice and lyrics captured

joy, heartbreak and many other emotions that comprise the human condition. His story is testament to the power of talent, combined with dedication and support."

Robinson is widely considered one of the most influential popular music artists of the 20th century, creatively combining pop music with early rock and roll and gospel. In addition to fronting the Miracles, Robinson served as a Motown vice president for several years, producing, writing and scouting for talent as Berry Gordy Jr's most trusted confidant and right-hand man.

Robinson wrote hit songs for Marvin Gaye, the Temptations, Martha and the Van-

dellas, the Supremes, the Four Tops and countless others. In 2006, he was inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame; he received a Kennedy Center Honor the same year.

*Rolling Stone* magazine, in featuring Robinson as one of the world's 100 greatest singers of all time (No. 20), described his unique style this way: "His high, delicate delivery marked him as not so much a tenor as a male soprano, able to glide into a heart-breaking falsetto that remains one of the most distinctive sounds of 20th-century pop."

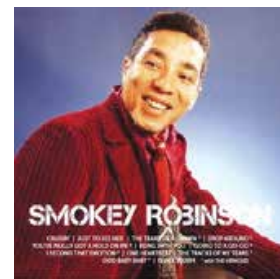
Paul McCartney once marveled: "Smokey Robinson was like God in our eyes."

The tribute concert culmi-

nates a weeklong celebration (Nov. 2-7) of the life and legacy of Robinson, who will attend to accept the award, but is not scheduled to perform.

Other featured events include a keynote lecture, "You Really Got a Hold on Me," by famed rock journalist Dave Marsh on Thursday, Nov. 5, at 7 p.m. at Case Western Reserve's Tinkham Veale University Center Ballroom. The event is free and reservations are not required.

A conference on Robinson's life and legacy, organized in partnership with the Rock Hall, will be held Saturday, Nov. 7, from 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., in the Rock Hall's Foster Theater. Tickets are \$25



Courtesy of amazon.com

and are available at tickets.rockhall.com. For a full list of events scheduled Nov. 2-7, visit rockhall.com.

Tickets to the Nov. 7 tribute concert range from \$30 to \$100 and are available at the PlayhouseSquare box office by calling 216.241.6000, or by visiting playhousesquare.org.



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# Black Girl: Linguistic Play coming to Playhouse Sq direct from Broadway

*New work by Camille A. Brown commissioned locally*

Multi-award winning Camille A. Brown & Dancers will perform *Black Girl: Linguistic Play* on Saturday, November 14 at 8:00 p.m. at the Hanna Theatre in Playhouse Square. The piece, commissioned by DANCECleveland to commemorate their 60th Anniversary Season, recently premiered at the Joyce Theater in New York City to favorable reviews.

"We were overjoyed to receive a 2014 Joyce Award and funding for this great project," said DANCECleveland Executive Director Pam Young. "Camille spent time in northeast Ohio interviewing women in the African American community as part of her research for the new work being performed here. The results are a wonderful opportunity to introduce Northeast Ohio to this Bessie Award-winning choreogra-

pher and her company."

Camille A. Brown & Dancers use theatricality and the aesthetics of modern dance, hip-hop, ballet and tap to tell stories that connect history with contemporary culture. The company's work explores real life situations through the lens of a modern female perspective, and, according to the *Belfast Telegraph*, features "incredibly inventive and energetic dancers."

In *Black Girl: Linguistic Play*, Brown explores black female identity by transporting her dancers and audience to the playground, courtesy of a multilevel stage of platforms and mirrors designed by Elizabeth C. Nelson. With original music performed live by pianist Justin Ellington and bassist Tracy Wormworth, the choreographer uses the rhythmic play of Afri-



can-American dance vernacular including social dancing, double dutch, steppin', tap, Juba, ring shout, and gesture as the black woman's domain to evoke childhood memories of self-discovery and empowerment.

Formerly a member of Ronald K. Brown's Evidence and

a guest artist with Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Camille A. Brown is a recipient of multiple accolades in dance and theater, including a 2015 Doris Duke Award, two Princess Grace Awards, and the 2014 Joyce Award with DANCECleveland, among others. She is the co-di-

rector of a new program at The Jacob's Pillow School, *Social Dances: Jazz to Hip-Hop*.

Tickets, starting at \$15, can be purchased at [www.DANCECleveland.org](http://www.DANCECleveland.org), by calling 216-241-6000, or at the Playhouse Square ticket office at 1501 Euclid Ave.

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# Mike White helps Glenville celebration look back, ahead



L to R: Young professionals Teleange Thomas, Aaron O'Brien among those considering moving to Glenville, former Mayor Mike White & India Pierce Lee.

By **R. T. Andrews**  
EDITOR

Much has changed from the Glenville of yesteryear and even the Glenville of yesterday, if by yesteryear we mean the 1950s and 1960s and by yesterday we mean from 1990 through 2001.

The latter period roughly corresponds with the mayoral administration of Mike White, who now lives about 100 miles south of Cleveland and appears to be enjoying his life as a gentleman farmer, vineyard owner, and consultant to the Mandel Foundation.

