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# Caribbean Today

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# SIDNEY POITIER:

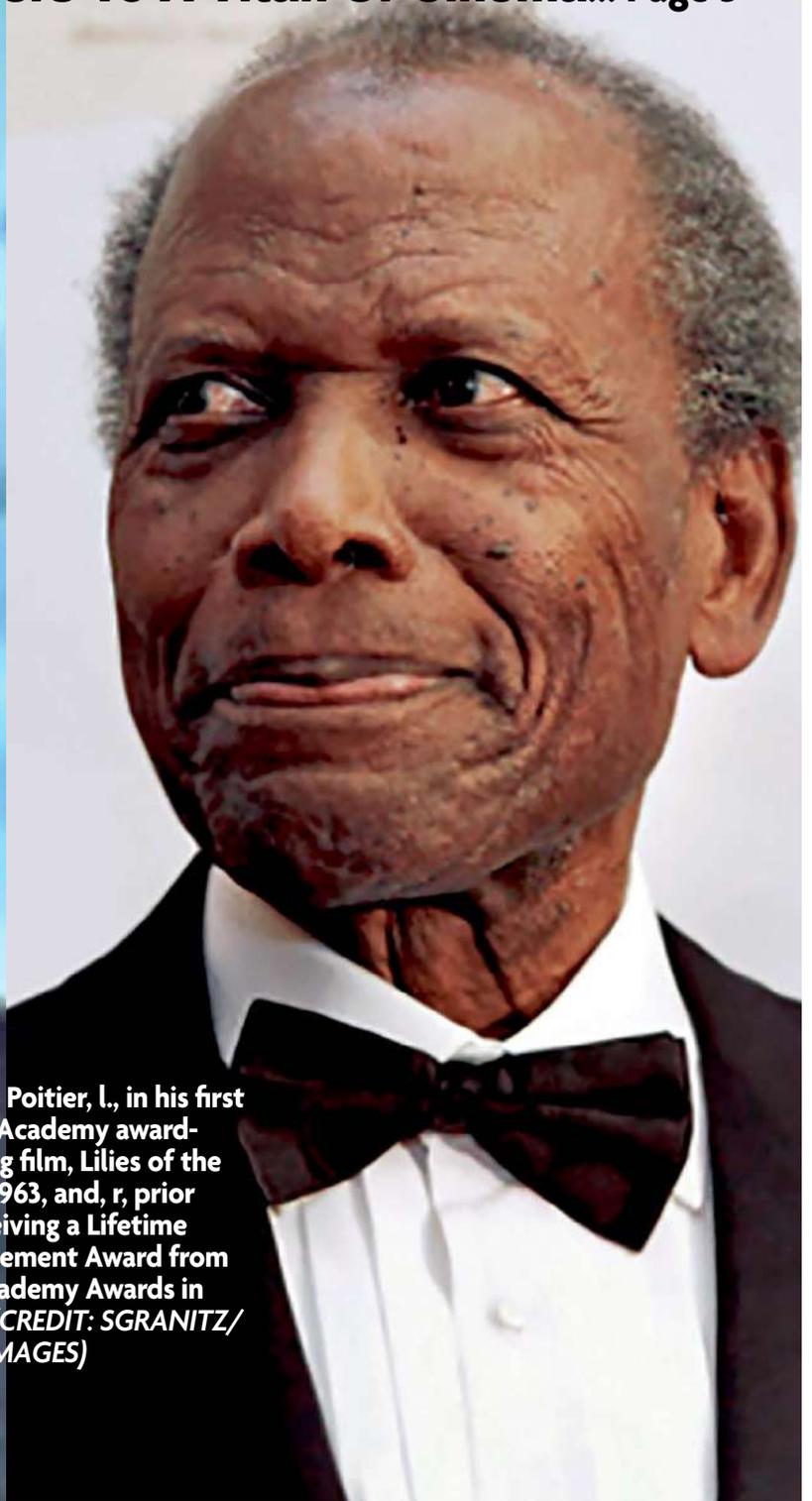
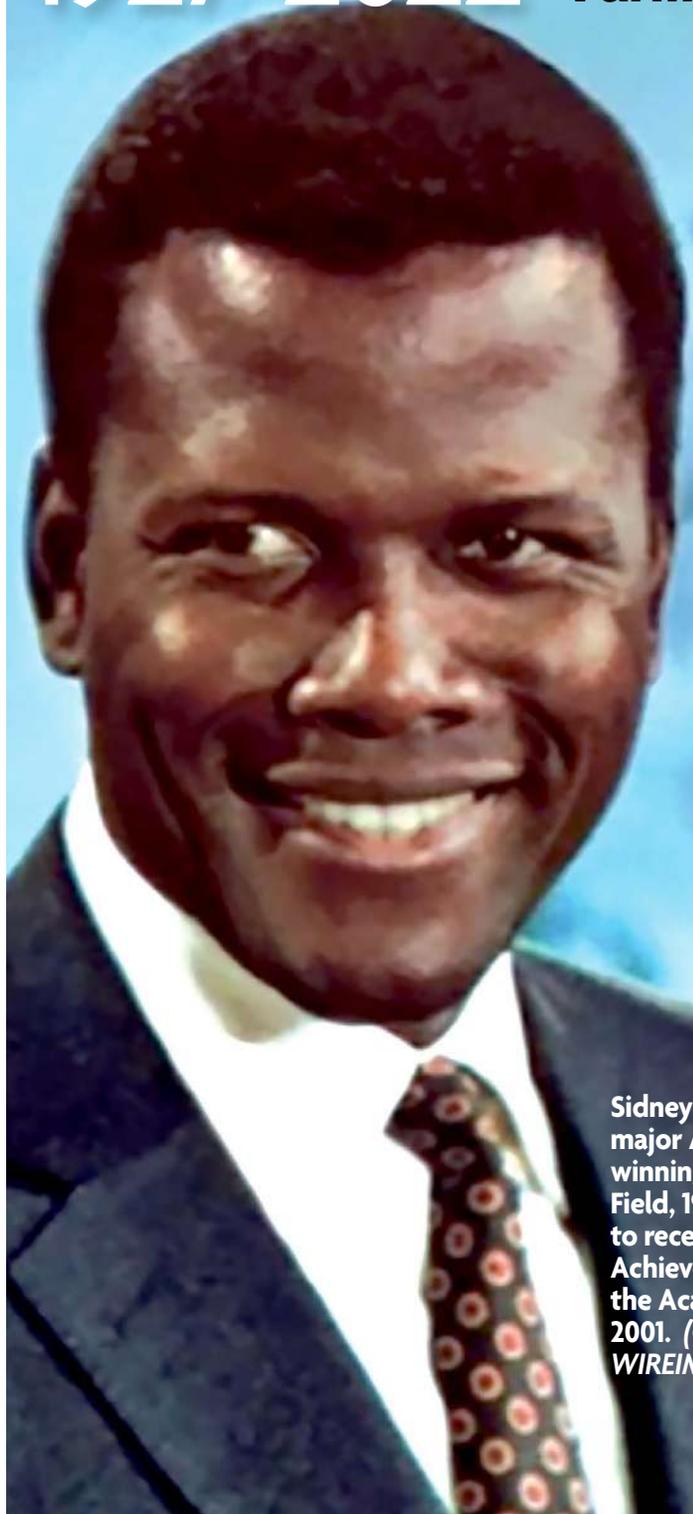
1927-2022 **From A Son Of Caribbean Tomato Farmers To A Titan Of Cinema... Page 3**



