

THE METER

Serving Tennessee State University and the Nashville Community Since 1950

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AFTER DECADES OF MISSING FUNDS, GOV. LEE PURPOSES \$318M INVESTMENT TO TENNESSEE STATE



Tennessee Governor Bill Lee

By **Destiny Alston**
Staff Writer

After going through years of unmanageable circumstances on campus and persistent underfunding, the state's only public historically black college, Tennessee State University, will reach an agreement with the governor for partial compensation.

As stated by President Glover, the \$318 million proposed budget will include

\$250 million for infrastructure improvements, \$60 million towards the engineering program and building, and lastly, \$8 million for maintenance on campus. The funds will be documented under the new state budget proposal bill, from Governor Lee. The funding proposal for the upcoming budgetary year of 53 billion dollars, will include Tennessee State's compensation. If this bill is passed this will be the largest investment ever for Tennessee State University.

LOTISMUSIC: *Journey to the Top*

By **Alexandria Whigham**
Staff Writer

LotisMusic is a TSU student on a rise to the top of the rap scene. At 22 years old, Noah Bayless aka LotisMusic is fulfilling his dreams to become a successful artist who not only dominates the charts but builds an album of rich and timeless records. He hopes his attitude inspires others to not hesitate on what truly makes them happy or what they care about, as well as what they will be ready to work for. In addition, he hopes to inspire others to adopt the same man-on-a-mission mentality he has for their goals in life.

With all the success he is earning he admits that the journey takes a bittersweet turn. Although the gratifying nature of one's hard work leading to victorious results is always mo-

tivating, it is a tough spot to be as things began to change. "It's like growing pains," he says. He says it takes a lot to pursue a music career while being a student, but with all the challenge and effort it is always worth it. He stays inspired through rough times

by reading and watching good movies and gets inspiration from other artists by listening to the music of people he admires. He reminisces on older R&B and focuses on the substances filled in those songs to place in his own music and recreate the treasured sound he cherishes.

Lotis shared his music-making process by describing it as a balance of creating good lyrics as well as matching with the right rhythm and beat. "Good verses are important, it's all-important," Lotis says. He finds authenticity and individuality very valuable and strives to make every part of music work in that function and sound good. He says, "I'm not chasing a temporary high, I want my music to age well." As for any words of encouragement to others seeking a similar path he says, "Never second guess and always reinvest into your career...always seek stability, don't get it out of your system and leave it behind, create stability from it."

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TSU student and Nashville rapper LotisMusic

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A building for the AOB or Theater?

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New residence hall progressing nicely

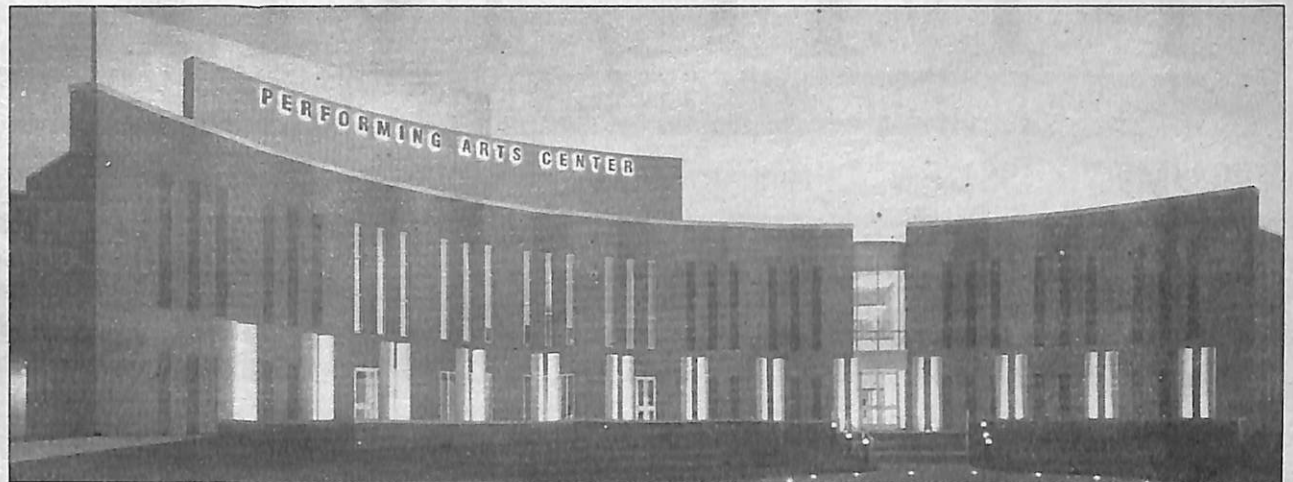
PAGE 7
Hercy Miller leaves TSU

AOB vs. Theater: Who Deserves Their Own Building?

