



# Defender

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NATIONAL

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says Trump rhetoric inciting threats on her life



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takes top prize for screenplay

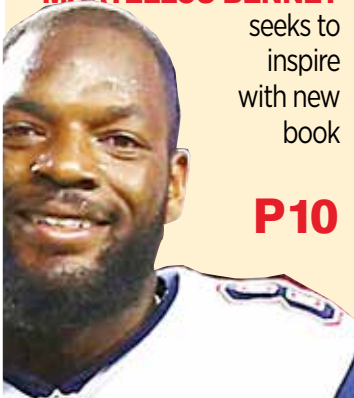


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**MARTELLUS BENNET**

seeks to inspire with new book



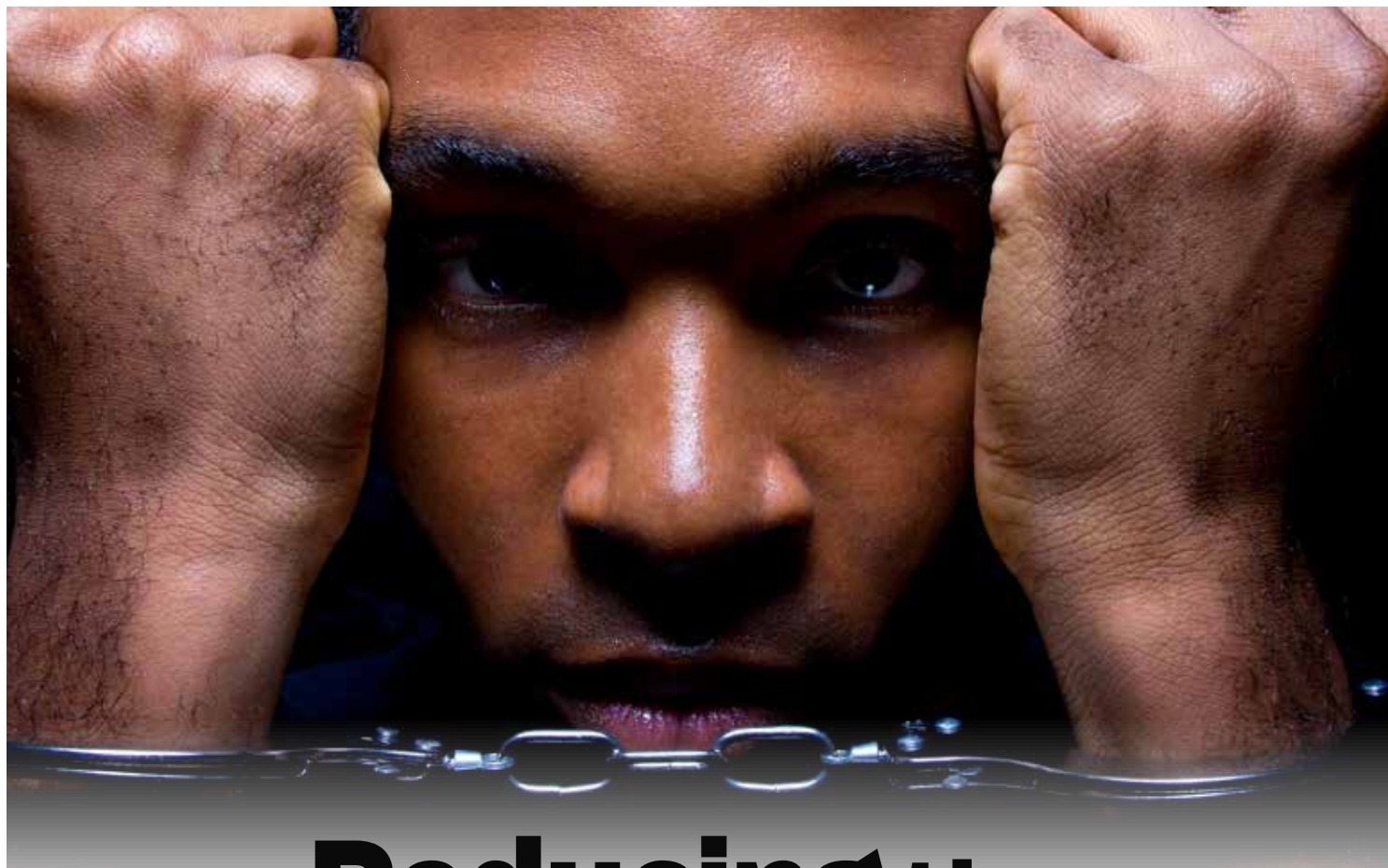
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TOP EVENTS



Warren Lockett and Derek Robinson at the Aroma Culinary panel as part of Black Restaurant Week.

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## Reducing the prison population

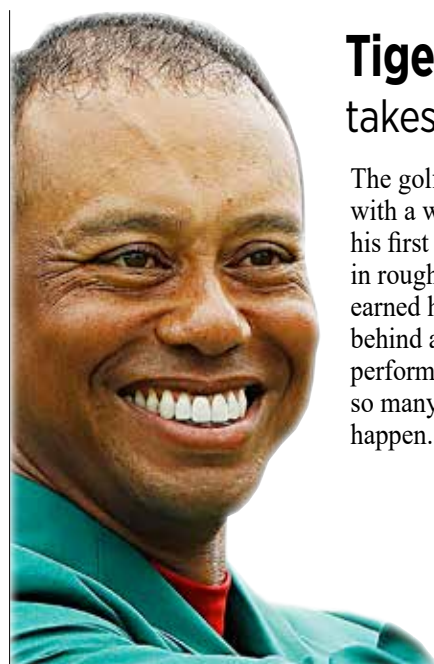
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### George Thomas dies at age 80

The former KTSU general manager left a legacy of leadership at the radio station based on Texas Southern University's campus. See how the station grew to have the largest Black audience of any U.S. public station. Read about Thomas' other contributions.