Modern Day Lynching? ... Page 4



Remembering MLK... Page 12



Sidney Poitier, l., in his first major Academy award-winning film, *Lilies of the Field*, 1963, and, r, prior to receiving a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Academy Awards in 2001. (CREDIT: SGRANITZ/WIREIMAGES)

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## Regional Caribbean News Round Up

Here are some of the top Caribbean news making headlines this month.

### REGIONAL

The Director-General of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, says the Caribbean could serve as a production site for goods such as vaccines and that efforts are being made to get manufacturers to invest in the region.

“We have to de-centralize and we have asked the manufacturers to invest more in developing countries and emerging markets so that we can also produce,” she said during a panel discussion organized by the Central Bank of Barbados (CBB).

The discussion was on the topic “How Trade Can Be Used To Address Challenges Related To Public Health, Climate Change, And Food Security,” and included the President of the Barbados-based Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), Dr. Gene Leon.

“I don’t see why we don’t have a production center in the Caribbean for example,” Okonjo-Iweala said, noting that the region could be used to develop the vaccine used in treating the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic that has killed and infected millions of people globally as well as a therapeutic diagnostic center.

“Why can’t we have center here? So, we have been working with them to establish in Africa and I am very proud to say the African presidents have also been working hard and this is having an impact,” she questioned while adding that developing countries like those in the Caribbean also needs to do much better on the issue of intellectual property and patent rights.