By **Tori Raquell Roberts**
Staff Writer

If you are a part of Tennessee State University's Communication Department, you may have heard that the theater department and the Aristocrat of Bands (AOB) bump heads due to having to share the Performing Arts Center for practice. This was evident during the fall semester while during the show "Mama" the band and the theater department went head to head.

According to an inside source, on the day of the play the actors, set crew, directors, and backstage members were all shocked to hear the band playing as the show was supposed to start. The play dates were set in stone and put on the calendar months prior. It is important to note that due to the pandemic the show was aired with no audience and played online. Thus making the audio extremely important for the audience to enjoy the show. The



play directors asked the band to go practice somewhere else during the times of the play but the band stood firm they were going to stay in their place of practice which is in front of the Performing Arts Center. When asking the

head AOB why they could not practice elsewhere they stated "We have a lot of performances coming up and this is where we practice." This forced many students in-

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Nashville Public Radio Professionals Meet With Meter Staff to Share Career Stories and Words of Encouragement

By **Nyah Peebles**
Editor in Chief

On February 1, 2022 professionals from Nashville Public Radio (WPLN) held a meeting with The Meter staff via zoom to share their career stories and advice. The Meter staff was joined by WPLN News Director Emily Siner, Arts and Culture Reporter Paige Pflieger, and Radio Editor, LaTonya Turner. As the women come from different backgrounds and have had different experiences that led them to WPLN, it was very inspiring for the staff to hear, who range from a number of different majors.

WPLN is a non-profit newsroom covering the topics of Arts, Culture and Music, Criminal Justice, Education, Environment, Health Care, State Politics, Metro Government and Race and Equity. Covering a wide range of stories from light feature stories to heavy investigation stories, news director Emily Siner says

that the goal is to "make people feel connected to the region and feeling like they are empowered to make change..." Since beginning at the station in 2014 as an enterprise reporter, Siner has had an impressive rise in a career path as she has gone from being an editor at 24 and becoming a news director at 26. She advises the Meter staff to ask questions, seek mentorship take on small project management roles, and "seize the moment when it arises."

Arts and Culture reporter, Paige Pflieger echoes Siner's advice to seek mentorship as she was once an intern at The Tennessean in college, and her then mentor helped her get her current job at WPLN, eight years after her internship was finished. Pflieger has been working in public radio for about 10 years, starting with her local college town public radio station in her junior year of college, then interning at NPR national headquarters in Washing, DC upon graduation. A more seasoned journalist,



WPLN staff Emily Siner (far left, middle row), Paige Pflieger, (top right) and LaTonya Turner (bottom left) share words of wisdom to the The Meter staff.

WPLN editor LaTonya Turner has had experience in many different fields in journalism. Starting in television, Turner's career trajectory is quite different from Siner's and Pflieger's. Turner had held many hats in journalism as a television reporter, anchor, producer,

and now radio editor. All these different experiences encouraged Turner to share with The Meter Staff to consider all options and to be open-minded about where the opportunities because "some of the most impactful, important and even lucrative positions may not be

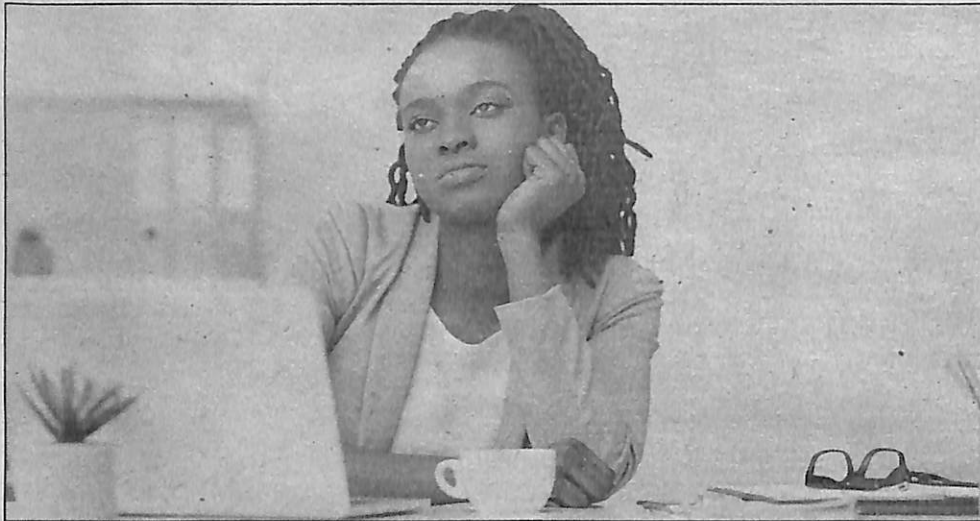
the traditional ones..." She also notes that it is important to get hands-on experience and speak up and ask for what you want instead of waiting for people to notice you.