★ PAGE 2



### Tiger Woods takes Masters

The golf pro returned to the top with a win at the 2019 Masters, his first major competition win in roughly 11 years. Woods earned his fifth green jacket behind a final round 2-under 70 performance. It's a comeback that so many thought would never happen.

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# newstalk

## Black mayors will converge on Houston

Defender News Services

More than 500 African-American Mayors from large cities and fast-growing communities will converge on Houston for the African Americans Mayors Association (AAMA) Conference taking place April 24-26 at the Hilton Americas. AAMA empowers local leaders for the benefit of their citizens.

The annual conference will bring Black mayors, Fortune 500 business leaders and other leaders to Houston for what organizers say will be a dynamic and inspiring event.

This is the first time the conference will be hosted outside of the Washington, D.C. area. Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner

will serve as the 2019 conference chairman.

Topics discussed will include building sustainable cities, rebuilding after a disaster, regional mobility, financing projects and much more.

The AAMA is the only organization exclusively representing African-American mayors in the United States. It also takes positions on public policies that impact the vitality and sustainability of cities, provides mayors with leadership and management tools and creates a forum for member mayors to share best practices related to municipal management.

The current president is Mayor Oliver Gilbert of Miami Gardens, Fla.

For information visit <http://ourmayors.org/>



Mayor Sylvester Turner



Mayor Oliver Gilbert

## Former KTSU General Manager George Thomas dies

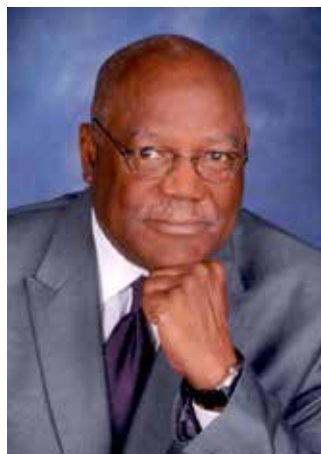
Defender News Services

George Wilson Thomas, who served as general manager of KTSU 90.9 FM for 18 years, died April 13 at age 80. Under Thomas' leadership, the station based on the Texas Southern University campus experienced a major increase in funding and programming, and grew to have the largest African-American audience of any U.S. public radio station.

Thomas was instrumental in establishing the African-American Public Radio Consortium, a group comprised of Black general managers. He was a musician and jazz enthusiast who performed locally for 40 years with his group, George Thomas & Friends. He was also an avid tennis player who helped spearhead the KTSU Tennis Tournament for 17 years.

KTSU Music Director Shelton T. Nunn said in a tribute that Thomas was a man who led by example.

"No task was too difficult because of his visionary spirit,"



George Thomas

Nunn wrote. "Always the optimist, George found ways to make things happen due to the many relationships he developed throughout his life from all walks of life. His ideas bore fruit and his passing leaves a void in the lives of all who either met or knew George Thomas personally or socially..."

Current KTSU GM Ernest Walker said he first met Thomas as a musician.

"He was a trumpet player and I was a drummer, and sometimes we would play together," Walker said.

"For many years, George deposited so many great things in the next generation – the up and coming musicians, the up and coming broadcasters, the up and coming young people

who had a passion for tennis. He made a great contribution to our community as a whole and we will remember him for that," Walker said.

Defender CEO and Publisher Sonny Messiah-Jiles said, "I worked with George over the years, and he was creative and fun.

He was a classy man, who dressed well and was known for his love of music, tennis, KTSU, his church Good Hope Missionary Baptist Church and the community. Rest in peace, my brother."

Thomas, who previously worked as a KTSU account executive, became general manager in 1995. At the time, the station had limited resources. One of his first duties as GM was to connect KTSU with the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), a government entity responsible for providing funding for public radio stations.

With increased funding from CPB and implementation of two annual fund-raising events that raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for KTSU, the station's audience grew.

Jazz was the primary focus at KTSU, and Thomas wanted to maintain it as an original American art form. Music greats Joe Sample and Hubert Laws were among Thomas' closest friends.

Two of Thomas' most notable accomplishments were the construction of a state-of-the-art 18,000-square foot digital broadcast facility and a recording studio in 2005. Following his departure from the station, his vision of a student-run streaming radio station became a reality with the launch of KTSU2 – "The Voice."

## localbriefs

**THE DECISION TO LAY OFF 220 FIREFIGHTERS HAS BEEN DELAYED** after Councilmember Dwight Boykins tagged the vote for the following week. The vote is part of the city's Proposition B implementation, which includes the layoffs of 220 classified firefighters and the removal of some ladder trucks. Firefighters have resumed negotiations with Mayor Sylvester Turner, but with conditions to come to an amicable agreement. Voters in 2018 approved Proposition B, which requires equal pay for firefighters and police officers based off job titles and experience.....**REPUBLICAN LEADERSHIP IN TEXAS WANTS TO RAISE** the sales tax from

6.25 percent to 7.25 percent, generating an estimated annual \$5 billion in coming years. That would take the total sales tax in most cities to 9.25 percent because local governments can raise the tax an additional two percentage points. Supporters say a higher sales tax rate would generate enough revenue to buy down property tax rates at a time when Texas homeowners and businesses are feeling squeezed by rising bills. But critics believe raising the sales tax would cause poor Texans to pay a higher percentage of their income in taxes.....**THE COUPLE WHO RAN VARNETT CHARTER SCHOOLS** for seven years has been accused of stealing

\$4.4 million in funds intended for the schools. Alsie Cluff Jr., 69, and his wife, Marian Cluff, 70, pleaded guilty in 2017 to mail fraud and conspiracy to commit tax evasion charges in connection with the millions embezzled from the school between 2007 and 2014. Prosecutors said the Cluffs charged parents for various activities and funneled the money into an off-the-books account used for their personal expenses. Investigators seized enough assets to cover the money that was stolen and have returned about \$1.9 million to the school, \$1.8 million to the IRS and \$100,000 to an insurance company caught up in the scheme.