Meanwhile, the University of the West Indies (UWI) has sought to downplay reports of

a rift between the Chancellor Robert Bermudez and the Vice Chancellor, Sir Hilary Beckles. The Jamaica Gleaner newspaper in an article headlined “UWI rifts deepens,” said that Beckles is investigating the UWI ceremonial head “using a committee that reports to him.

“This is the latest act in the drama unfolding at the 73-year-old institution that intensified after a damning 2020 governance report commissioned by Bermudez was released, which critics believe was aimed at tarring Beckles’ stewardship,” the paper reported.

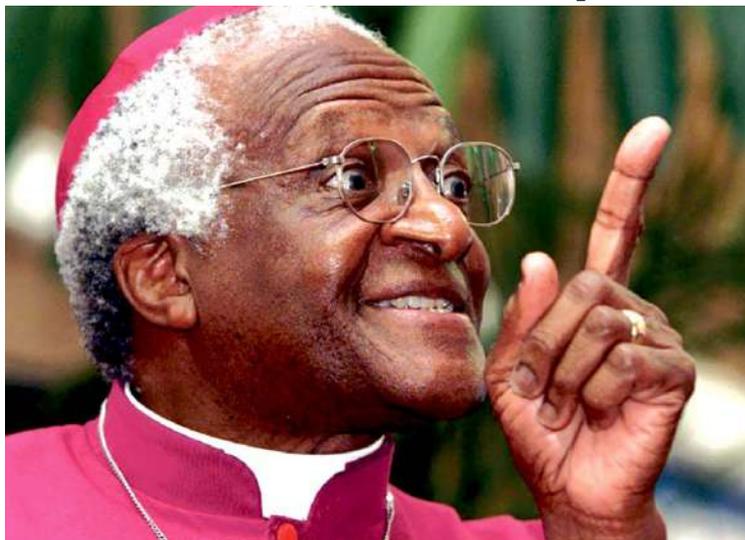
But in an internal communicate, the UWI said it is a “public academic institution that greatly values its rules, regulations, laws and conventions, and its responsibilities to the societies it serves”.

It said that the experiences and perceptions “are often tested in relevant procedures and processes and their integrity assessed.

“From time-to-time management finds cause and has a duty to review such aspects of its human resource enterprise and operations,” the statement added.

And the 15-member Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and Caribbean leaders were among those globally paying tribute to Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu of South Africa, who passed away on Dec. 26th at age 90.

CARICOM in a statement said it is “profoundly saddened” by the death of the first black Archbishop of South Africa, who became one of the country’s best-known figures at home and abroad for his fight against apartheid and the movement to end the policy of racial segregation and discrimination enforced by the white minority government against the black majority in South Africa from 1948 until 1991.



**CARICOM was among millions globally who voice sadness at the passing of the famous first black Archbishop of South Africa, Desmond Tutu, who was laid to rest on Jan. 1st. The ashes of the revered anti-apartheid leader Desmond Tutu were interred On Jan. 2nd in a private ceremony in St. George’s Cathedral in Cape Town, South Africa. (Photo Credit: Mike Hutchings/Reuters)**

“Archbishop Tutu’s strong moral voice was a very significant factor in the successful struggle against the brutal racist policy of apartheid in his homeland,” CARICOM said in a statement. “His compassionate leadership of South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission during the sensitive transition period that followed the end of apartheid further elevated his national and global esteem. Archbishop Tutu, a Nobel Laureate, will be remembered as an indefatigable fighter for human rights, justice, equality and the environment whose unquestioned integrity cements his legacy as a global icon.”

Archbishop Tutu was laid to rest on Jan. 1st. Tutu reportedly requested aquamation, or alkaline hydrolysis, a water-based process considered an eco-friendly alternative to traditional cremation. His ashes were interred on Jan. 2nd in a private ceremony.

### JAMAICA

Jamaica Prime Minister Andrew Holness says a new Firearms Bill will be brought to Parliament that will outline the harshest consequences for the possession of illegal guns. “Possessing an illegal weapon increases the means and likelihood of the possessor escalating to committing murder or other serious crimes. All Jamaicans should speak with one voice against the illegal possession of firearms,” Holness said, during his New Year’s Day Message.

He told the nation that an estimated 85 per cent of all homicides in Jamaica are committed using an illegal firearm, meaning a gun that was brought into the country illegally, never registered in the national firearm database, and the owner was never put through a process to determine whether they are fit and proper to possess a firearm.

