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NGA, Harris-Stowe sign agreement to develop STEM educators

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COMPLIMENTARY

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All you need to know to vote



Photo by Wiley Price

Alpha Kappa Alpha's Veronica Walton spent the afternoon of Saturday, September 26 near North Grand Boulevard and Spring Avenue encouraging residents in North St. Louis' Greater Ville neighborhood to remember to vote on November 3. In fact, absentee voting is underway at the local election authorities, and many voters are eligible to cast their votes now.

Explaining the important dates for the Nov. 3 general election

By Nigel Holloway
For The St. Louis American

"Ordinary people with extraordinary vision can redeem the soul of America by getting in what I call good trouble, necessary trouble," Civil rights leader and Congressman John Lewis wrote, before his death on July 17.

"Voting and participating in the democratic process are key. The vote is the most powerful nonviolent change agent you have in a dem-

ocratic society. You must use it because it is not guaranteed. You can lose it."

Every citizen has the opportunity of having their voice heard in the November 3 presidential election by casting their ballot. Absentee voting is underway, as of September 22. Voters should note these other important dates:

- October 7: Last day to register to vote
- October 21: Last day to request ballot by mail

• October 31: Saturday absentee voting 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

• November 2: Last day to vote absentee in person

• November 3: Absentee ballots must be received by election authority by 7 p.m.

As a notary and a poll judge, let me explain the significance of these dates.

September 22. If you are either unable or

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How God got Ella Owens' attention

Baptist church activist had her ministry interrupted by COVID-19 infection

By Sylvester Brown Jr.
Of The St. Louis American

"It appeared that my life was going along rather well."

In her letter to *The American*, Ella Owens expressed appreciation for her life. At 76, Ella and her husband, Phillip, 77, are retired empty nesters. With their three children all grown and living in different parts of the country, the couple lives comfortably in their home in Pasadena Park in Normandy.

Ella wrote of how God is using her in the ministry: "God is working through me. All of us have been created with a purpose, and I feel like this is my purpose. I enjoy my positions in the church and gathering with fellow parishioners."

On any day, the diminutive senior citizen climbs into her miniature, 2014 forest green, white-topped Mini Cooper and heads



See OWENS, A6

When COVID-19 struck, Ella Owens was serving as the administrative assistant and missionary president at Greater Leonard Missionary Baptist Church in the Old North neighborhood. This involved attending to its business, collecting offerings, worshiping, doing missionary work in the neighborhood, and overseeing once-a-week food and clothing give-aways.



Ariel Turner

Ariel Turner is a college and career counselor at Lift For Life Academy, a charter school in Soulard. The school building, at 1731 South Broadway, was once a bank and still has the marble teller counters and columns in the school lobby. Turner could tell if something was off the minute Wilson walked through the school doors, Wilson said, and they would "talk for hours" in

See SALUTE, A7

American wins Gold Cup from MO Press

Captures the coveted award for the sixth time in eight years

American staff

The St. Louis American won the Gold Cup award for weekly newspapers with a circulation of 5,000 or more from Missouri Press Association in its 2020 Better Newspaper Contest. This marks the sixth time in the past eight years that *The St. Louis American* has won top honors among all large weeklies from the state press association.

In all, *The American* won 43 statewide awards, the most it has ever won in this competition. Besides the Gold Cup, *The St. Louis American* won 10 first place awards, 12 second

place awards, nine third place awards and 11 honorable mentions.

Each year, a different state press association judges the competition. This year, it was the South Carolina Press Association.

"This is an affirmation of the journalism quality of our mission-driven work that is achieved by

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2020 SALUTE TO EXCELLENCE

'Second mom' at Lift For Life

Ariel Turner is 2020 SEMO Counselor of the Year

By Rebecca Rivas
Of The St. Louis American

Tylea Wilson was a self-proclaimed "busy bee" during her senior year at Lift For Life Academy in 2019. She was class president, heavily involved in sports, an activist and valedictorian.

"But yet, I was still growing up on the North Side of St. Louis," Wilson said. "During the last two years of high school, I lost a lot of people. I lost a sibling, I lost best friends, I lost my boyfriend. Ms. Turner could tell when something was wrong; I didn't have to say anything."