To learn more WPLN and to listen to their content, visit wpln.org.

TSU Editorial

by Nyah Peebles
EDITOR IN CHIEF

Dear 20-Somethings, You Have Time



Recently, I was having a conversation with one of my friends where the topic of discussion focused on how my friend felt like the prime of life had passed and my friend is already behind in life at only 21.

At first I couldn't understand because after recently turning 21 in December, I couldn't be more excited and hopeful for my future, but I hear a lot of people my age say this. Why do we feel this way?

It's like we're all searching for a destination and a purpose and if we haven't found it by now we'll be lost forever. The truth is that no one is alone in feeling that way and that we never stop growing or finding ourselves. Life is a continuous trail of self-discovery and I think that's the beauty of life; that there's always room for reinvention, always room to learn something new

and discover a new part of ourselves.

Maybe this feeling of failure comes from comparing oneself to others that we feel are more successful than we are. I think that this is especially true as an undergraduate student. One thing that my friend said that stuck out to me was that this is the last time that we'll all be in a space like this: We're surrounded by like-minded individuals, all around the same age, all trying to be successful and supporting each other.

There is so much excellence at TSU that it becomes easy to compare your own journey to someone else and feel inferior if you're not as involved on campus or getting as many opportunities as your peers.

It's easy to fall into the mindset that if you're not getting opportunities now, what hope do you have for the future? It's

easy to envy those who are making moves right now in undergrad and know what they want to do with their lives.

However, not everything is always as it seems. Some of the most successful students are struggling, still not sure if they're taking the right path or stuck in a major for which they are not passionate. Many feel this way but don't say it out loud because there are so many expectations from them to succeed and to do it with a smile on their face.

If you're feeling like my friend, you are not alone. Life doesn't end after undergrad; in fact it just begins. Life will take you many places you'd never thought you would go as long as you are open to opportunities and watching your own path instead of someone else's.

So, 20-Somethings, we have time.

Students Try to Rebuild 'Black Wall Street' With Financial Literacy Workshop

By Emmanuel Freeman

NASHVILLE, TN (TSU News Service) — A group of Tennessee State University students, along with the Women's Center, hosted a financial literacy workshop on Feb. 15 to provide awareness and empower their peers.

Titled "Bring Back Black Wall Street," the workshop draws from the 2020 movie "Black Wall Street Burning," that chronicles the 1921 Memorial Day massacre of Black people and the burning of the once thriving section of Tulsa, Oklahoma, referred to as Black Wall Street.

The students said the workshop is about knowing the past, shaping the future, and holding a conversation about empowering Black people to understand true financial wealth they can build upon.

"Bring Back Black Wall Street" is a conscious conversation that talks about the hard-hitting issue of building wealth within our Black community and how we can actively make a change," said Gabrielle Mosby, a freshman business major from Memphis, Tennessee, who is one of the organizers of the event.

According to recent statistics, African Americans account for 13 percent of the U.S. population with significant impact on the economy,

yet they lag in financial well-being when compared to other groups.

Seanne Wilson, director of the Women's Center, said the workshop is one of the many programs the center provides to empower young women, as well as young men, to think about how they spend their money.

"As we were discussing Black history and what should be one of our focus areas for the month, financial literacy jumped out," said Wilson. "I wish when I was in college, someone had talked to me about wealth management, saving money, and not spending unwisely. So, now I want to be proactive and help them understand the value of money and not be reckless in spending it."

Fellow workshop organizer Karly Miller, a sophomore pre-nursing major from Houston, said the event is one that every student should attend, because if nothing else, they would be inspired.

"It is motivating to hear about and see African Americans of the past and present who have established and maintained wealth in the community," said Miller.

Kyle Smith, a Black Nashville businessman, was the event's keynote speaker.

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Dr. Glover Pleased With Progress of New Residence Hall

By Emmanuel Freeman

NASHVILLE, TN (TSU News Service) — Tennessee State University President Glenda Glover says she is very pleased with the pace of construction of the new 700-bed ultra-modern residence hall that is scheduled to open in the fall.

