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Cong. Davis Endorses Lt. Gov. Julianna Stratton for U.S. Senate: A Coalition of Support Emerges



State Rep. Camille Lilly, Pastor Michael Eaddy, Cong. Danny Davis, Lt. Gov. Julianna Stratton, Ald. Emma Mitts, and State Sen. Mattie Hunter came together to support Stratton for US Senator to replace Senator Dick Durbin after his retirement.



At the community office of Ald. Emma Mitts (sitting), Cong. Davis endorsing Lt. Gov. Julianna Stratton (standing) for US Senator to replace Senator Dick Durbin who is retiring at the end of his term.

In a pivotal moment for Illinois politics, Congressman Danny Davis joined a coalition of community leaders in Chicago to endorse Lieutenant Governor Julianna Stratton in her campaign for the U.S. Senate. The event underscored Stratton's growing momentum as she seeks to succeed Senator Dick Durbin, who announced he will not run for re-election.

Stratton, already a history-maker as Illinois' first Black woman Lieutenant Governor, was praised for her record of advocacy, leadership, and community engagement. Speakers highlighted her experience on issues

ranging from healthcare and criminal justice reform to economic development and environmental justice.

"This event was about showing Illinois the type of leadership Julianna Stratton brings," said Pastor Michael Edie, president of the People's Community Development Association of Chicago. "She represents a voice for the voiceless. We need someone prepared to advocate for the needs of Illinoisans. Julianna Stratton is a problem solver who does not shrink from challenges. Most of all, she represents a listening, sensitive, and empathetic realness."

Stratton's public career

began in the Illinois General Assembly, where she served from 2017 to 2019 before being chosen by Governor J.B. Pritzker as his running mate. Since then, she has led statewide efforts on birth equity, rural affairs, and community development.

State Senator Mattie Hunter recalled serving with Stratton during her legislative tenure. "She has always been a very strong leader and a very strong voice," Hunter said. "She never hesitated to make tough decisions. Out of all the candidates, she's the one I know is qualified to replace Senator Durbin. I am confident she will bring the

Ret. Ald. Walter Burnett, 2nd longest serving Alderman in City Council history, for the 27th Ward.

By: Creola Thomas

In July, something happened that surprised most of the 27th Ward: our beloved Alderman, who had served for 30 years, retired. Whispers floated through the neighborhood about why this had happened so suddenly and who would now take on the role. Residents wondered who would handle everyday complaints—missing garbage cans, uneven potholes, or city services. I, too, was caught off guard, which prompted me not only to speak with Burnett by phone but also to sit down with him for answers.



On Friday, August 29th, we Retired Ald. Walter Burnett, 27th Ward met at a familiar Chicago spot known for its grilled burgers—the Billy Goat Tavern. Walter arrived on time, looking relaxed and refreshed, still in the honeymoon stage of retirement. He admitted he sometimes misses being busy, though those moments are brief. It was good to see him—a familiar face, especially since we are both alumni of Cabrini-Green, shaped by the school of hard knocks. Walter, however, was known far beyond that. With a calm tone and a firm presence, he earned a reputation as a man of the people—one he worked hard to establish.

Burnett's journey into politics began during the heyday of Chicago's Democratic machine. After serving time in jail and paying his debt to society, he did what few manage to do—he turned his life around. Introduced to

See Burne page 4

same energy, enthusiasm, and effort to Washington."

Champion for Working Families

Alderwoman Emma Mitts echoed those sentiments, pointing to Stratton's community-first approach. "She's always put working families first," Mitts said. "The Pritzker administration has a winning record—thousands of new jobs, access to quality education, common-sense gun-safety laws. We need a strong leader to stand up to Trump in times like these. Julianna Stratton, coming from her experience as a working mother with children, is going to fight for all of us."

Mitts emphasized Stratton's accessibility, recalling her participation at a Mother's Day event earlier this year. "She didn't shy away—she walked up to people, spoke to them, and let them know she was there for them," she said. "That's the kind of U.S. Senator we need."

Cong. Danny Davis, whose endorsement was central to See Stratton page 4

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The North Lawndale Community News

The North Lawndale Community News is published weekly by Strategic Human Services. Our purpose is to help inform the communities we serve on resources, events, and issues relevant to them. Our community includes those who live, work, worship in, and/or care about North Lawndale and its neighboring communities. Our focus is on positive, productive solutions, that will improve the lifestyle of community members.

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The fruits of a living Legacy

By: Creola Thomas



Maywood Mayor, Nathaniel Booker at ribbon cutting ceremony of Minnie Minor Carr (yellow) and her husband Juan Carr for their MSMS—Minor Strategies, Major Solutions Life Insurance agency located at 1701 South 1st Avenue in Maywood, IL



Guests mingle at ribbon cutting ceremony of Minnie Minor Carr and her husband Juan Carr for their MSMS—Minor Strategies, Major Solutions Life Insurance agency.