U.S. briefs

**THE MAN ARRESTED FOR SETTING FIRE TO BLACK churches** in Louisiana over a 10-day period was arraigned and charged with three counts of hate crimes and a previous simple arson charge has been elevated to aggravated arson. Authorities said Holden Matthews allegedly set fire to St. Mary Baptist Church in Port Barre, the Greater Union Baptist Church in Opelousas and Mount Pleasant Baptist Church, also in Opelousas, destroying all three churches. The 21-year-old son of a local sheriff's deputy pled not guilty but police said the evidence against him is overwhelming.....**DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE KAMALA HARRIS RELEASED** 15 years of tax returns, including her returns for 2018, and the California senator reported that she and her husband had a federal tax bill of about \$700,000 on an adjusted gross joint income of about \$1.9 million last year. Harris is the latest Democratic presidential contender to release her taxes. President Donald Trump has continued to refuse to release his since the 2016 presidential campaign, when he became the first nominee in decades to buck the tradition of disclosure. House Democrats are pressing for access to Trump's tax returns, which would give lawmakers far greater insight into the president's business dealings and potential conflicts of interest.....**MOREHOUSE IS THE FIRST ALL-MALE SCHOOL TO OFFICIALLY** accept transgender students. After much debate, the college recently made the announcement. Morehouse President David A. Thomas said, "I can't speak for all HBCUs, but we know in the Black church there has largely been silence on this issue. I can imagine there may be people who would say, 'Why would you even raise this?' I say to those people we live in an era now where silence on these issues is actually not helpful. For us, as a school for men, it's important for us to set clear expectations about what that means. That's what we're trying to do with this policy."

national

# Congresswoman Omar says Trump encourages violence

Associated Press

U.S. Rep. Ilhan Omar says she's faced increased death threats since President Donald Trump spread around a video that purports to show her being dismissive of the 2001 terrorist attacks. "This is endangering lives," she said, accusing Trump of fomenting right-wing extremism. "It has to stop."

Her statement followed an announcement by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi that she has taken steps to ensure the safety of the Minnesota Democrat and the speaker's call for Trump to take down the video.

Soon after Pelosi's statement, the video disappeared as a pinned tweet at the top of Trump's Twitter feed, but it was not deleted.

And Trump further escalated the standoff, tweeting that, "Before Nancy, who has lost all control of Congress and is getting nothing done, decides to defend her leader, Rep. Omar, she should look at the anti-Semitic, anti-Israel and ungrateful U.S. HATE statements Omar has made."

Pelosi was among Democrats who had criticized Trump over the tweet, with some accusing him of trying to incite violence against the Muslim lawmaker. An upstate New York man recently was charged with making death threats against her.

White House press secretary Sarah Sanders



Congresswoman Ilhan Omar

defended Trump, saying the president has a duty to highlight Omar's history of making comments that others deem anti-Semitic or otherwise offensive and that he wished no "ill will" upon the first-term lawmaker.

But Omar said that since Trump retweeted the video, she's received many threats on her life that referred or replied to the posted video.

"Violent crimes and other acts of hate by right-wing extremists and white nationalists are on the rise in this country and around the world," she said. "We can no longer ignore that they are being encouraged by the occupant of the highest office in the land." She added, "We are all Americans."



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# Biden to campaign as extension of Obama

Associated Press

Joe Biden is finalizing the framework for a White House campaign that would cast him as an extension of Barack Obama's presidency and political movement. He's betting that the majority of Democratic voters are eager to return to the style and substance of that era – and that they'll view him as the best option to lead the way back.

The former vice president has begun testing the approach as he nears an expected campaign launch later this month. After remarks at a recent labor union event,



Former Vice President Joe Biden

Biden said he was proud to be an "Obama-Biden Democrat," coining a term that his advisers define as pragmatic and progressive, and a bridge between the working-class white voters who have long had an affinity for Biden and the younger, more diverse voters who backed Obama in historic numbers.

Biden's strategy will test whether anyone other than Obama can recreate the coalition that delivered him to the White House twice, but was something Hillary Clinton was unable to do in 2016. And it will thrust the 44th president's legacy into the center of the 2020 campaign.



# Affordable housing a problem for renters

NNPA Newswire

A recent study by the Urban Institute reports that in communities across the nation home prices and rents are exceeding the reach of an increasing number of households.

“For every 100 extremely low-income households, there are only 29 adequate, affordable, and available rental units. That means two parents who both work minimum-wage jobs might wait years to find a safe, affordable place to live with their two kids,” the report states.

According to Michael Washburn, president at Exit Realty of the Carolinas, based in Charleston, S.C, there are a number of troubling factors that contribute to this problem.

“Rules and regulations that govern where and how housing developments can be built,” Washburn said, “vary widely from one municipality to another. Government and the private sector have to come together to streamline the process of building homes and apartments,” he adds.

One possible solution to dealing with this problem, said Washburn, is offering developers property tax incentives that make it possible to reduce the cost of land acquisition. Another more long-term answer



is expanding public transportation. Modern light rail systems enable residents to have a reliable, economical commute from areas where housing is more affordable to areas where their jobs might be located.

“It doesn’t help much to have an affordable rent,” Washburn said, “if you have to buy a car and pay all the costs associated with buying gas, maintenance and insurance.”