The White years were a boisterous and tumultuous time for Cleveland, a period personified by White's high energy, great intensity, and hands-on leadership style. He took over the school board politically and then statutorily, drove the building of the Gateway district, and completed the expenditure of more than \$800 million in public playgrounds when he oversaw the building of a new football stadium.

White was known during his tenure as somewhat of an orator. That description always seemed overblown to us, attributable more to the force of his personality than any genuine eloquence.

White returned to Cleveland Oct. 23 for a Famicos Foundation fundraiser to benefit the work being done to rebuild a Glenville that physically bears only a faded and deeply scarred resemblance to those other, long-departed Glenvilles. But he brought with him a spirit of those old Glenvilles, and it helped him reach an elo-

quence that was extraordinary, as he spoke from the heart. He recalled the role that the Glenville neighborhood had played in his life and in the lives of so many others.

That spirit clearly resonated with those at the Museum of Contemporary Art who are laboring with Famicos today to build a new Glenville. While MOCA is in the heart of Glenville, on this night one could feel it being pulled into and made a part of Glenville.

Several factors contributed to the sense of homecoming that pervaded the evening. For one, while White was the event's honorary chair, the actual chair was White's childhood friend of more than 50 years, India Pierce Lee, whom White called a "tremendous partner" for her community work throughout the city via the Cleveland Foundation. White also called his former neighbor and the city's director of community development, Daryl Rush, "the hardest working man in community development." Rush, who was being honored for his decades of work in community development, was moved nearly to tears as he recounted the joys of his career shift from corporate law to community service.


White, who left politics behind after his three terms in office, was most encouraging of young talent, saying that community elders "should put our arms around our young and say, "Go for it! We'll back you up!"

Also a highlight of the evening was the recognition of young professionals. A group of 20 have pledged to move [back] into the neighborhood and help

to seed its renaissance.

Famicos executive director John Anoliefo noted in his remarks that Rockefeller Park, which runs along Glenville's western edge, is, after New York's Central Park the second largest public municipal green space in the United States.

Famicos was founded by a nun, Sister Henrietta, 45 years ago. It has evolved into a community development corporation and became Glenville's CDC in January 2014 after ward boundaries were redrawn and Kevin Conwell's was redrawn to make him councilman for "the 'Ville".



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# Teenager spreading message: S.T.V.

By **Derek Dixon**  
RDP CORRESPONDENT

To simply say “enough is enough” is no longer enough for Cassidy Sanders. She literally wears it, and hopes you will too.

The 14-year-old John Hay ninth-grader was saddened when a close family friend’s boyfriend was murdered in March, followed soon after by the Lee-Harvard drive-by shooting death of 15-year-old L’Shawn Brooks, one of her peers. After a third fatality occurred just blocks from her home, Cassidy refused to sit still. “The fact that these were so close to home, within a one or two-mile radius was a trigger for (Cassidy’s) idea,” recounts her grandmother, April Sanders.

“I wanted to get the idea out to stop the violence in Cleveland. My aunt knew someone who made t-shirts, and he actually designed a logo for me,” Cassidy explained. “I had a plan. All he had to do was design it for me.” That was early in March. Before the month ended, the first batch of “Stop the Violence” t-shirts was produced. Each is emblazoned with the outline of the state of Ohio. In the background is the Cleveland skyline and the foreground features a large hash tag and capital letters “S.T.V.”. The words “Stop the Violence” are spelled out underneath, and area code “216” is printed as the bottom line. The shirts come in a wide range of colors and in every size from toddler to adult. They are sold for \$20

regularly or \$25 with a personalized image or message on the back.

Cassidy sent Instagram photos of the finished product to many of her friends. “Many people started supporting me right away,” she said. Response has been so good that Cassidy’s Instagram following has grown from six thousand before the endeavor to nearly twelve thousand as of this writing. More than one hundred of the items had been sold to date, resulting in excess of \$2,500 in sales as of mid-October, estimates April.

“We deliver the shirts. We travel to Garfield, Maple Heights, Euclid, and Richmond Heights—all over,” Cassidy said. All but a couple of deliveries have been on the city’s east side and suburbs. Though it’s not yet available, the pair hasn’t ruled out the prospect of online sales should it become feasible.

April says her granddaughter has some specific plans for the proceeds once production and delivery costs are covered. “We have an idea for all the participants who have purchased a t-shirt to be on a billboard in one of the high crime neighborhoods. Another idea is to use the money to pay high school students who are doing really well to tutor other students in pre-K and kindergarten.”

Evidence of the movement’s growth has appeared in unexpected places. “I thought it was interesting that someone actually wore one of the t-shirts at John Hay’s homecoming dance. The message

was important enough for that student to wear it as homecoming attire,” April said, adding proudly that Cassidy was named queen of the event for the ninth grade class. “Recently there was a lady on Instagram who had uploaded a picture about violence,” Cassidy added. “She actually tagged me in it and I didn’t even know it. I was really surprised. She told me I needed to continue taking action.”