September is Life Insurance Awareness Month, a time when the industry reminds us of the importance of securing and maintaining life insurance coverage. This message led me to the doorstep of Minnie Minor Carr and Juan Carr, a dynamic Black American entrepreneur couple who started MSMS—Minor Strategies, Major Solutions Life Insurance agency.

Located at 1701 South 1st Avenue in Maywood, IL, MSMS is far from an ordinary insurance firm. The company is built on seven guiding principles: belief, faith, hope, perseverance, trust, teamwork, and legacy. As a brokerage, they work with several providers, offering a wide range of services, including life insurance, retirement strategies, annuities, 1035 exchanges, disability insurance, long-term care plans, and other living benefits. Truly, MSMS is a one-stop shop for insurance and financial solutions.

Minnie and her husband welcome you with a warm humility, balanced by a competitive drive. Their business success is underpinned by a remarkable personal story of resilience. Minnie, the youngest of 17 children, was born to parents who met in Chicago in the 1950s. Despite the challenges of the time, her family's story defies the narrative of family disloyalty and violence. Her father, with limited education, built a stable life for his family, first in West Lawndale and later in Austin. Against the odds, all 17 children avoided trouble with the law, choosing instead to live out the values instilled in them. Their story is a testament to the power of resilience and the ability of families to rise above their circumstances and thrive.

This achievement is particularly significant in a field where only 56% of Black Americans hold life insurance, and just 3% own their own insurance business. Minnie and Juan are part of that rare 3%, holding keys to both financial empowerment and community transformation. Their commitment to community transformation is a source of pride for the local community, as they lead the way in providing financial empowerment to those who need it most.

With eighteen years of helping families with life insurance coverage. Minnie and
See Invest Back page

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Burnett from front page

politics by his father, a precinct captain, Walter followed in his footsteps. He volunteered for George Dunn, longtime President of the Cook County Board of Commissioners, and became active in the Young Democrats, eventually serving as chairman of the growing movement.

Before stepping into the spotlight himself, he worked for Jesse White, helping distribute turkeys and hams during holiday drives. Jesse White would later succeed Carol Moseley Braun as Cook County Recorder of Deeds. At the same time, Moseley Braun went on to make history as the first African American U.S. Senator from Illinois. When the city eventually remapped the ward along racial lines, the 27th Ward was created. A young, ambitious Walter Burnett stepped forward to take the lead. He won and went on to hold the seat for three decades, despite repeated challenges to his position.

So why step away now? Though it seemed sudden to the public, Walter shared that the decision had been weighing on him for some time. His mother, who volunteered in his office before passing away from cancer, made him promise to leave while on top, not letting the job rob him of life's better things. His wife—herself a cancer survivor and political fighter—also wanted him to retire. And, as Walter admitted, balancing the old guard of Chicago politics with a new generation of leaders was wearing him down. “It just felt like the right time,” he said.

When asked about his proudest accomplishments, Walter didn't hesitate:

the affordable and mixed-income housing initiatives he brought to the ward. Against the odds, the 27th Ward became a rare space where the rich, middle class, and working class live side by side. It's a legacy he hopes will continue.

Of course, the big question remains: what's next for Walter? Let's put one rumor to rest—he is not running for Congress. However, he has applied for the position of President of the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA), a natural step given that the 27th Ward contains some of the most significant public housing developments in the city. He wants to remain connected to people while continuing his mission to expand quality affordable housing.

And who does he hope will follow him as alderman? With a proud smile, Walter named his son, Walter R. Burnett—known to many simply as “Red.” A graduate of Whitney Young High School and Fordham University, Red has an impressive resume: five years at Goldman Sachs in New York, work as a marketing specialist for Chance the Rapper, and a reputation as a cultural connector. From finance to music, from Generation X to Gen Z, Red can speak multiple languages of leadership—professional, political, and cultural.

So will Walter lead the CHA? Now, waiting for restrictions to be waived or Will Red become the youngest alderman in the City Council? Time will tell. For now, the 27th Ward can take pride in a history shaped by an alderman who put people first—and be hopeful that this tradition continues.

Stratton from front page

the day's announcement, highlighted Stratton's deep ties to grassroots activism. “Our candidate is what I call a community activist,” Davis said. “Before getting involved in public office, she was standing as a citizen, engaged in shaping the thoughts and ideas of her community. She has stood right beside our governor, helping Illinois fight back against all the efforts to take away rights that took generations to secure.”