Ariel Turner is a college and career counselor at Lift For Life Academy, a charter school in Soulard. The school building, at 1731 South Broadway, was once a bank and still has the marble teller counters and columns in the school lobby. Turner could tell if something was off the minute Wilson walked through the school doors, Wilson said, and they would "talk for hours" in

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Gold Cup

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a total team effort, from the reception desk to our news room, sales department, design team, accounting and administrative staff," said Donald M. Suggs, publisher and executive editor of *The St. Louis American*.

"We couldn't be more proud. We don't take these awards lightly. These accolades from industry professionals are a testament to the consistent, professional work we strive to provide for our community." The *St. Louis American* won 10 first place awards, including:

- Best Online Newspaper or Website

- Best Video (for the seventh year in a row and each of the seven years this award has been given, *The American's* Rebecca Rivas won first place in the category, this time for her video on Early Childhood Education awardee Chandria Taylor)

- Multi-Media Reporting (for the only two years in this category's existence, *The St. Louis American* won this first place award, this time for its extensive print and video coverage of the annual Salute to Excellence in Education Gala)

- Best Coverage of Government (for "Attacks against the city's first Black prosecutor")



Photo by Wiley Price

Laying Wayman to rest

Pallbearers carried the body of pioneering attorney, executive and education leader Wayman F. Smith III to a waiting hearse at Austin Layne Funeral Home on Monday, September 28. The former Anheuser-Busch executive and Harris-Stowe State University board chair passed September 15 at the age of 80.

- Best News Photograph (Wiley's Price's front-page photo "Comforting Pashance")

- Best Breaking News Story (Sandra Jordan's "50k eligible children dropped from Medicaid")

- Best News or Feature Series (Rebecca Rivas' series on "Surveillance and the city")

- Best Photo Package (Mike

- Terhaar and Wiley Price's coverage of Blues Stanley Cup celebration)

- Best Sports Feature Story (Kenya Vaughn's piece "Goodbye, Charles Glenn")

- Best Story About Religion (Chris King's "Pastor with a bullet-proof vest").

Second place awards include:

- General Excellence
- Best News Story (Rebecca Rivas)

- Best Columnist – Serious (Mike Jones)

- Best News Photograph (Wiley Price)

- Best Feature Photograph (Wiley Price)

- Best Sports Columnist (Alvin A. Reid)

- Best Investigative Reporting (Rebecca Rivas)

- Best Coverage of

- Government (Rebecca Rivas)

- Best Story About Religion (Rebecca Rivas)

- Best Story About Education (Chris King)

- Best Military Story (Clara Germani)

- Best Video (Rebecca Rivas)

Third place awards include:

- Best Overall Design

- Best Breaking News Story (Rebecca Rivas)

- Best Feature Photograph (Lawrence Bryant)

- Best Editorial Pages

- Best Sports Columnist (Earl Austin, Jr.)

- Best Newspaper In Education Project (Cathy Sewell)

- Best Video (Dawn Suggs)

- Best Headline Writing (Chris King)

- Best Health Story (Sandra Jordan).

Owens

Continued from A1

to church. The modern, red brick building, Greater Leonard Missionary Baptist Church, is on 11th Street in the Old North neighborhood. Ella serves as the administrative assistant and

missionary president for the church. Cherishing her roles, Ella is at the church constantly. She attends to its business, collecting offerings, worshiping, doing missionary work in the neighborhood, and overseeing once-a-week food and clothing give-a-ways.

Then, Ella's fulfilled life was interrupted. The first jolt

came on her birthday, March 22, as she prepared to attend the last Greater Leonard worship service for a while. At the time, the federal government strongly urged Americans to limit gatherings to no more than 10 people. St. Louis Mayor Lyda Krewson had even hosted a teleconference with 300 clergy members, including

Black ministers, to encourage them not to hold services.

It was a smart move. By July, more than 650 coronavirus cases nationwide had been linked to religious facilities. Millions of churchgoers, like Ella, suddenly found themselves without the sanctuary of safety, solace and fellowship during an unsafe and chaotic

time.