Holness said that his administration intends to expand

the use of Zones of Special Operations (ZOSO) to control crime and homicides in selected communities. He said in the interim, the Jamaica Defence Force (HDF) and the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) will continue to deploy strategically, as best as possible its resources, in static and dynamic operations to secure affected communities.

### HAITI

Haiti’s Prime Minister survived an assassination attempt on January 2nd, a day after the country marked its 218th anniversary of political independence and less than six months after the country’s president was murdered.

A wide scale investigation has been launched following the attempted assassination of Haitian Prime Minister Ariel Henry with at least one person dead and several others injured in the city of Gonaives.

PM Henry and his entourage had insisted on attending a church service there to commemorate the independence.

Heavily armed gangs that control the area, fired in the direction of the official delegation as his security personnel returned fire. The mass was held despite reported threats from the armed group, which warned Henry not to come to the city.

The prime minister was quickly removed from the area and the remaining events to celebrate Independence Day were cancelled.

Henry was installed on July 20, 2021 as prime minister weeks after President Jovenel Moïse was assassinated at his home on July 7th. He has been focusing on trying to clamp down on the increase in crime and violence across the country even as some have fingered him in the assassination of Moïse.

### TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

Consumers of flour made products will have to shell out more as the state-owned National

Flour Mill (NFM) announced an increase in the price of flour on January 3rd.

“With the increasing cost of wheat and freight globally, National Flour Mills today announced its decision to increase the wholesale price of flour by between 15 percent and 22 percent, with a suggested increase averaging 19 percent on the retail price of flour to the consumer,” NFM said in a statement.

It said that the decision follows several internal initiatives to improve operating efficiency and reduce processing costs in an attempt to contain expenditure and maintain the price of flour, in the face of increased supply chain costs and soaring commodity prices.

The company said that flour prices were last adjusted in 2008 and according to NFM chief executive officer, Ian Mitchell, the increase “was by no means an easy decision, as we did everything within our control to try to hold our prices.

Meanwhile, Trade union leaders on the island have called on public sector workers to reject the mandatory vaccination policy of the government and turn up for work on January 16 whether or not they have been vaccinated against the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic that has killed 2,936 people and infected over 92,997 others since March 2020.

Speaking at a news conference outside the Office of the Attorney General, President of the Joint Trade Union Movement (JTUM), Ancel Roget, told reporters that all public sector workers should report for duty on January 17 regardless of their vaccination status.

Last month, Prime Minister Dr. Keith Rowley announced that all public service workplaces will become safe zones and that all employees paid by the State will need to be vaccinated against COVID-19.

### ST. LUCIA

Police have charged a 53-year-old man with murdering his mother, whose body was found at her home at Blackstone in Jacmel, a small village south of Castries, the capital, on December 31, 2021.

A police statement said that on arrival at the house, the “unresponsive body of a female with visible marks of violence” had been discovered and that a post mortem examination later revealed that Florence Augustin died as a result of strangulation.”

It said that the murder charges were laid on Tuesday and that the son will appear in the First District Court for a bail hearing.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)

## Grant Opportunities!



The following grant opportunities are anticipated to be released in February 2022.

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## Sidney Poitier – From A Son Of Caribbean Tomato Farmers To A Titan Of Cinema

The tributes keep pouring in for the man that was undoubtedly the greatest Black and Caribbean American actor ever - Sidney Poitier – the first black person and first Caribbean American and Bahamian to win the Academy Award for Best Actor; director, ambassador, and trailblazer, who passed away in his parents' homeland of the Bahamas on January 6, 2022.

Bahamas Prime Minister Philip Davis, who announced his death to the world, remembered Poitier, 94, for his "strength of character, his willingness to stand up and be counted, and the way he plotted and navigated his life's journey."

His long-time friend, fellow Caribbean American actor, singer and activist, Harry Belafonte, also 94, noted: "We grieve for his loss and for his wife and children, our extended family. For over 80 years, Sidney and I laughed, cried and made as much mischief as we could. He was truly my brother and partner in trying to make this world a little better."

Former President Barack Obama said Poitier "epitomized dignity and grace" and "opened

doors for a generation of actors" while President Joe Biden praised him as a "once-in-a-generation actor and advocate whose work carried so much dignity, power, and grace that it changed the world on and off the big screen."

While his family released a statement noting: "There are no words to convey the deep sense of loss and sadness we are feeling right now. We are so grateful he was able to spend his last day surrounded by his family and friends. To us Sidney Poitier was not only a brilliant actor, activist, and a man of incredible grace and moral fortitude, he was also a devoted and loving husband, a supportive and adoring father, and a man who always put family first. He is our guiding light who lit up our lives with infinite love and wonder. His smile was healing, his hugs the warmest refuge, and his laughter was infectious."