Davis added that Stratton brings both creativity and courage. “She's for healthcare, for family protection, for economic development, but she's also for restorative justice,” Davis noted. “She will take to the United States Senate the courage and determination it takes to protect Illinois from hurt, harm, and danger.”

For Stratton, Davis's endorsement was deeply personal. “I want to recognize and thank Congressman Danny Davis,” Stratton said. “For nearly three decades in Congress—and for years before that in public service—he has been a tireless advocate for Illinois families and for those whose voices are too often left out. His confidence and trust mean the world to me. Just like Congressman Davis, I will fight for the people of Illinois with everything I have.”

She framed her campaign as a fight for the future of democracy. “We are living in a defining moment—attacks on the rule of law, attacks on our Constitution, attacks on our neighbors,” she said.

“But here in Illinois, we know who we are. We will not be bullied, and we will not give in to fear. We will protect our neighbors and defend our democracy.”

Representative Camille Lilly praised Stratton's ability to connect across the state. “Illinois has a deep bench, but Julianna is the best candidate for this seat,” Lilly said. “She understands the struggles of the middle class because she lived them. As a woman from the South Side, she has a human voice, and that voice in the Senate will make a difference.”

Stratton emphasized her campaign's inclusive vision. “This campaign is about carrying the voices of all Illinoisans to Washington,” she said. “It will take all of us, and it requires true fighters. But with this team and our momentum, our movement can and will win.”

With endorsements from Governor Pritzker, Senator Tammy Duckworth, and now Congressman Davis, Stratton's coalition is expanding across Illinois. As she continues to travel the state, she remains focused on her central message: that government must be a partner to the people.

“I hear from families every day that they want good-paying jobs, affordable healthcare, safe communities, and fairness no matter their zip code,” Stratton said. “That's the fight I'm taking to Washington. That's what bold leadership looks like.”



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FEATURING
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Checking the temperature of the West Side with State Rep. La Shawn K. Ford

By Todd Thomas

NLCN: As a youth, you collected bottles and cans for recycling. Why did you do this, and did you realize at the time that you were helping the environment?

Ford: As a young person, I collected bottles and cans because it was a way to earn a little money and also do something positive. At the time, I did not fully realize I was helping the environment, but looking back, I see that it instilled in me a sense of responsibility that small actions, when multiplied, can make a real difference in reducing waste and keeping our neighborhoods clean.

NLCN: What is your view on environmental justice, and how do you define it?

Ford: Environmental justice is about fairness. It means ensuring that no community, especially the West Side of Chicago, is forced to bear more than its share of pollution, flooding, or lack of resources. Everyone deserves clean air, safe water, trees, and green spaces regardless of their ZIP code, race, or income. To me, environmental justice is about equity and dignity.

NLCN: The North Lawndale Newspaper/Strategic Human Services started a program to teach youth about birds and appreciating nature in the community. Do you support initiatives like this?

Ford: Programs like this connect young people to the environment right where they live. Learning about birds, nature, and conservation gives youth a sense of pride in their community. It helps build a future of diverse leadership that understands the importance of protecting our environment. These initiatives are

powerful because they make environmental awareness real and personal in every community.

NLCN: Do you believe in climate change, that the temperature is getting warmer, and if so, how are communities like the West Side of Chicago impacted?

Ford: Yes, I believe in climate change, and we can see its impact all around us. On the West Side, families are already dealing with more extreme heat, flooding, and poor air quality. These challenges put extra pressure on seniors, children, and people with health conditions. Climate change is not some distant issue; it affects our daily lives, so action is urgent.

NLCN: What steps do you take to protect the environment in your role in government?

Ford: In government, I support policies that promote clean energy, reduce waste, and demand investment in sustainable infrastructure. I also fight for resources to protect communities from flooding by improving old infrastructure, improving public transit, and expanding green spaces. Every legislation we pass should consider environmental impact because preserving the environment protects public health.

NLCN: What do you suggest people in the community do to help protect the environment?

Ford: Every person can play a role. Simple steps like recycling, reducing energy use, planting trees, and supporting local clean-up efforts make a difference. People can also get involved by speaking up at community meetings, supporting policies prioritizing sustainability,



State Rep La Shawn Ford, 8th District at his campaign office for the Congressional seat of Cong. Danny Davis

and teaching children to respect and care for the environment.

NLCN: With so many other issues to grapple with, do you think people are interested in environmental justice and awareness?

Ford: I believe people care deeply, even if their concern is not always framed as environmental justice. When families talk about flooding in their basements, asthma in their children, or the need for safe parks, they are talking about environmental justice. The challenge is to connect the dots and show people that the environment is not separate from our daily struggles; it is at the center of them.

NLCN: Anything else you would like to add?