The president toured the massive facility on the main campus on Feb. 3, accompanied by the project management team and senior administrative staff. She said not only is the project ahead of schedule, but she is also impressed by the cutting-edge technology and the types of amenities students will enjoy in the building.

“This is an exciting time for Tennessee State University and for our students coming in the fall,” Glover said. “They will be coming to a facility that is student centered, academically centered, and socially centered. It is just what the students need to study and excel. So, I am very appreciative of what I see today.”

TSU officials have said the new residence hall, estimated at \$75.3 million, and the first new residence hall on the campus in nearly 25 years, is indicative of TSU’s growth and desire to create a better living and learning environment for students. It will house lower and upperclassmen in a mixed living community that offers multiple upscale living, dining, recreational and leisure concepts.

“I think that this new addition is really good for the campus,” said Travion Crutcher, a senior mechanical engineering major from Huntsville, Alabama, who is a student ambassador. “That will help a lot with recruitment, and when we are talking to students about coming to TSU.”

Aaliyah Doss, a sophomore agricultural sciences major from Chicago, agreed.

“I lived in Epps Hall my freshman year and now in Rudolph Hall. They are not bad, but they are outdated,” said Doss. “This new building will definitely give the campus a great look and make lots of students want to come to TSU.”

Dr. Curtis Johnson, chief of staff and associate vice president; Frank Stevenson, associate vice president for student affairs; George Herring, chief



TSU President Glenda Glover tours residence hall construction site with Frank Stevenson, associate vice president for student affairs (left) and Dr. Curtis Johnson, chief of staff (right).

project manager; and Brent Dukhie, executive director of student housing and residence life, accompanied Dr. Glover on the recent tour.

“We are excited that we are on schedule to get this facility open and able to accommodate the students in ways that we have not been able to do in the past,” Johnson said. “This particular facility is designed to be a city or community for the students. The intent is for the students to be able to do almost everything they need to do without having to go across campus.”

Stevenson, who is also dean of students, lauded the progress of the project as well. “We started this five years ago by adding it to the campus strategic plan, and our partners on this have been amazing in working diligently to make sure we meet our target date,” he said. “We are excited about that, and what this space will mean for stu-

dents as they experience campus life here at TSU.”

As for living arrangements, the new residence hall has a variety of room types for students and employees. Among them, four-bedroom suites with bathrooms, common areas, kitchenettes, as well as doubles, and pods with community bathrooms that are shared with select groups of individuals.

“The new residence facility is a mixture of spaces,” Johnson said. “When we initiated this project, one of the things we looked at was living spaces for traditional students and the non-traditional students. That brought us to the next question for our team to strategize around: How do you accommodate all those different groups? We also looked at being able to include space for camps and different programs should the need arise.

So, having the building configured in a manner to accommodate those particular aspects was also important.”

Kathryn Crockett, district manager of Aramark, the food services provider, disclosed during an earlier tour that dining in the new building will include brands such as Firehouse Subs, Twisters Tacos, Bojangles, Bento Shushi, and Noddle Rice Bowl. Chick-fil-A, Pizza Hut, and Starbucks are currently on campus.

“We are thrilled to be here at TSU. We really enjoy taking care of this campus community and serving the students, faculty, and staff,” said Crockett. “We are really looking to round out our footprint here and continue the evolution of dining services on campus.”

Johnson added that existing concepts will be upgraded and modified to blend in with the new offerings.

Black History Month

TSU's Inman Recounts Family's Traumatic Experience in the Tuskegee Experiment

By Emmanuel Freeman

NASHVILLE, TN — It's been nearly 50 years since the "Tuskegee Experiment" ended, but Wendelyn Inman is constantly haunted by the thought of what it did to her "Uncle Gus."

"He was in that study and didn't realize it was a study," says Inman, sobbing, as she recounts her family's trauma that resulted from the study, arguably the most infamous biomedical research study in U.S. history.

"They gave him syphilis and he didn't realize he had been given syphilis," adds Dr. Inman, a professor and director of the public health programs in the College of Health Professions at Tennessee State University.

In the study, conducted between 1932 and 1972 by the U.S. Public Health Service and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, investigators enrolled a total of 600 impoverished African American sharecroppers from Macon County, AL. Of these men, including Inman's uncle, Augustus Reynolds (Uncle Gus), 399 had latent syphilis, with a control group of 201 men who were not infected.

As an incentive for participation in the study, the men were promised free medical care, but were deceived by the PHS, which never informed them of their syphilis diagnosis and provided disguised placebos, ineffective methods, and diagnostic procedures as treatment for "bad blood." More than 100 died as a result.