Yet, before Poitier was all those things, he was a poor immigrant like so many today, sleeping in a bus station in New York City, 16 years after he was born prematurely in Miami to Caribbean tomato farmers.

### EARLY LIFE

Sidney L. Poitier was the youngest of seven children, born to Evelyn (née Outten, and Reginald James Poitier, Bahamian farmers who owned a farm on Cat Island.

The family would travel to Miami to sell tomatoes and other produce. Reginald also worked as a cab driver in Nassau, Bahamas.

Poitier was born unexpectedly in Miami while his parents were visiting. His birth was two months premature, and he was not expected to survive. But his parents remained in Miami for three months to nurse him to health.

They then took the young Poitier back to Cat Island where he grew up in the then British colony but owing to his unplanned birth in the United States, he was automatically entitled to U.S. citizenship.

Poitier lived with his family on Cat Island as a Catholic until he was 10, when they moved to Nassau. There he said he was exposed to the modern world for the first time and saw his first automobile, first experienced electricity, plumbing, refrigeration,

and motion pictures.

At age 15, he was sent to Miami to live with his brother's large family but at 16, he moved to New York City and held a string of jobs as a dishwasher. As he tells it, he was so impoverished at first that he slept in the bus station.

A waiter sat with him every night for several weeks helping him learn to read the newspaper. During World War II, in November 1943, he lied about his age and enlisted in the Army. He was assigned to a Veteran's Administration hospital in Northport, New York, and was trained to work with psychiatric patients. Poitier, however, became upset with how the hospital treated its patients and feigned mental illness to obtain a discharge.

He later confessed to a psychiatrist that he was faking his condition, but the doctor was sympathetic and granted his discharge under Section VIII of Army regulation 615-360 in December 1944.

After leaving the Army, he worked again as a dishwasher when he decided to audition for the American Negro Theatre. He read so poorly, one of the directors

said, "Why don't you give up trying to act and get a job washing dishes or something?"

Poitier said, he said to himself, "How did he know I was a dishwasher?"

### HIS ENTRY TO ACTING

But he said he dedicated the next six months to overcoming his accent and improving his performing skills. On his second try, he was accepted. He was later spotted in rehearsal by a casting agent and won a small part in the Broadway production of "Lysistrata," for which he earned good reviews.

By the end of 1949, he was having to choose between leading roles on stage and an offer to work for Darryl F. Zanuck in the film, 'No Way Out,' (1950).

His performance as a doctor treating a white bigot got him plenty of notice and led to more roles. Nevertheless, the roles were still less interesting and prominent than those white actors routinely obtained. But seven years later, after turning down several projects he considered demeaning, Poitier got a number

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 6)

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**NEWS**



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# Modern Day Lynching? This Caribbean Immigrant Was Killed By White Men On A Hunting Trip

A “modern-day lynching?” That’s what the family of Caribbean immigrant Peter Bernado Spencer says it all boils down to, even though

Pennsylvania State Police’s Western Heritage Affairs office says the murder is not being treated as a hate crime and Spencer was buried on



Murdered Jamaican immigrant Peter Bernado Spencer, l. and his sister, Tehilah Spencer, r. (GoFundMe image)

December 31st. It all goes back to December 11, 2021, when the Kingston, Jamaica-born Spencer, 29, was dropped off to a cabin in Venango County, Pennsylvania around 9 p.m. According to his sister Tehilah Spencer, writing on GoFundMe, her brother went to go hunting and camping with, a white man whom he met at a

previous job. She said that white man brought his own friends - 3 other white males and his girlfriend, a white female. Spencer, the lone black in the group, was dropped off by his fiancée Carmela King. King said she received a text shortly afterward to say he was staying the night. But at 2.30 a.m. on December 12, 2021, Franklin police were called to the cabin at 279 Carls Road in Rockland Township and found the Jamaican immigrant from Pittsburgh, dead at the scene. Venango County Coroner

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 15)

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## Barbados Voters Will Choose A New Leader This Month



Barbados Prime Minister Mia Mottley

Fresh from dumping the Queen of England as its head of state

and becoming the world’s newest Republic, the Caribbean nation of Barbados will be going to the polls on January 19th. Barbados Prime Minister Mia Mottley called a snap general election on December 27th in a radio and television broadcast to the nation, 18 months before her first term in office is due to end. Nomination day was on January 3rd. The country’s two major political parties nominated 60 candidates to contest the January 19th snap general election.