This growing lack of affordable housing is particularly acute in Charlotte, N.C. because of rapid

population growth fueled largely by individuals who have relocated from high-cost-of-living cities hoping to find a more affordable lifestyle, said LaWana Mayfield, who represents District 3 on Charlotte’s City Council.

Other important factors contributing to the lack of affordable housing, said Mayfield, are the expanding wage gap between corporate executives and their employees and the ongoing assault on labor unions, which for decades helped to ensure wage growth and better working conditions for their members.

## Renters at a glance

- Nearly half of the nation’s renting households are cost-burdened, meaning they spend more than the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s recommended 30 percent of gross income on rent.
- The actual median household income in Houston is \$50,980. To rent a median-priced two-bedroom in Houston, one will need an annual income of 41,080 to avoid becoming cost-burdened.
- The hourly wage recommended to rent a median-priced two-bedroom in Houston is \$20 an hour.

Source: Apartment List



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## entertainment

## Author Mignette Dorsey takes top prize

Defender News Services

A dispute over a parking spot turned into a racially-charged, savage beating at the hands of three white police officers. What followed next shocked an entire community and sparked outrage that some say led to the start of the Civil Rights Movement. It was also the basis for Mignette Dorsey's book, "Speak Truth to Power, the story of Charles Patrick, a Civil Rights Pioneer."

Dorsey recently received the Platinum Remi Award at the 52nd Annual WorldFest-Houston, the event's highest award. She now joins the ranks of notable WorldFest-Houston Remi Award winners Steven Spielberg, Francis Ford Coppola, George Lucas, Ang Lee, the Coen Brothers and more.

Dorsey actually won the award for a screenplay she adapted from the book, which she wrote in 2010. Her work was among 4,500 category entries. A Remi Award is bestowed by WorldFest-Houston, an international film festival, in recognition of excellence in the entertainment industry, including film production, video production, and screenwriting, to name a few categories.

Dorsey worked as a journalist for the now-defunct Houston Post and later worked on a contract basis at the Houston Chronicle. She joined the communications staff at the City of Houston's Public Works Department before being appointed Houston's first bicycle-pedestrian coordinator by then Mayor Lee P. Brown.

She went on to create the first Communications Office for the newly-formed Building Services Department. Dorsey left the City to teach journalism and reading at Alief ISD's Taylor High School. She is currently an English professor at Lone Star College-Houston North.



She spoke with the Defender about her award.

**Defender:** Why did you decide to write a screenplay?

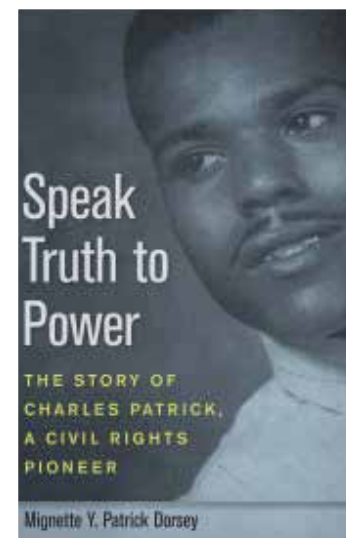
**Mignette Dorsey:** The story is very visual, and people who have read the book kept telling me to see it as a movie. More importantly, there was more to the story that I could not convey in the book, so I decided to script it.

**Defender:** Wouldn't a story like this stir up animosity toward law enforcement and generate memories of days gone by?

**Dorsey:** I think if anything it will stir up pride in law enforcement officers who are tired of corrupt cops giving them a bad name. There are a lot of righteous cops out there. The book and the

movie both show how law enforcement officials back in 1954 Birmingham took action, disciplined their own, instituted new policies, and cleaned house – their own house.

**Defender:** What about the phenomenon of "white guilt" that some feel when they view movies depicting life for African-Americans in that era? Won't the story turn them off?



**Houstonian Mignette Dorsey** won a Platinum Remi Award for the screenplay adapted from her book, "Speak Truth to Power."

**Dorsey:** I think the same sense of pride white citizens experienced in 1954 would be experienced by white citizens in the 21st century. That's because they will see how white

citizens in a Southern state known for its racism went public in opposition to police brutality in the city of Birmingham. It was a first. They wrote letters to politicians, the newspapers, and were vocal on radio talk shows of that day. They weren't having it. They wanted those officers off the force. And they got what they wanted.

Of course, it was all fueled by Charles Patrick's own persistence, but I think seeing white citizens rally in support of a Black veteran will actually stir up a sense of pride in today's audiences.

## what'sup

**ARETHA FRANKLIN** is still getting R-E-S-P-E-C-T after her death. The Queen of Soul recently received the Pulitzer Prize Special Citation honor, becoming the first individual woman to earn a special citation prize since the honor was first awarded in 1930. The Pulitzer board said the award was given to Franklin for her indelible contribution to American music and culture for more than five decades. Franklin died last Aug. 16 at her home in Detroit from pancreatic cancer at age 76. .... **FELICITY HUFFMAN'S** guilty plea for her role in the college admissions bribery scam has delayed the release

of her forthcoming Netflix comedy "Otherhood." Netflix has not revealed a new premiere date for the film but it was originally set to release on April 26. The film was to co-star **ANGELA BASSETT**. Huffman was arrested on March 12 and accused of paying \$15,000 to increase the SAT score of her daughter, allegedly originally with plans to do the same for her younger daughter, which were later aborted. The second Netflix venture for Huffman, "When They See Us," is still set for a May 31 premiere. "When They See Us" is a miniseries based on the true story of the Central Park Five, a group of five young African-American men who

were accused of a rape they didn't commit. The series is written and directed by **AVA DuVERNAY**. .... There's a chance that **R. KELLY** is now in even deeper trouble. Federal prosecutors are reportedly eager to speak with people connected to the singer regarding a sex trafficking investigation they're conducting. The parents of Kelly's girlfriend Joycelyn Savage said they have physical evidence to turn in regarding New York probes, which are completely separate from a reported Northern District of Illinois investigation. Kelly is also being investigated by Homeland Security for sex trafficking.