Inman, now a microbiologist and a nationally recognized infectious disease control expert, says as a result of

the study, her uncle contracted syphilis and eventually went blind. By the end of the study, Inman's family, including her grandparents, had left Alabama, and moved to Sandusky, OH, where she grew up. Reynolds' wife divorced him because of his syphilis diagnosis, accusing him of being unfaithful. Blind and no one to care for him, he moved to Ohio and stayed with his siblings.

"He was blind, and I remember my siblings leading Uncle Gus out of the house to sit with us under the tree in the summer and having to lead him to go to church and things like that," Inman recalls. "He died from it. That's what I remember."

Inman says she became interested in medicine and public health to "help my people better understand and avoid the mistakes" of the past.

"When he (Uncle Gus) was going through this, I was a very young child," says Inman.

"So, I heard a lot of things about what my parents talked about. It did motivate me for a research career that I chose. What did my Uncle Gus die from? An infectious disease. So, I am on my path to helping my people be better, because now, I have a complete understanding of how a microbe works," adds Inman. And she does!

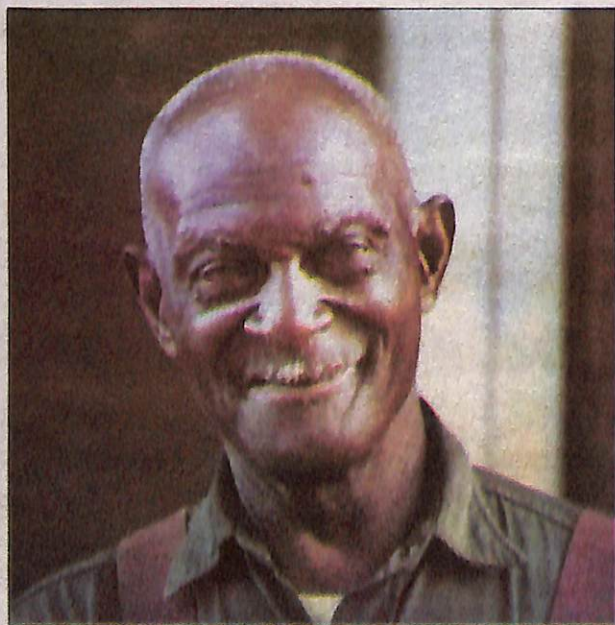
When COVID-19 hit the United States followed by widespread vaccine hesitancy, especially among Black people, Inman was among those public health experts encouraging her fellow African Americans to take the available drug against the disease. The Tuskegee Study is often cited as one of the reasons African Americans do not trust the vaccine. Efforts to increase vaccination rates among African Americans often focus on misconceptions surrounding the study as a result.



Dr. Wendelyn Harris Inman



Wendelyn Inman is from a family of eight brothers and sisters, with accomplishments in medicine, law, military service and education. Back row, from left: Donald Harris, Inman, Anthony Harris, Howard Harris, and Helen Harris Abrams. Middle row: Howard Harris, Sr., father, and Ada Reynolds Harris, mother. Front row: Lt. Col. Steven Harris, Adrienne Harris, and Gaye Harris Miles. Courtesy photos



Milton Reynolds, Inman's grandfather, was the younger brother of Augustus Reynolds or "Uncle Gus."

"This is no time for hesitancy," says Inman. "The vaccines work."

At TSU, in particular, Inman has helped in the effort to get employees and students vaccinated. Currently, close to 80 percent of the university's full-time faculty and staff have received vaccinations, as well as hundreds of students.

Looking back at what happened to "Uncle Gus," Inman has good reason to be optimistic about the vaccines. After all, she is a professor of public health, been an advisor on several national initiatives in that area, and previously served as the chief of epidemiology for the State of Tennessee.

"There is great advancement in medicine today," she says. "When you look at science, there are so many benefits that outweigh the negatives, and there is access. If they (Uncle Gus and others) had equal access to healthcare, they could have gone to another doctor, but they didn't have access to other healthcare and they knew it. So, they (U.S. government) enticed them by offering them healthcare while they were destroying their health."

On May 16, 1997, President Bill Clinton formally apologized on behalf of the United States to victims of the Tuskegee study, calling it shameful and racist.