Ford: Protecting the environment is really about protecting our earth for generations to come. If we want strong, healthy, thriving communities, we must prioritize clean air, safe water, and resilient infrastructure. The West Side and all of Chicago deserve nothing less. It is my belief that we can not only build a better future but also use this as an opportunity to create jobs in our community and create a new middle class, lifting people out of poverty.

This work was made possible in part by funding from the Alliance Matters campaign, an initiative of Chicago Independent Media Alliance (CIMA) and the Field Foundation."

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Checking the temperature of West Side College Education

Malcolm X College Recognized for dedication to Students' Well Being

By Todd Thomas



Malcolm X College located at 1900 W Jackson, Chicago Il 60612.



David Sanders, President of Malcolm X College

Malcolm X College has received the 2025 Excellence in Mental Health and Well-Being Award from Insight Into Academia. The honor recognizes the school's dedication to supporting students' mental and emotional health. School president, David A. Sanders spoke with the North Lawndale Community Newspaper about the award and the college's commitment to overall excellence as they enter the 2025 Fall semester.

NLCN: Tell us about the award and why you think Malcolm X College was recognized?

Sanders: It's all about the fact that we are prioritizing the mental health of our students. The pandemic exacerbated those needs, and I think people have a concept of mental health that's typically negative. But really mental health is about ensuring that you're confident, and that you have somebody to talk to if needed. I believe that's what the chancellor desired and that is obviously what we desire. We have the largest constitution of mental health providers here at Malcolm X in the district with eight clinicians, and anywhere from eight to twelve externs who are students that are going to college to become mental health counselors or social workers. They help provide the foundation for the support we provide students.

NLCN: Has this always been something Malcolm X College emphasizes?

Sanders: We've been focusing on it for a long time, and we were one of the first wellness centers that was opened at City Colleges of

Chicago. We found that students that participate in clinical services ended up having a 15% greater success rate than students who did not, and that was telling us that these services are absolutely needed and most importantly they help students get cross the finish line.

NLCN: A lot of people won't seek services because of the potential embarrassment and personal nature of the issue. How do you address that?

Sanders: A lot of people have a stigma about mental health because they associate that with being "Crazy." The stereotype is that that person is out of their mind or doing things that are inappropriate, but that does not fully constitute mental health. Mental health can be a traumatic event like a death in the family, or an accident or somebody robbed you. All of those can be events that impact mental health. And it is OK, to not be OK. Sometimes you need someone to talk to, or walk through with you in those challenging circumstances, and figure out how to improve your mental health and capacity around that particular issue so you can overcome it.

NLCN: Why is it critical for students to have these services available at school?

Sanders: Sometimes people have no one at home that they can talk to, they don't have family. By providing these services we're providing a much needed health care that students may not have access to, that they can get right here on campus. And we have made it available twenty four hours

a day seven days a week so they can call in and get these services as well. We want everybody who needs those services to receive them. The Wellness Center at Malcolm X is in a location that's obscure to insure our students seeking those services wouldn't be stereotyped or ostracized for going to those services, and our food pantry is in that area as well. The location of it was very intentional.

NLCN: Do the economics of the community play a role?

Sanders: We are actually in a very influential area in the medical district. We've got doctors, lawyers, and officials all living in this area. At Malcolm X College we serve students from every single ward in the city of Chicago. We provide services to everybody. If you're a student of ours we're going to provide it to you...that's our approach. Trauma is not confined to a zip code. It's not confined to your financial situation... trauma is trauma.

NLCN: What are the initial steps a student takes to get the help they need?

Sanders: They can speak to any employee and they can direct them to the Wellness Center. We have orientation so every student is aware we have services available to them. And we give them that in writing... it's on our website and we try to make it as simple as possible.

NLCN: Does the current political climate have any effect on what the college's mission is, or will be in the near future?

Sanders: We are continuing as we always have. When you talk about

DEI, who are you talking about? We serve everybody so I don't know there's even an issue. We just keep grinding away because our job is to get students across the finish line. Get them into the job market, get them into four year universities, into research projects and study abroad trips across the world. We're doing all kinds of amazing things for students and proving that the stigma of community college doesn't exist here. We are a college and we can do what any other college does, and we do it really, really well.

NLCN: What is your mindset going into the new school year in the fall of 2025?

Sanders: It's the greatest time of the year for us. Our students are coming back and they have objectives of what they want to accomplish. And our faculty and staff are back and the excitement is in the air. It's a chance for us to invest in our students and our community. Every single day we're ensuring that our mission is being accomplished by helping students achieve their academic objectives, and this is the time that that happens. It's all hands on deck, and everybody is focused on ensuring that we have a warm and inviting environment and they're there for every student to be successful.