Apart from the ruling Barbados Labour Party (BLP) and the opposition Democratic Labour Party (DLP), candidates representing five other political parties and nine independents will contest the elections. A total of 108 candidates will vie for the 30 seats in the Parliament. In the last general election, the BLP won all 30 seats, crushing the then DLP government. But one BLP member, Bishop Joseph Atherley, crossed the floor to become Opposition

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 15)

## Regional Caribbean News Round Up

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

### ST. VINCENT & THE GRENADINES

A 56-year-old woman, who had been charged with wounding Prime Minister Dr. Ralph Gonsalves during an anti-mandatory vaccination protest last August, appeared in court last week on a charge of throwing a missile in the city.

The charge of wounding Gonsalves, who had to be flown to neighboring Barbados for medical treatment, was withdrawn last year, but Annamay Lewis, a vendor, was slapped with a charge that on August 5, last year, at Kingstown, in a public place, she threw

missiles to the danger of persons who were present. But the case has now been adjourned to February 9th, after the Kingstown Magistrate’s Court was told that a key prosecution witness was under quarantine.

### GUYANA

Guyana registered 485 cases of the coronavirus (COVID-19) in 24 hours on January 3, 2021, and health authorities are worried that the record number of infections could continue as the country deals with the Omicron variant of the pandemic.

“We can expect that this trend will continue because

with the Omicron variant, it is highly contagious and the numbers double every four days or so,” said Health Minister, Dr. Frank Anthony during his daily COVID-19 update.

Figures released showed that the 485 cases are the highest number of infections recorded in a 24 period, pushing the total number of active cases to over 1,800. The country has since March 2020, recorded over 1,000 deaths and over 40,000 infections.

- *Rewritten from CMC & News AmericasNow.com*



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# I'm a mom first.

I may be Dr. Nina Ford Johnson a pediatrician, but I'm a mom first. My babies are my top priority, always. With COVID going around affecting Black kids at a higher rate, I'm telling any parent with children 5 and older to get the COVID vaccine.



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## Here's What You Should Know About The First Person Charged With Murder Of Haiti President

The US on January 4th charged a retired Colombian commando with taking part in the July 7, 2021, assassination of President Jovenel Moïse of Haiti. He is the first suspect to face U.S. prosecution in the crime. Here's what you should know about the case so far.

1: He is Mario Antonio Palacios Palacios, an ex-Colombia army officer, who was detained during a layover at an airport in Panama on Monday, Jan. 3rd and flown from there to Miami, after previously agreeing to cooperate with U.S. law enforcement, according to federal prosecutors.

2: He flew out of Kingston's Norman Manley International Airport in Jamaica en route to Colombia, after Haiti failed to get him extradited to Port-au-Prince and a judge in Jamaica ordered his deportation to Colombia. Palacios was arrested at a guest house in central Jamaica in October, 2021. It is believed that he entered the country through one of the



**Mario Palacios is the first person to be officially charged in the assassination of Haitian President Jovenel Moïse.**

island's more than 140 informal ports of entry. Jamaica does not have an extradition treaty with Haiti.

3: He appeared before a federal judge on Tuesday, Jan. 4th, and was charged with conspiracy to commit murder or kidnapping outside the United States and providing material support resulting in death, knowing or intending that such material support would be used to prepare for or carry out the conspiracy to kill or kidnap. He was held without bond.

4: Alfredo Izaguirre, a lawyer who was appointed to represent Palacios, said he would most likely plead not guilty at a pretrial hearing scheduled for later this month. The U.S. Attorney's Office said he faced a possible life sentence.

5: Palacios, 43, was among two dozen retired members of Colombian military special forces who traveled to Haiti between May and June as private security contractors hired by a Miami-based firm called CTU Security, according to interviews with their families and Haitian police. Once in Haiti, their mission gradually changed from providing protection to local dignitaries to storming the presidential residence in an operation that resulted in Moïse's death, according to Haitian police, the U.S. Department of Justice and Colombian intelligence.

- *NewsAmericasNow.com*



## Sidney Pointier – From A Son Of Caribbean Tomato Farmers To A Titan Of Cinema

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3)

of roles that catapulted him into a category rarely if ever achieved by an African American man of that time, that of leading man.