# Lawmakers address programs to reduce ex-offender relapse

By **KATIE BALEVIC**  
Defender

AUSTIN – Reggie Smith knew that when he left prison, he wanted to go back to school, get a job and stay out of the prison system. And he did – but he doesn't want to be an exception to the rule.

“When I got out of prison, it wasn't the prison sentence that I had that hurt me,” Smith said at the Criminal Justice Panel of the Texas Legislative Black Caucus Summit. “It was all those extra judicial collateral consequences that slowed me down... Every step I took, I heard folks telling me I couldn't do it. ‘You can't do it because of this law,’ or ‘You can't rent an apartment over here,’ or ‘you can't go to this school.’ I did it anyway.”

At the summit, participants discussed different types of legislation aimed at reducing recidivism, which is the tendency of a convicted criminal to re-offend.

One effort was Texas' Project RIO, or Re-Integration of Offenders, a 1985 program intended to help offenders prepare for their re-acclimation into society six months before their scheduled release. Project RIO was defunded in 2011, and some people, including Fort Bend District Attorney Brian Middleton, have called for the program's refunding.

“When someone has been telling you what time you wake up, what time you go to sleep, what you're going to eat, how you're going dress, for 10 years, and all of the sudden you're thrown out there, it's tough trying to re-acclimate yourself,” Middleton said.

“If we are serious about reducing recidivism, about reducing mass incarceration, about reducing the need for private prisons, then a program such as Project RIO is definitely needed.”

Middleton said the program was successful when it was in the hands of the Texas Workforce Commission, but later, Project RIO was taken over by the Texas Criminal Justice Department, which he said wanted access to the program's funding.

“From what I was told, they saw that money and figured they could do a better job on reducing recidivism themselves, so they ended up getting that money, and what happened was the results of success just started to drop,” Middleton said.

“This is a program that is preventing people from coming back into prison, but [they gave] it to somebody whose job is to have people in prison. It didn't make much sense.”

Middleton called for Project RIO to be refunded through the Texas Workforce Commission.

However, Smith was skeptical about Project RIO's effectiveness in reducing recidivism.

“We constantly go back to these old programs, and I'm not really talking about RIO, but I'm talking about RIO 2.0 and coming out with a new iteration of the same thing, trying to get different results,” Smith said. “In the community that I come from, the recovery community, that's insanity.”



Fort Bend County District Attorney Brian Middleton

## Legislators hopeful about

By **ALEXIS TATUM**  
Defender

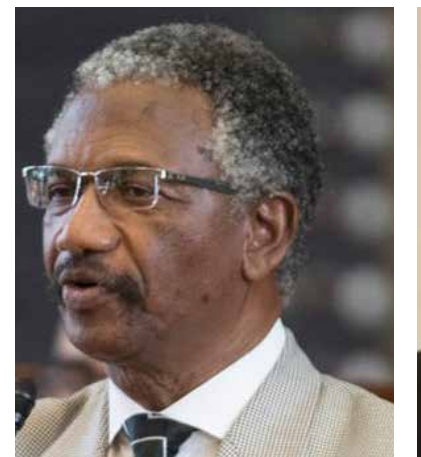
Black state lawmakers are working to pass criminal justice reforms this legislative session, especially proposals that would help keep minors out of the “school-to-prison pipeline.”

Rep. Harold Dutton Jr., D-Houston, and Sen. Borris Miles, D-Houston, have filed multiple bills on juvenile justice reform, a recurring hot topic from the previous legislative session.

Both legislators said that the school-to-prison pipeline is an issue that continues to harm Black youth in Texas. The pipeline refers to the disproportionate number of minority and disadvantaged youth in the criminal justice system, largely because of harsh policies that begin in public schools.

Dutton and Miles discussed some of their proposed juvenile justice legislation with local leaders and constituents during the recent Texas Legislative Black Caucus (TLBC) Summit.

Dutton, who serves as chairman of the TLBC, has again filed the



State Rep. Harold Dutton

2017 “Raise the Age” bill to change the age from 17 to 18. According to Raise the Age



## Prison facts & figures

- Texas had the second-largest prison population nationwide in 2014, with more than 136,000 inmates. The average age of inmates is 39.
  - Inmates are disproportionately Black and Brown. Approximately 48,000 inmates are African-American, approximately 46,100 Hispanic, 42,000 white and 700 “other.”
  - At last count, Project Re-Integration of Offenders (RIO) placed 69 percent of more than 100,000 ex-offenders served since 1985.
  - RIO served 15,366 parolees, about 40 percent of all ex-offenders (and 47 percent of all parolees) released from prison in 2014.
  - 66 percent of African-American participants and 66 percent of Hispanic participants found employment, compared with only 30 percent of African-Americans and 36 percent of Hispanics who were not enrolled in the program.
  - 48 percent of RIO high-risk clients were rearrested compared with 57 percent of non-RIO high-risk parolees; 23 percent were re-incarcerated, compared with 38 percent of non-RIO parolees.
  - Project RIO saved Texas more than \$15 million in one year alone by helping reduce recidivism.
- Sources: National Institute of Justice, Texas Department of Criminal Justice, Defender News Services

This story was produced by a partnership with the University of Texas at Austin and Huston-Tillotson University. Katie and Alexis are UT students who covered the Texas Legislative Black Caucus Summit.

## at juvenile justice reform



Sen. Borris Miles

e of criminal responsibility  
Texas, only four states still



Vivian King

due to a “shift in climate.”