Exposure is on the rise. The teen and her brand were featured in a July interview segment on Newstalk Radio 1490 WERE. Support has also come from LCR (Loyalty, Consideration, Responsibility) Enterprises, LLC, a Beachwood-based management consulting firm. Members of the Omega Psi Phi fraternity Zeta Omega chapter wore royal purple and gold versions of the shirts during one of their events.

One of the most meaningful addendums to Sanders’ cause was the production and sale of a special batch of “Pray for Boston” shirts during that city’s response to the Boston Marathon terror explosions crisis. They were sold in April following the protests that erupted following the funeral of police custody victim Freddy Gray. Still to come is a partnership with the Stark County NAACP, and a news segment to air on WHBC Radio in Canton—all while Cassidy maintains her rigorous academic requirements.

“It was out of balance at first,” the progressive teen ad-



mits in reference to launching the brand while being a student. “Now I’m handling the t-shirt sales and school much better.”

Omega Psi Phi member Jerry Kennebrew is excited about the mission. His initial encounter with April at Gimme Java Café in Shaker Heights came from a tip provided by his fraternity brother, LCR CEO Henry Butler, with whom Kennebrew serves on the fraternity’s International Youth Leadership Committee. “I told April ‘You need to produce them in colors for every fraternity and sorority,’” he said, on his way to an Omega conference. On his way, he distributed five of the six shirts he bought. One recipient was Cleveland Municipal Court Judge Ronald

Adrine who is involved with a number of anti-violence causes.

“There has been a positive response at least at a micro level,” reflected Kennebrew of helping Cassidy’s effort. “It’s all about education. Often time, the parents are not spending enough time with youth who commit violent acts. The streets are raising them. We take a long-term view.” He greatly appreciates the same effort Cassidy has made. “When the Omegas have our November 14th Achievement Week Banquet, we want to have her recognized for her accomplishments. Change starts with one individual taking a step, and April’s granddaughter has taken that step.”



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## Council on World Affairs hosts talk on plight of Nigerian women farmers

By **Derek Dixon**  
RDP CORRESPONDENT

Whether in Cleveland or globally, single mothers seeking an urban farming livelihood face gender-specific safety threats. However, Doris Ikpeze counters them with an internationally successful solution.

Ikpeze, a native Nigerian and the Economic Justice and Gender Officer for Oxfam Nigeria shared the podium with Oxfam America's Policy and Research director, Gawain Kripke on October 20 at St. Ignatius High School's Breen Center. Their combined focus was provision and protection for female farmers locally and abroad. According to its website, Oxfam is an international confederation whose chapter members combine policy, political action and funding toward reducing the impoverishing conditions of under-resourced citizens.

"Collaborating with the Cleveland Council on World Affairs (CCWA) was the perfect avenue for us to bring together local and global voices and create conversation around the importance of building a sustainable global food supply," explained Adam Olson, Oxfam America's advocacy advisor, via email. CCWA holds ongoing forums featuring policy-makers who focus on various social and humanitarian issues, including global food security. "The Global Food Security Act, which is bipartisan legislation currently before Congress, would help achieve providing foreign aid for food growers by continuing an investment in developing world agriculture. Doris and Gawain's time in Cleveland helped inform public discussion on issues related to that bill," he wrote.

About 54 million of Nigeria's 87 million women live in rural areas and consequently, according to Ikpeze, are almost completely dependent on agriculture to live and eat. "It's sad to state that only 7.2 million of these women own the land they farm in," Ikpeze stated. "Most of the land they farm in is either rented or they work on their husband's farm." Nigerian customs permit only men to have the privilege of land inheritance, regardless of the heir's reputation, stewardship habits, or work ethic, Ikpeze added.

So Ikpeze, the past Secretary General



Doris Ikpeze. Photo by Randy Norfus.

of the International Federation of Women Lawyers, began dedicating her energy to the establishment of what became Nigeria's chapter of the Female Food Hero project. "We realized that there were issues of poverty among these women. The project is a national event which is used to showcase the importance of women and their contributions to food security." Ikpeze cited the research findings of another FFH project representative who stated the threats to farming security and progress encountered by Nigerian female farmers were the same as those facing locals—"access to land, access to markets, access to modern technology, issues of climate change, and issues of access to water," Ikpeze specified.

The project allows for any female farmer with more than three acres of viable land to apply for federal aid. In Nigeria, which is divided geographically into six states, farmers submitted more than 8,200 applications this year. From there, twelve farmers were selected to verbalize their conditions to selection committee members who ultimately chose a single award winner of an undisclosed monetary amount. The award was enough for the farmer to buy the land from the owner and provide resources that helped maximize its use. Additionally, the new landowner was assured she received protection against domestic violence vulnerability as part of the country's Violence Against Persons Act—a protection ordinance enforced by the Nigerian federal government.

"I am here today in the U.S. because I am definitely aware of the Global Food Security Act, and that it definitely has an impact on developing countries." She believes the legislation, if passed, will be able to solve issues much the same way the Female Food Hero project has in Nigeria.