This work was made possible in part by funding from the Alliance Matters campaign, an initiative of Chicago Independent Media Alliance (CIMA) and the Field Foundation."

Checking the temperature of West Side High School Sports

Temperature Check with Westinghouse Coach Rafie Fields

By Todd Thomas



Coach

NLCN: I know you have been on the West Side for many years, so can you tell me if you feel the issues with crime among the youth are getting worse (hotter), or decreasing (getting cooler) in a manner of speaking?

Fields: I feel that overall crime might be lower, but when violence does happen, it feels more sudden, random, or intense. That sense of unpredictability is still what bothers me.

NLCN: How does sports, particularly basketball help keep youth from involvement in more negative activities?

Fields: Sports can be a powerful tool to keep youth engaged, disciplined, and away from negative influences. They provide structure, mentorship, teamwork, and a sense of purpose. When youth programs are underfunded or deprioritized, that loss ripples far beyond just missing out on a game. It can leave kids without safe spaces, positive role models, or a reason to stay committed to something bigger than themselves.

NLCN: There were several violent events that happened with teens on the West Side this summer. I know it is a complicated issue but in general what are a few things that might be done to deter situations like these?

Fields: Violence prevention begins at home. It starts with parents holding themselves and their children accountable, and teaching the values of respect and responsibility. Children should learn not only to honor their elders and adults, but—just as importantly—to respect their peers. By modeling accountability

and empathy in the home, we lay the foundation for safer, stronger communities.

NLCN: As far as basketball, what are your plans for improving your team from last season?

Fields: My plan to improve our team from last year is to focus on stronger defense and greater discipline with the ball. We will emphasize conditioning to ensure our student-athletes are prepared to compete at the highest level, while creating a more structured and focused atmosphere. Most importantly, we are committed to getting back to playing true Westinghouse basketball.

NLCN: How have your players that have graduated recently done after a year of college. Anyone who stands out to you in particular?

Fields: All of my guys that have recently graduated are either still in school as a student-athlete or still in school. Our school does a pretty good job of preparing



Closed Currency Exchange on Madison Street many businesses have closed on the Westside of Chicago.

our young-men for college and life.

This work was made possible in part by funding from the Alliance Matters campaign, an initiative of Chicago Independent Media Alliance (CIMA) and the Field Foundation."

Stephen Thorpe returns to NLCP as Head Basketball Coach

By Todd Thomas

Basketball has a proud tradition as North Lawndale College Prep High School and the Phoenix won the city title in 2009 and the Class 2A championship in 2008. Most of the success was under former head coach Lewis Thorpe, who sadly passed away seven years ago.

Thorpe's son Stephen was a starting guard on the team during that time and he's returning to North Lawndale as head coach for the 2025-2026 season. Thorpe coached at Urban Prep and Muchin after a playing and coaching career at Colby-Sawyer College in New Hampshire, and he said he was ready to come back to familiar territory. "Taking the head coaching position at North Lawndale was bigger than just basketball. It was about culture, legacy, and home. The unique culture of NLCP has always been rooted in resilience, family, and pride, and as an alum, I felt the call to give back and re-engage with the same community that helped shape me.

Most importantly, it was about building my own legacy on the very foundation where my father created his," Thorpe said. "Sports are important for students because it is much bigger than winning and losing," he adds. "The game teaches adversity, mental toughness, and resilience; skills that prepare students for life. Basketball demands a strong work ethic and pushes players to keep fighting until the final buzzer, teaching them never to give up no matter how tough the challenge. Playing basketball where there can only be one winner builds character, confidence, and perseverance, which is great preparation for the real world." Although the Phoenix have been competitive in recent seasons, he wants to see them take another step and play deeper into the playoffs, and he has a plan. "Improvement comes

from consistency and intentional work. My approach will be to focus on being better than we were yesterday. We'll build trust and belief in one common goal by setting clear expectations and strengthen our brotherhood by holding each other accountable through honest but supportive feedback. By combining discipline, preparation, and culture, we will increase our level of intensity daily and watch that translate into long-term success," Thorpe said.

He also said he also acquired a lot of knowledge in his previous coaching positions that he'll use to succeed at North Lawndale. "Coaching at Muchin, as well as Urban Prep, taught me valuable lessons that will directly impact how I lead at NLCP. First and foremost, I learned the power of relationship building. When players know you care about them as people, they'll give you everything they've got on the court. I also realized how important my energy is; - the way I show up each day sets the tone for the team's effort, focus, and belief in themselves.

Most importantly, I learned that every player cannot be coached the same way if you want them to reach their full potential. Some players respond to tough love and direct feedback, while others need encouragement, patience, or a more teaching-centered approach. I've developed flexibility in my coaching style, shifting between being a motivator, a teacher, a disciplinarian, and even a mentor depending on what the moment and the individual player requires.