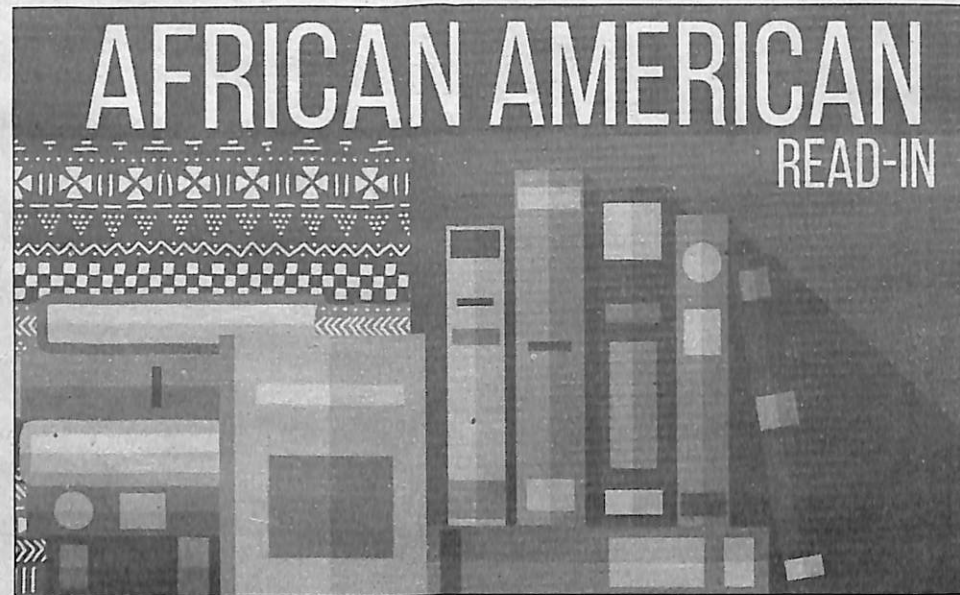
TSU Hosts African American Read-In Event, Highlighting Writers and the Black Experience

By Meagan Gosa

NASHVILLE, TN (TSU News Service) — Tennessee State University celebrated African American literature and literacy during the African American Read-In virtual event on Feb. 11. As part of Black History Month, the Languages, Literature, and Philosophy Department in the College of Liberal Arts hosted the read-in, with the theme of “Self-discovery.”

The National African American Read-In (AARI) is the nation’s first and oldest event dedicated to diversity in literature and encourages communities to read together, centering around African American books and authors. It was established in 1990 by the Black Caucus of the National Council of Teachers of English to make literacy a significant part of Black History Month.

Dr. Zeba Khan-Thomas, an as-



sistant professor of English, was the main organizer of the TSU event. Dr. Khan-Thomas said that the theme “self-discovery” is appropriate for empowering participants to learn more

about themselves through self-care practices, creative expressions, literary engagement, and community solidarity.

“We want to focus on what we are

doing to remain in tune with ourselves, heal ourselves, and cope on a regular basis,” said Khan-Thomas. “Our main objective is to explore how can we use our creative mediums and be writers of the African American literary canon. Most importantly, provide some of that motivation or inspiration for us.”

Communities nationwide, including schools, churches, libraries, bookstores, and professional organizations are urged to host an African American Read-In event.

“Being able to share ideas and our thoughts, it shows other people our experiences, what we’ve gone through, and who we are despite challenges we face,” said Jasmine Sears, a history major, with a concentration in teaching, from Atlanta.

Khan-Thomas said the readings started with negro spirituals from the 18th century, then moved into periods of the 70s, 80s, 90s, and early 2000s.

TSU Making the Mental Well-Being of its Students a Priority With Additional Programs

By Lucas Johnson

NASHVILLE, TN (TSU News Service) — As the nation deals with an increasing number of mental health issues, Tennessee State University is providing resources to address the mental well-being of its students, especially amid the pandemic.

Incidents of suicide, or extreme bouts of depression and anxiety, have consistently made headlines across the country. Recent national statistics show 44 percent of college students reported having symptoms of depression and anxiety. Thirty percent of students reported feeling depressed in the past year, mainly because of the coronavirus that has impacted just about everyone in one way or another over the last two years.

Most colleges and universities have returned to in-person classes. But before that, students learned remotely, the

majority at home. In some cases, says Dr. Richard Garvin, assistant professor of psychology at TSU, students had to stay in abusive environments, where campus living may have provided an escape.

“Let’s just assume the worse in that they’ve been living with an emotional or physical abuser,” says Garvin. “And they used to go to class as their way out. But now, they’re at home for 17 months. So that trauma kind of compounded itself.”

Garvin says the scarring that may have resulted from such an environment is why mental health programs like the ones offered through the University Counseling Center are so important.