“People that don’t look like us are starting to realize it’s a prob-

lem,” Miles said. “The Republicans are starting to run the numbers [and] they’re thinking that, ‘If I invest in a young Black man up here, I don’t have to pay as much money later on.’ It makes it easier for Harold and I to go across the aisle.”

charge 17-year-olds as adults. Texas House members passed the bill last session on a 92-52 vote, but the bill failed to be heard in the Senate. Dutton said that House Bill 344 is an overdue correction to the juvenile justice system.

“We are one of only four states left in the United States that tries 17-year-olds as adults,” Dutton said. “We [passed] this bill in the House last session, and we intend to get it all the way through this time.”

Both Dutton and Miles have renewed hope for the legislation

In addition to House Bill 344, Dutton and Miles have authored other juvenile justice bills focused on prevention and rehabilitation. Miles filed Senate Bill 304 and 392, which both aim to strengthen disciplinary actions within public school administrations rather than involving police.

Vivian King of the Harris County District Attorney’s Office explained the significance of the Senate bills to Harris County.

“Last year, [Harris County] filed about [11,000] juvenile cases and we asked ourselves, ‘What can we do to change this?’” King said. “Well, about [5,000] of those cases were school related. We went on a venture to all the independent school districts in Harris County and asked them to handle some of this stuff in the schools rather than putting handcuffs on kids for disciplinary infractions.”

Collectively, Dutton and Miles said that their proposed legislation will tackle the biggest elements of the school-to-prison pipeline.



# Blacks audited more than any other group

NNPA Newswire

A poor, rural county in Tennessee that is predominantly Black receives more audits from the IRS than any other county in the United States while rich counties skate by unbothered, according to a study published on the tax professional news website Tax Notes.

Humphreys County, Tenn., where more than a third of its Black residents live below the poverty line and the median yearly household income is \$26,000, somehow is on the IRS' radar to audit at a higher rate than anywhere else in the nation, according to AOL News.

The irony?

Humphreys County is audited at a rate that is 51 percent higher than wealthy Loudoun County, Va., which has a median yearly household income of \$130,000, the highest in the country.

The reason is believed to be because the majority of taxpayers in Humphreys County claim the earned income tax credit (EITC), a government program to help lower income taxpayers get out of poverty.

According to the report, the top five counties in the United States that were audited by the IRS were predominantly poorer, Black counties in the rural South.

Other highly-audited counties included majority Hispanic counties in Texas, Native American areas in South Dakota, and white, rural spots in Appalachia, according to Salon.com.

Last year, ProPublica found that the IRS audits poor, EITC workers at higher rates than any other group, excluding Americans earning over \$1 million annually.

The states that experienced the lowest IRS audit rates were largely white and middle-class, like Minnesota, New Hampshire and Wisconsin. The safest taxpayer bracket were households with a median yearly income between \$50,000 and \$100,000, according to Salon.

What's even more alarming about auditing poor, EITC taxpayers at a higher rate than wealthier Americans is that wealthier taxpayers generally commit more instances of tax evasion, which costs the agency more than \$450 billion per year, according to the IRS. By comparison, poor people who file more fraudulent tax returns cost the agency \$1.6 billion per year.

African-Americans aren't the only ones leery about the IRS.

Americans spend 8.1 billion hours doing taxes each year and the average person spends 11 hours and \$200 completing his or her IRS 1040-Form, according to another new report by the personal finance site, WalletHub.

Since the tax code is so complicated and has rules based on individual household characteristics, it's hard for the average person to tell, WalletHub experts said.

And with a new tax code taking effect this year, 2019 taxes will be quite different than last year.

One simple ratio known as the "tax burden" helps cut through the confusion.

Unlike tax rates, which vary widely based on an individual's circumstances, tax burden measures the proportion of total personal income that residents pay toward state and local taxes. And it isn't uniform across the U.S., either.

To determine the residents with the biggest tax burdens, WalletHub compared the 50 states across the three tax types of state tax burdens – property taxes, individual income taxes and sales and excise taxes – as a share of total personal income in the state.

With a 12.97 percent total tax burden, New York has the highest burden of any state, followed by Hawaii (11.71 percent); Maine (10.84 percent); Vermont (10.77 percent); and Minnesota (10.25 percent).

Alaska enjoyed the lowest overall tax burden at 5.10 percent followed by Delaware (5.55 percent); Tennessee (6.28 percent); Florida (6.56 percent); and New Hampshire (6.86 percent).

To view the full report, visit <https://wallethub.com/blog/tax-day-facts/11835/>



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# Tiger Woods takes the Masters, eyes record

Associated Press

No comeback by Tiger Woods was ever going to be complete without a major.

Now the question becomes how many more he can win.

So much appeal of that red shirt beneath a green jacket involved looking back at all Woods had to overcome to reach that moment – a Masters champion once again – that so many thought would never happen.

The fourth surgery to rebuild his left knee. The private affairs that became public, shattering his image. The balky back that required four more surgeries, the last one out of desperation because he could barely walk, much less play golf. And a new generation of stars he inspired who were younger, stronger and capable.

That's why Woods celebrated his 15th major like never before – fist pumps without a club in his hand, because he couldn't help himself walking off the 18th green.

"Overwhelming," he said with a voice still hoarse from all that screaming.

He went 28 majors over 11 years without win-



Wearing his fifth green jacket, Tiger Woods proudly displayed his Masters trophy. Woods, 43, won his last Masters 14 years ago.

ning, and no sooner did he stretch his arms into that familiar green jacket – "Ah, it fits," he said in Butler Cabin – was he asked about the 18 majors Jack

Nicklaus won to set the gold standard in golf.

"I don't know if he's worried or not," Woods said. "I'm sure he's home just chilling and watching."