That adaptability, along with the lessons I've learned, will allow me to maximize both individual growth and team success at NLCP," he said. Again, things he learned from his Dad will come



Coach Steven Thorpe

into play. "One of the most important things I learned from my dad is, you never know who is watching. That lesson taught me to always carry myself with integrity and to give my best effort in everything I do, whether that's on the court, in the classroom, or in life. Another lesson is, you never know what people are going through. As a coach and teacher, that reminds me to approach every student and athlete with understanding. Spreading positive energy and encouragement can have an impact far greater than we might even imagine, and sometimes that small moment of support can change the course of a young person's day or even their life," Thorpe said.

The West side has experienced several particularly violent gun-related crimes this summer and Thorpe, who is no stranger to urban violence thinks that sports can help keep kids safer. "The West Side has always faced challenges, and unfortunately, violence among teens has continued to be a

serious issue in recent months. Compared to when I was a student at NLCP, I'd say the temperature has gone up due to more outside pressures, from social media to community violence, pulling at our young people," he said. "That reality is why programs like basketball are so important. Sports provide structure, accountability, and a safe outlet where teens can channel their energy into something positive. My hope is that by building a strong culture of brotherhood, discipline, and pride at NLCP, we can help cut down the violence by giving students something greater to commit themselves to and the community something to proudly support. In addition to coaching at NLCP, Thorpe is a physical education instructor at Learn 8 Charter.

This work was made possible in part by funding from the Alliance Matters campaign, an initiative of Chicago Independent Media Alliance (CIMA) and the Field Foundation."

Checking the temperature with West Side Adult Seniors

Westside Seniors at Golden Corral respond to Temperature check

A recent community discussion on Chicago's West Side shined a light on issues senior residents say need urgent attention — from cleaner parks and more safer housing for seniors, to stronger enforcement of neighborhood rules. While the meeting was informal, the voices of neighbors carried a clear message: the West Side deserves better care and investment.

"We always need some improvement, but we need to clean up our parks," one resident said. It used to be so beautiful back in the day. You know about the Friends of the Park. They help to look out for and take care of the parks."

The call for cleaner and safer public spaces echoed throughout the conversation. Speaker 2 added that parks should have more signage and consistent enforcement. Others raised concerns about weekend car meet-ups along Independence and Lake Street, near the Conservatory, where noise, litter, and large gatherings create ongoing problems.

"I've seen people blocking off areas with cars, just hanging out," said another participant. "Police sometimes show up, but it doesn't last. The cleanup after the weekend is the worst part."

Despite the challenges, residents also spoke with pride about what the West Side has to offer. "It's centrally located. Good transportation. We've got three rail stations. We've got the Pink Line, the Blue one, and the Green Line," one neighbor said. The access to transit, many agreed, makes the area appealing and keeps people connected to jobs, services, and family.

Housing, particularly for seniors, was another major focus of the discussion. Several participants raised concerns about seniors being placed in the same buildings as residents under 65 who live with disabilities. Some feared the arrangement creates conflicts over safety, lifestyle, and generational differences.

"Mixing seniors with younger people isn't always safe," said Speaker 6. "We need housing that's designed for seniors, with the right services and protections."

There was also recognition of the work already being done by Resident Service Coordinators, or RSCs, who manage activities and connect tenants to resources. One senior praised the efforts, saying, "I seen you talking with the residents — I thought that was so beautiful."

Still, challenges remain and safety concerns extended beyond housing and parks. Some mentioned disorderly gatherings, street drinking, and even low-flying helicopters near Pulaski, which they believed were surveillance flights. "It just makes people uneasy," one speaker noted.

By the end of the meeting, no formal decisions were made, but several action items emerged. Suggestions included mapping senior-focused buildings to identify where younger residents are included, pushing for separation or stronger safeguards, and creating a transition program for seniors moving out of nursing homes into independent living situations.

Community members also called for stronger partnerships with Friends of the Park and city sanitation to schedule post-

weekend cleanups. Housing managers were urged to review credit check policies to ease access for seniors. And organizers committed to sharing updates through newsletters and community media.

While the meeting was filled with candid frustrations, it also carried hope. Residents believe that with cooperation — from city officials, local organizations, and neighbors themselves — the West Side can once again reflect the beauty and vitality they remember.

This work was made possible in part by funding from the Alliance Matters campaign, an initiative of Chicago Independent Media Alliance (CIMA) and the Field Foundation.