Junior Darius Boyd says he is appreciative of the mental health programs TSU offers because he has peers in need of help. He says the pandemic continues to affect their lives, such as students struggling to raise grades that

fell because COVID-19 forced them to learn remotely instead of in-person.

“It’s unbelievable how many students are affected by depression, especially during the pandemic,” says Boyd, a business information systems major from Memphis, Tennessee. “People’s lives have been shaken, including mine.”

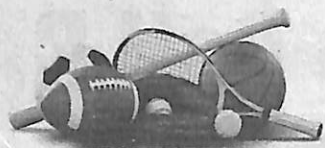
Programs offered through the Counseling Center include:

- Individual counseling and psychological services support
- “Let’s Talk,” which consists of virtual drop-in hours three times a week for a brief (approximately 30 minutes), informal, friendly, no-cost consultation visit.
- Crisis support and intervention
- Psychological Assessment and Evaluation
- Training opportunities
- Campus outreach and consultation services

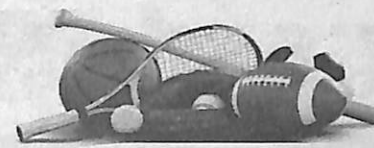
“TSU is committed to the well-being of our students and their mental health is our top priority,” says Frank Stevenson, associate vice president for student affairs and dean of students. “The stress from the pandemic has created an uptick in the use of services, thus we have increased resources by serving our students in new and innovative ways.”

The Center also offers consultation with faculty and staff regarding student well-being and outreach presentations. Additionally, TSU has partnered with MyURGNCYMD telehealth services powered by TSU to support students when the Center has limited appointment availability or for after-hours support.

For more information about TSU’s Counseling Center, visit <https://www.tnstate.edu/counseling/>.



SPORTS



Promising Basketball Player, Hercy Miller Decides to Transfer from TSU After Injury

By Asia Jones
Staff Writer

Hercy Miller was a three-star prospect who was committed to Tennessee State University with a two million dollar deal. 2021 was the first year for the new NIL deal, which allows college athletes to make money off their name, image, and likeness. Since Hercy was a top prospect and the son of a famous rapper, this brought a lot of

positive attention to the school. This looked like the start of a new wave of black athletes who have decided to play for an HBCU. However, this did not turn out to be the case. After just six games Hercy decided to enter the transfer portal. This was disappointing news for many TSU students and fans. This was a shock because when he was committed, he and his father talked about how he was determined to support HBCUs. He decided to transfer to Xavier University after is-

sues with Tennessee State's medical resources. After the first game on November 9 against Alabama A&M, Hercy suffered from a hip injury. According to Master P, Hercy did not receive the proper treatment for his misdiagnosed injury as he was cleared to play in the next game. A few games later, the severity of his initial injury caused him to be shut down for the rest of the season as it required surgery to repair. Master P said he felt that Black universities did not have enough medical resources to compete with other Division I and that Hercy's injury could have been prevented. Al-

though Master P does not blame the lack of medical resources on Tennessee State, he points out the large disparity in funding between HBCUs and other big-name schools. However, Tennessee State's athletic department responded to Master P's comment by saying TSU is not underfunded compared to other schools its size. The athletic director for TSU stated that the facilities are in the process of improving by growing and expanding. Although Hercy Miller's tenure as a Tiger was short-lived, we wish Hercy the best on the rest of his collegiate basketball journey at Xavier University.



Former TSU basketball player Hercy Miller and music mogul father Master P

Rapper, continued from page 1

He shares that the many people he's worked with are 40 and older still in love with their craft, so it's important to never stop believing in it.

As a student at TSU, he is happy for the support and ability to network frequently but he hopes to find more of a platform for TSU students who

want to perform and be more involved with their school. He shares that he wishes that HBCUs, in general, would promote the artistry within their University more. Lastly, he shares his dreams of giving a show-stopping performance on BET and having a lively concert at Coachella. He also as-

pires for the honor to sing next to artists who he admires most, Drake and Wiz Khalifa as they have served as true presentations of real music and enthralling performers for him. We hope to see Lotis-Music soar to the top and solidify his legacy, as well as be a hopeful inspiration to those yet to come.

Performing Arts Center, continued from page 2

involved in the school play to stay later until the band was almost done to begin the show. The students were not able to wrap up the play performance until close to eleven at night.

Throughout the Communications Department, this sparked the conversation of whether or not the theater and band should have their own separate buildings. *The Meter* was told by anonymous sources that this has been talked about for a couple of years but nothing has ever been put into action.