One of these films, *The Defiant Ones* (1958), earned Poitier his first Academy Award nomination as Best Actor. Five years later, he won the Oscar for *Lilies of the Field* (1963), a film in which he sang despite being tone deaf, and was the first Black man to win for a leading role.

He remained active on stage and screen as well as in the burgeoning Civil Rights movement. His roles in "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner," (1967), "To Sir, with Love," (1967) and "In the Heat of the Night," (1967), were landmarks in helping to break down some social barriers between blacks and whites.

In the 1960s, for many of his films, he was paid in a way known as "dollar one participation" which basically means he begins collecting a cut of the film's gross from the first ticket sold.

Poitier's talent, conscience, integrity, and inherent likability placed him on equal footing with the white stars of the day. He learnt Russian and took on directing and producing chores in the 1970s, achieving success in both arenas.

His film, *Stir Crazy*, (1980), was the highest grossing film directed by a black filmmaker until *Scary Movie* (2000), directed by Keenen Ivory Wayans almost 20 years later.

His last film was 'The Last Brickmaker in America, in (2001).

### CIVIL RIGHTS SUPPORT

Like Belafonte, Poitier was

active in the support of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the fight for civil rights at the time. In the summer of 1967, he introduced MLK at the 10th-anniversary convention banquet of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

King at the time called him: "... an imperishable niche in the annals of our nation's history."

"I consider him a friend. I consider him a great friend of humanity," he added on Poitier who helped change many stubborn racial attitudes that had persisted in this country for centuries and built the bridges and opened the doors for countless artists in succeeding generations.

### AWARDS

Poitier received numerous honors during his lifetime. He was the first black actor to place autograph, hand, and footprints in the cement at Grauman's Chinese Theatre on June 23, 1967.

He was awarded an honorary knighthood of the Order of the British Empire in 1974 and has an honorary doctorate degree from Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania.

In 1992, Poitier received the AFI Life Achievement Award and was awarded a Star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 7065 Hollywood Boulevard in Hollywood, California on February 1, 1994.

In 2001 he received a lifetime achievement award from the Academy Honorary Award for his achievement in film; in 2009 the Presidential Medal of Freedom from Barack Obama and in 2016, he received the BAFTA Fellowship.

### AMBASSADORIAL ROLES

Poitier also became an ambassador, serving as the Bahamas' ambassador to Japan from 1997 to 2007 and a UNESCO ambassador from 2002 - 2007

He once said: "I decided in my life that I would do nothing that did not reflect positively on my father's life."

### HIS FAMILY

Poitier is survived by five of six daughters from two marriages, eight grandchildren and three great-grandchildren; his current wife, Joanna Shimkus Poitier and his former wife, Juanita Hardy.

Poitier was preceded in death by his daughter Gina, who died in 2018 at the age of 58.

He tweeted once in 2009, noting humorously: "In 1949 I consciously remember saying to my dear friend Beverly that a home computing machine was a far-fetched idea ... now I'm on Twitter!"

And as the tributes continue to pour in, Poitier's humility is what still stands out as he summarized his legacy for all in his 1981 autobiography, *This Life*: "Though history will accurately acknowledge my presence in those proceedings, my contribution was no more important than being at the right place at the right time, one in that series of perfect accidents from which fate fashions her grand designs. History will pinpoint me as merely a minor element in an ongoing major event, a small, if necessary, energy."

*Rest In Power Mr. Poitier.*



## Guyana ~ Rolling In The Oil



**Vessels carrying supplies for an offshore oil platform operated by Exxon Mobil are seen at the Guyana Shore Base Inc wharf on the Demerara River, south of Georgetown, Guyana. (REUTERS/Luc Cohen/File Photo)**

ExxonMobil has announced two more oil discoveries in Guyana.

The new discoveries, announced on Jan. 5, 2022, are in the Stabroek block offshore of Guyana and adds to the previously announced oil estimates for the block of 10 billion oil-equivalent barrels.

"Initial results from the Fangtooth and Lau Lau wells are a positive sign for Guyana and continue to demonstrate the potential for the country's growing oil and gas sector, ExxonMobil and our co-venturers in the Stabroek block," said Mike Cousins, senior vice president of exploration and new ventures at ExxonMobil.

ExxonMobil said that the Fangtooth-1 well encountered approximately 164 feet of high-quality oil-bearing sandstone reservoirs. The well was drilled in 6,030 feet of water and is located approximately 11 miles northwest of the Liza field. The Lau Lau-1 well encountered approximately 315 feet of high-quality hydrocarbon-bearing sandstone reservoirs. The well was drilled in 4,793 feet of water and is located approximately 42 miles southeast of the Liza field.