Westside Seniors responding to Temperature Check questions

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Catch Fire with Carver

By Professor Zaki Amir

Primarily known as an “Agricultural Scientist”, Dr. George Washington Carver is the preeminent individual for young Afrodescendants to learn about and emulate. He and his mother Mary were sold to slavers, but for the love of the slave Mistress Susan Carver, slave Master Moses Carver was forced to repurchase him by trading his broken down horse to affect the child’s return.

Dr. Carver became the adopted child of the Carver’s in later years and was known as a wanderer of the field who found peace in watching Bees, and Butterflies being interested solely in plants.

He was thought to be too frail for the field where the work was picking cotton and other vegetables. Instead with the kindness shown by Susan Carver to him, he learned to paint, knit, and was a poet as well as an accomplished pianist.

Today, he would be called a “Renaissance Man” who was cultured and able to overcome any obstacles. And based upon his extraordinary life, there is not a question he is the person who should be taught to our youth today.

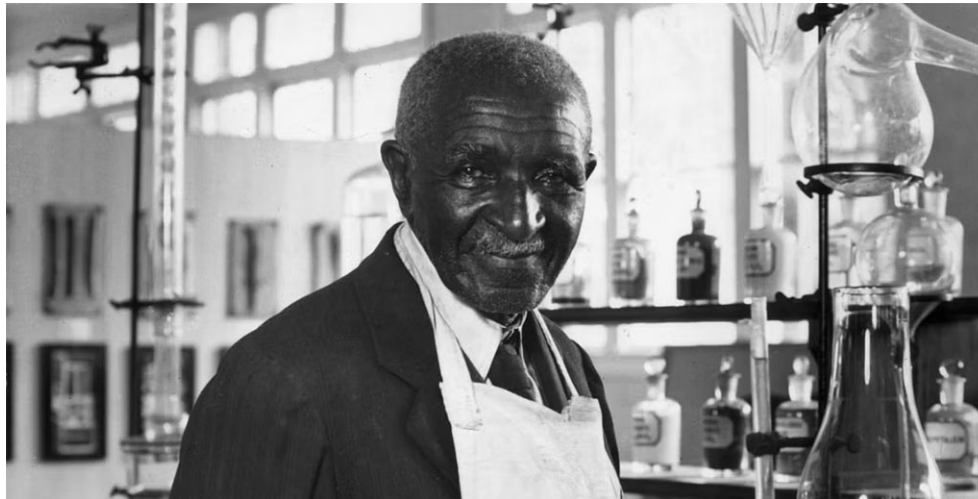
Realizing this is the state of affairs, it is hereby proposed that 2026 officially be the year of Dr. George Washington Carver. And this momentous task is easily accomplished. There are so many schools named after him it is unknown how many exist in America. His laboratory proficiency and advocacy of a diverse polyculture rather than a monoculture system of soil use dependent upon cotton helped solidify him as one of the most important scientists of the 20th century.

In addition to his agricultural science training, his compassion for humanity is beyond reproach. As a leading academician and educator, his entire life was devoted to making the lives of others better. He used his skill in agriculture not only as a farmer, but was an inventor of many products which we know and use but he did not patent them because he wanted to bestow his gifts upon the world without seeking profits.

In fact, he made application and received only three patents but did so much more and it is his humility and ability to give rather than take from society which makes him a giant among men far from the “Capitalists” who sought to take him and use him for their nefarious purposes.

2026 is the time to look closer at a man who defied the odds of his birth, as a slave and one who was not slated to do anything really but live a mundane life. He forever changed the world and we intend to give him his credit and help to make his legacy more prominent in today’s world where AI is utilized as the plan for the future.

To say what is old is new is not just a cliché. It is with the understanding that knowledge of Dr. George Washington Carver is worth passing to our children. We ask you to Catch Fire with Carver!



Dr. George Washington Carver in his laboratory



George Washington Carver in his younger days.

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Seniors Share Community Concerns Over Lunch



Seniors from Montclare Supportive Living, Green Oaks of Park Forest, and Claire House enjoying food and conversation at Golden Corral



Seniors from Montclare Supportive Living, Green Oaks of Park Forest, and Claire House enjoying food and conversation at Golden Corral



Staff from Montclare Supportive Living



Staff talking with senior resident enjoying food and conversation at Golden Corral



Ms. Vicki Hughes, Marketing Director at Montclare Supportive Living

A recent outing to the Golden Corral on 3330 S. Cicero Ave. brought together seniors from Montclare Supportive Living, Green Oaks of Park Forest, and Claire House for food and conversation. Joined by service providers and coordinators, the relaxed event doubled as an informal discussion on senior housing, neighborhood conditions, and the role of resident services on Chicago's West Side. While no formal decisions were made, participants raised concerns about the need for safer, senior-focused housing and stronger community support. Organizers said the gathering created an open space for seniors to share ideas to improve quality of life.