The Aristocrat of Bands here at TSU is very well known for being the best band in the land. Many feel as though they also deserve to have their own building. When interviewing several theater students and band members they all had one

common answer. "Yes, the band should have their own building." However, the reasoning behind the answer was vastly different. When interviewing a band member they stated "We are the largest organization that TSU has on campus and when you truly think and observe how much we practice, travel, and grow yearly having our own building only designated for Aristocratic student musicians seems just right in my opinion." The band member also touched on how they need to have rooms designed for uniforms, warm-ups, and extra decorations we use every day and to travel with.

When interviewing a theater member if the band and the theater department can share a

building they stated "No because when we have rehearsals, we have to stop what we're doing for them. So they don't need to be in the same building." Another theater member said "It would be ok to be in the same building if the band respected the theater department. Most of the issues are from disrespect. Also, they have a whole band room they need to use it."

As the Aristocrat of Bands in the largest organization on campus, we may hear more about the band having their own building space within the next few years. In theater department news, TSU students and faculty can expect to see the audio play *Farside: An Audio Drama* released from February 25 - 27.

FedEx and TSU Participate in Bell Ringing at NYSE, Highlighting New HBCU Program

By Meagan Gosa

NASHVILLE, TN (TSU News Service) — Tennessee State University was on Wall Street. TSU President Glenda Glover and one of the school's top students joined FedEx Corporation to ring the closing bell at the New York Stock Exchange on Feb. 1. The ceremonial event served as an announcement for the FedEx HBCU Student Ambassador program.

President Glover and sophomore Shaun Wimberly, Jr. were joined by presidents and student ambassadors from seven other historically black colleges and universities that FedEx is currently supporting through a \$5 million grant announced last year.

"This is great exposure for Tennessee State University as we join FedEx Corporation for the ceremonial ringing of the bell at the New York Stock Exchange," said TSU President Glenda Glover.

"The FedEx leadership continues to show its commitment to TSU and HBCUs through financial support, internships, along with career and development opportunities. Our invitation to be a part of the closing bell on one of the largest financial stages in the world and the HBCU Student Ambassador program is evidence of that commitment."

Wimberly, an agricultural business major from Louisville, Kentucky, said the trip was ideal for his career path and he was elated to be a part of the closing bell ceremony.

"I'm thankful for being selected by FedEx to represent my HBCU TSU, a place that is molding me to be my best self and providing opportunities like this," said Wimberly.

"This is an exciting, once-in-a-lifetime experience and it's happening because of a great corporate partnership between the University and FedEx that is truly investing in students. I'm proof of that."

Wimberly is one of two students who represented TSU in the FedEx HBCU Student Ambassador program. The other student was sophomore Breanna Jefferson of Madison, Alabama.

The HBCU Student Ambassador program aims to provide empowerment, engagement, and education for students; and resources that will hopefully offer them an edge as they prepare to enter the workforce after college.

Antoinette Duke, director of TSU's Career Development Center, said she's proud to have TSU students participate in the FedEx program.

"The career development center is so excited to have two of our top scholars represent TSU as ambassadors for FedEx," said Duke. "These students understand the value of representation."

The program will officially kick off in March, with the first cohort of students who will participate in virtual and hybrid meetings. The intent is to introduce a new cohort each year, to align with FedEx's five-year commitment to HBCUs.

Students for the program were selected based on their career interests in various areas, including e-commerce, sustainability, IT/tech, logistics, marketing communications, sales, data/analytics, operations, and more. The first cohort of student participants will help set the direction for upcoming FedEx Ambassador programs, such as career pathways initiatives, HBCU leadership institutes, and student forums/think tanks.

"We're preparing tomorrow's leaders, and the students we reach through this program will gain valuable practical experience that will help prepare them to enter the workforce," said Judy Edge, corporate vice president for human resources at FedEx. "It will also help us to continue to bring diverse talent into our pipeline at FedEx."

The FedEx Corporation has had a long partnership with HBCUs. Since the early 2000s, the company has played a vital role in cultivating the next generation of leaders from these institutions.

Last year, NASCAR driver Denny Hamlin unveiled a special HBCU paint scheme featured on his #11 FedEx Toyota during last year's NASCAR Cup Series race at Daytona that included school logos of TSU and three other HBCUs.



TSU President Glenda Glover (fourth from left, front row) joins presidents from other HBCUs for NYSE bell ringing.



TSU President Glenda Glover, left, and FedEx HBCU Student Ambassador Shaun Wimberly



TSU sophomore Shaun Wimberly, 2nd from left, and the other FedEx HBCU student ambassadors.