Woods winning his fifth Masters was not entirely out of the blue. He capped the year of his great comeback last year by winning the Tour Championship in typical fashion, by building a lead on a tough, fast course at East Lake and not giving anyone much of a chance to catch him. He also briefly led in the British Open, and was one shot behind on the back nine at the PGA Championship.

So, imagine the effect of winning the Masters, especially the way this one played out. Six players had at least a share of the lead at one point on the back nine – four of them major champions – and there was a five-way tie for the lead when the final group was in the 15th fairway.

And then it became Woods' game – a two-putt birdie to take the lead, an 8-iron that rolled down the slope next to the hole for a signature moment at this Masters.

"Well, I can win majors now," Woods said with a laugh.

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MAYOR

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MAYOR SYLVESTER TURNER

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# sports

## Martellus Bennett

# Former NFL player seeks to inspire boys

By **MAX EDISON**  
Defender

**F**ormer NFL standout and Houston native Martellus Bennett was in town recently to draw attention to his latest post-retirement literary work titled “Dear Black Boy.” The former Alief Taylor and Texas A&M University standout described the motivation behind his book.

“I wrote this project after the Alton Sterling shooting and then the Philando Castile murder,” he said. “There was so much going on in the world and I was able to identify with it. That could be me, that could be my brother, it could be my cousin.”

Bennett hopes the book will motivate African-American boys to realize their unlimited potential.

“When I look at kids, I see myself,” he said. “Hopefully when they look at me, they see themselves. I want to give them a message that you guys are the ones who will change the world. To change the way society looks at us we have to change the way that we look at ourselves that’s the message of the book.”

“Dear Black Boy” encourages youth to look beyond sports as a means to an end.

“The book explains that sports are cool, but there’s a bigger game going on out there – it’s the game of life,” Bennett said. “Are you prepared for that? You have to prepare for life the same way you would prepare for the NFL.”

“We have to give Black boys the space to dream and allow them to dream the dreams that they want and not have society dream the dreams for them. The NFL is 65 percent Black, the NBA is 75 percent Black, the tech industry is 7 percent Black. Those numbers are so skewed that it’s just crazy.”

Bennett, who was drafted in the second round in 2008 out of A&M by the Dallas Cowboys, spent 10 years in the NFL between six teams. He punctuated his career with a Super Bowl 51 win in his hometown as a member of the New England Patriots.

He was more than just a 6-foot-6, 260-pound tight end.

“It’s all about a thirst I could never quench, a thirst to learn more, accomplish more and become more,” he said. “I’m always trying to learn and grow and achieve multiple things, so people realize one dream isn’t enough.”

Being an opinionated, educated athlete who’s not afraid to speak his mind is a trait that was encouraged in the Bennett household.

“My mom is a very outspoken woman and my dad is a very outspoken man. At the table our parents allowed



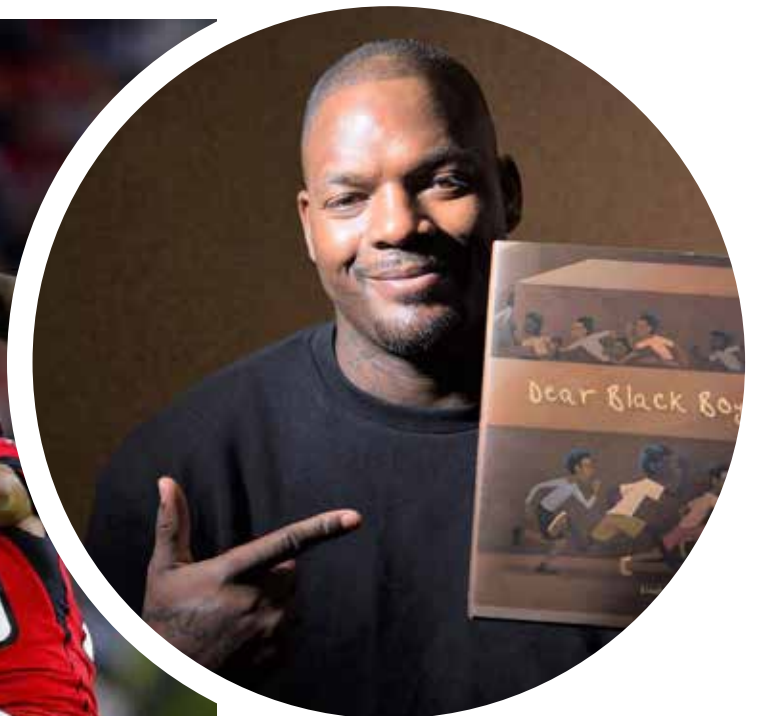
*Bennett last played professionally for the Patriots and began his career with the Cowboys.*

us to speak our point of views,” he recalled. “Even to this day we get into debates. My dad has an idea, I have an idea and we just discuss our personal points of view on whatever the topic is as a family. If we’re comfortable expressing ourselves in the home, then why can’t I express myself in the world.”

He resents the notion espoused by Fox reporter Laura Ingraham when she told LeBron James to “shut up and dribble.”

“That mentality bothers us,” Bennett said. “Athletes are so much more than athletes, but a lot of us don’t put all of themselves into the world because being a successful athlete is good enough.

“Now, you see more athletes taking control of who they are and controlling their brand. They’re doing different things and crossing over into different platforms. Because of that people are starting to look at athletes differently than they did in the past.”



*Houston native Martellus Bennett has written a book titled “Dear Black Boy.”*



*Bennett played college ball at Texas A&M and high school ball at Alief Taylor.*



# HS sports

## Blaise Mucho & Israel Okoroji Sharpstown makes noise in soccer playoffs

By JODIE B. JILES  
Defender

**S**harpstown High School is the last HISD team standing in the soccer playoffs this season as the state semifinal tournament looms in Waco. A big reason for the Apollos' success in beating Kingwood Park 4-3 is goalie Blaise Mucho and attacking forward Israel Okoroji.