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Route 66 Festival and Unity Along Historic Route 66

By Todd Thomas

A vibrant stretch of Ogden Avenue in Lawndale was transformed into a lively festival on Saturday as neighbors gathered to celebrate culture, unity, and history along the iconic Route 66.

The event was first organized 2008 by Drew Goldsmith a retired firefighter and longtime resident of the North Lawndale. Collaborating with others like the Historic Route 66 Chicago's Classic car show, the Firehouse Block Party, Live at Principle barbers, 24th Ward Ald. Monique Scott, and the American Red Cross the festival enjoyed its best year yet.

The day kicked off at 10 a.m. with a classic car caravan, followed by a soul-stirring concert that set the tone for an afternoon filled with music and fellowship. Local church groups, including African American and Hispanic performers, took the stage to deliver powerful musical performances that had the crowd clapping, dancing, and singing along. The event also had boxing as part of its festivities. At the end of the festival there was even live Jazz at Principal Barbers.

"This event showcased unity, love for our community, and celebrating our roots on the historic Route 66," said one organizer. "We wanted everyone to feel welcome, and I think we accomplished that."

Vendors lined the street with handmade arts and crafts, information booths, and plenty of barbecue. The smell of smoked ribs and chicken added to the festive atmosphere as families browsed booths and supported local entrepreneurs.

Organizers made inclusivity a central part of the day, ensuring that all announcements and activities were presented in both English and Spanish. Residents noted that the bilingual approach reflected the spirit of Lawndale's diverse population.

"This was more than just a block

party," said a longtime resident. "It was about coming together as one community, no matter where we come from."

The festival highlighted the positive spirit of Lawndale, offering neighbors a chance to celebrate their shared history while creating new memories together. For many, the event was a reminder that Route 66 is not just a roadway but a symbol of connection, resilience, and pride.



Drew Goldsmith one of the lead organizers of the Route 66 Festival



Pastor Phil Jackson (blk pants) on one of stages where live music and DJ's performed. there was a total of 3 stages lined along the Ogden from Central Park to Pulaski.



Julian Davis on Keyboards, Reid Charmaine Parker on vocals, Lenard Simpson on Sax, Ethan Thilion on Bass, James Brown Sims on drums playing live at the Principle Barber located on 3820 W. Ogden.



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Ald Monique Scott (Center Red and Black) was a co-sponsor of the Route 66 Festival



Classic Corvette Stingrays lined up with owners in front at the Route 66 Festival



Eric Lindsay (white) of Lindsay Italian Ice with family serving Italian Ice at the Route 66 Festival.

Invest from page 3

Juan were inspired by her parents to start MSMS. Her family's story begins with Emma Gean Kirkwood Minor of West Helena, Arkansas, and Harry Lee Minor, from Jackson, Mississippi. Emma's brother introduced them. The couple married in the late 1950s and raised seventeen children—ten girls and seven boys. They became active members of Bethlehem Healing Temple, where they grounded their family in faith, love, and togetherness, teaching and applying biblical principles, sowing seeds, and transferring wealth, thereby leaving their family an inheritance in the Austin community.

When I sat with five siblings—Carolyn, Charlene, Prancella, Christine, and Minnie—I asked about the “secret recipe” behind their family's strength.

- Carolyn shared that their mother taught them to take care of themselves first—through healthy eating, appearance, and discipline—so they could better care for others. To this day, the family continues its tradition of charitable giving, donating clothing to nursing homes and shelters.

- Prancella attributed their success to hard work, ambition, and the closeness their mother required—like insisting they sit together in church.

- Charlene emphasized the importance of always putting God first in friendships, goals, and family problems.

- Christine remembered the

importance of prayer, saying their family often stayed inside praying while other children played outside.

- Minnie recalled her parents' constant encouragement to “never give up,” which inspired her to start her own business.

On Saturday, September 6, MSMS will celebrate a grand opening for its new location. The company motto, “Live Your Dream, Protect Your Legacy,” will be proudly displayed. Minnie highlighted what sets MSMS apart: financial literacy classes, recruitment through community vendor events, client-focused risk education, and an open-door policy.

The success of MSMS is more than business—it's a testament to legacy. Minnie and her husband, Juan, lead with care, faith, and a forward-thinking vision. Their company is not only a financial resource but also a model of community leadership, inspiring others with their innovative approach to financial empowerment and community involvement.

As we reflect on this story, we should also return to some simple yet powerful practices: If you can believe it, you can achieve it, the power of two, used to empower families and communities, teaching children to love and accept one another, and remembering the value of prayer before play. Perhaps that is the actual fruit of a living legacy—and what we are really celebrating in the Minor-

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