Just as Ella was adjusting to the thought of missing her church and serving its community, another wave crashed into her world. She contracted the virus.

On March 29, Ella was at home listening to Greater Leonard's first video worship service. The sermon that day, "Discovery in Darkness," delivered by Rev. Ralph E. Irving, hit her like a thunderbolt. She had been feeling fatigued and was experiencing aches and pain for days. Anxiety was setting in, she said.

"I was in a dark place," she said. "I'd never had that kind of pain before. That was darkness to me."

She remembered Rev. Irving saying, "Even in your darkness, you can come out in the light."

Ella said she felt a strong need to journal her efforts to discover the source of her darkness. She wrote how her doctor prescribed her acid reflux medicine on March 31 and how on April 3, doctors at Barnes-Jewish Hospital's emergency room diagnosed her lack of appetite, heartburn, and fatigue to acid issues. She was given more medicine. Ella said she felt better and went back to her church duties, which included dropping off supplies to a church member suffering from cancer.

The next day, Sunday, April 4, Ella was once again moved by Pastor Irving's virtual sermon, "Conviction in Crisis." Her problems had returned, this time more severe. She instinctively felt something other than acid reflux was ailing her. Her doctor suggested that she immediately go back to the emergency room for a full screening and further treatment.

She was told she had viral pneumonia, even though she had no cough, no fever. She was also tested for the coronavirus.

The day before Easter, Ella got the call with the news she already expected. "God told me, 'Ella, it's going to be positive,'" she recalled. Even though she had her suspicions, the call rocked her. "That's when the fear set in," she said.

She was not so much concerned about her own health as she was about the wellbeing of the people she had been in contact with the past few days: her husband Phillip, church members and the cancer patient she recently visited.

"I feared I might have

spread it to them," Ella said. "I began to blame myself. I felt like everything was my fault. It was at that moment that I cried out to God."

Ella said Irving's Easter Sunday video sermon, "The Hope of the Resurrection," was the answer to her heavenly plea. "I knew then that I would rise up as Jesus did on that Sunday morning," she said. "I rested in the knowledge of knowing that even if I were to leave here, I would be with Him."

Ella changed her outlook about the illness. The Biblical story described in Daniel 3:12-30, about God's servants walking into a blazing fire unscathed, empowered her. Ella, convinced she wasn't going to die, saw herself instead as a vehicle to inspire others.

"God told me, 'Ella, you're going to be a testimony to me and it's going to bring me glory as you continue to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ,'" Ella said. "He wanted me to be a witness and let others know there is hope during these times of crisis."

The journal Ella shared with this newspaper is titled: "God Got my Attention." Although she was serving His will, Ella said God wanted more.

"With all the things I was doing, God wanted my attention on a personal level," she said. "A lot of times as we're going here and about, sometimes God will say, 'Wait a minute ... I want you to really get to know me personally and who I really am.'"

Ella survived COVID-19. Neither Phillip nor any other church member she had visited contracted the disease. On a lovely sunny day last week, Ella sat in her forest green mini Cooper in front of her beloved church. There was a message she wanted to share.

She said, "I want people to know that – not only during this coronavirus crisis, but the crisis we go through every day – that there is hope. Don't give up!"

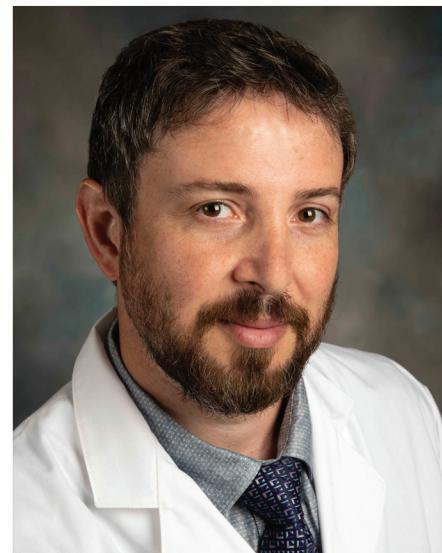
She wants those consumed with fear during these perilous times to rely on the words found in Hebrews 11:1: "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

Sylvester Brown Jr. is The St. Louis American's inaugural Deaconess Fellow.

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