Sharpstown head coach Greg Bowles is pleased with the performance of his two standout players.

"First, they are just good players," Bowles said. "Blaise is obviously a big kid who is a talented goalkeeper, knows what he is doing and is coachable. He also has that free spirit and I really like that.

"With Israel...he is almost like a Patrick Beverley [NBA player] on offense where he can score because he's got skills while also putting that pressure on their defenders."

The Defender spoke with Mucho and Okoroji before a practice session to discuss their styles of play, reasons for playoff success and overall love of the game.

**Defender:** How would you describe your style of play as a goalie?

**Mucho:** I organize my defense and do what is necessary for my team to win by leading the team with my voice through our struggles.

**Defender:** How did you get into playing soccer?

**Mucho:** It started off when I was a kid. It was all I knew because everyone in my family played soccer so I just grew up playing it. I never liked it at first but I started to love it and that's all I do.

**Okoroji:** I started when I was in my home country of Nigeria. I loved to play and watch people play.

**Defender:** What do you attribute the team's playoff success to so far?

**Mucho:** We have a really strong attacking team. Our forwards score goals and we get up there [in points].

**Defender:** What has been the mantra keeping you guys going this year?

**Mucho:** Family.

**Defender:** How would you say this offense has been able to continue to put points on the board and advance in the playoffs?

**Okoroji:** Communication. My teammates and I are good at communicating. We talk a lot and that helps us to know what we do. Communicating is the key to our victories and scoring goals.

**Defender:** What do you think it will take to bring home a state championship this season?

**Okoroji:** I think it will take hard work, improving our communication skills and also having God on our side and praying because we are a praying team. We can't do anything by ourselves. It is God's grace that has led us this far.

**Defender:** What about the game winning goal you scored against Texas City in the playoffs?

**Okoroji:** It wasn't an easy one because the ball was high and I had to jump high to get it. What led me to score the goal is the way we train because we know we have the game coming up. The team spirit had me hungry for the win and if I have to score for us to get a win that is what I will do. I was hungry for the win because I know more games are ahead.



Blaise Mucho and Israel Okoroji are two Sharpstown Apollo soccer stars.

### About Mucho

**Position:** Goalie

**Instagram:** @la\_flame\_3500

**Favorite food:**

Hamburgers

**Favorite subject:** Math

**World problem he**

**would solve:** Hunger

### About Okoroji

**Position:** Forward

**Instagram:** @israellukesyn

**Favorite food:** Jollof fries

**Soccer players he studies:**

Ronaldinho, Cristiano

Ronaldo, Lionel Messi

**Shout-outs:** "Mom, dad, siblings and friends"



Goalie Mucho bats down a shot in practice.



# Happening in Houston

For event coverage email: [events@defendermediagroup.com](mailto:events@defendermediagroup.com)

# topevents

**LINKS' COMMUNITY RESOURCE FAIR**.....The Houston Chapter of the Top Ladies of Distinction (TLOD), Inc. hosted a Community Resource Fair at the Third Ward Multi-Service Center. TLOD partnered with several organizations to provide participants with information benefitting children, teens, adults and seniors on financial awareness and job recruitment, health and wellness, higher education and more. In addition, free prom gowns and women's business apparel were distributed. Free blood pressure screenings were available along with several workshops including AARP's workshop on "Fraud and Protecting Your Identity." Attendees included **Kim Topps, Katherine Wilson, Margaret Williams, HISD Trustee Wanda Adams, Rhonda Collins-Byrd, Cynthia Edwards, Marcus Milton, Edna Leigh** and many more ..... **AROMA: HOUSTON CULINARY PANEL DISCUSSION 2019**.....Black Restaurant Week 2019 kicked off with a bang recently as restaurateurs, chefs and foodies of all types gathered at the Emancipation Community Center for Aroma: Houston Culinary Panel Discussion 2019. Attendees learned of the successful business strategies of leading culinary experts who shared their knowledge about culinary

product placement, preparing recipes for mass distribution, raising capital, and more. Panelists included **Tamala Austin** (J.J.V.E. Juice Company), **Tyla-Simone Crayton** (Sienna Sauce), **Wayne Lockett** (Branwar Wines), **Rodney Norton** (Frenchy's), and **Chris Carrier** (Sysco). Greater Houston Chamber of Commerce sponsored the event, attended by **Carol Guess, Brigitte Joe, King Creuzot** and more. ....

**SMART'N UP BLACK MALE SUMMIT**.....Local activist **Deric Muhammad** recently hosted the Smart'n Up Black Male Summit, an event designed to address the unique needs of Black males in the greater Houston area (ages 13 and older). This year's summit, held at the Shrine of the Black Madonna Cultural & Events Center, included workshops, motivational speakers, interactive presentations and a

panel discussion featuring Dr. **Abdul Muhammad** and **William "Willie D" Dennis** (Geto Boys), addressing critical issues needed for participants to succeed in life. Attendees included **Sadiki Kadirifu, Sharon Tuere Stewart, Malik Hornsby, Phillip Johnson, Tre Silvers, Stephanie Phillips, William Phillips, Nailah Nelson, Sharon Tuere Stewart, Craig Lowry** and scores more.

## Defender TOP EVENTS

More photos on [defendernetwork.com](http://defendernetwork.com)



Jonathan Gordon, Kim Topps, Katherine Wilson



Lawson Academy Drumline



Jose Torres, Irma Torres, Rhonda Collins-Byrd



Warren Lockett, Derek Robinson



Lucy Bremond, Kynetta Moore, Iris Garcia



Emily Durham, Katy Herpin, Kerristen Brooks, Erica Hubbard



Deric Muhammad, panelists



Sharon Tuere Stewart, William "Willie D" Dennis



Packed house