Guyana Natural Resources Minister Vickram Bharrat said the government "remains confident" that these two additional discoveries, which add to the 26 commercially feasible finds, will further strengthen

Guyana's position as a country with world-class discoveries of high-quality hydrocarbon.

The latest find comes as a Guyanese-Diaspora group has added its voice to many expressing dissatisfaction at the passage late last year of the Guyana Natural Resource Fund (NRF) Act without consultation with the parliamentary opposition or other civil society stakeholders.

Executives of the Oil and Gas Governance Network, (OGGN), said it is "extremely disappointed that the Government of Guyana rushed through the passing of the Natural Resource Fund (NRF) Act.

Guyana's parliament on Dec. 30, 2021, approved local content rules for oil producers and a sovereign wealth fund to oversee the South American nation's earnings from a budding oil bonanza. Guyana's President Irfaan Ali has since signed the bill into law.

The bills were part of updates to the country's regulatory framework for oil exploration and production. The local content bill requires energy projects use local businesses for certain jobs, including environmental studies and metal fabrication.

- *NewsAmericasNow.com*



## Jailed For Sexual Assault Of Four-Year-Old

A 35-year-old security guard in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, has been sentenced to four years in jail after he was found guilty of two counts of indecent assault after a video surfaced showing him engaged in a sexual act with a four-year-old child.

The Family Court on January 2nd jailed the man, who had faced a maximum five years in prison. He pleaded guilty to one count of indecent assault of the child, committed between December 31, 2019 and January 1, 2021, and another on December 29, 2021, the day that the video became public here.

The identity of the man is being withheld since publication can help to identify the victim

of the sex crime, an offence contrary to Section 11 of the Family Court Act, and punishable by a fine of up to EC\$500 or a maximum of six months imprisonment.

Police have warned the public that it is a crime to be in possession of or to circulate the video.

In a press statement last week, police reminded the public that it is a criminal offence to produce, make available, distribute, procure, possess or obtain child pornography in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

- *CMC*



## Trinidadian, South Florida Columnist In Murder-For-Hire Plot

A 43-year-old Trinidadian columnist and Pembroke Pines, Florida resident made his third appearance in Fort Lauderdale court on January 7th to face a charge that he used the U.S. mail system to solicit, plan, and pay for the murder of his former girlfriend's new love interest.

According to the criminal complaint affidavit, Trinidad Guardian columnist Ryan Hadeed's first piece of murder correspondence was his request to the intended hitman that said: "I need someone eliminated. I've been told you can arrange that. \$10,000 All in cash and upfront.

Person located in Tampa."

It is alleged that in that first letter, mailed in September, and in two subsequent mailings, Hadeed instructed the intended hitman to signal acceptance of the offer by posting marked sheets of paper on his store-front window, among other things. According to the complaint affidavit, on November 10, 2021, the intended hitman received a final mailing from Hadeed that included a description and pictures of the man that Hadeed wanted killed, the victim's home address and likely travel schedule, as well as a deadline for the murder.

Also inside the envelope was \$10,000 cash, says the affidavit. It is alleged that Hadeed left the country on a one-way ticket the same day the hitman received the cash and pictures of the intended victim.

Law enforcement officers learned of the plan. During a secondary customs inspection of Hadeed when he returned from his international trip, additional evidence of the crime was uncovered, according to the affidavit. Pursuant to a court-issued warrant, law enforcement officers arrested Hadeed on December 22, 2021.

The intended victim, who remains alive, is romantically involved with Hadeed's former girlfriend, says the criminal complaint affidavit.

Hadeed is charged with one count of using interstate commerce facilities - the U.S. mail system - in the commission of murder for hire, in violation of

US laws. If convicted, Hadeed faces up to 10 years in federal prison and a \$250,000 fine.

A pretrial detention hearing for Hadeed was held on December 29, at 11:00 a.m., in federal magistrate court in Fort Lauderdale and an arraignment was held on Jan. 7th.



## Caribbean Immigrant Gets New Year Gift

A Caribbean born convicted drug dealer is getting a new lease on 2022 with a New Year's gift of clemency from the governor of New York State.

Jamaica-born of Roger Cole, 55, was among 10 immigrants granted clemency by New York Governor Kathy Hochul who said that they have "showed remorse and exemplified rehabilitation."

In commuting the sentence of Cole, Hochul noted that he was originally sentenced to 125 years to life in prison, "having been put on trial during the Rockefeller Drug Law era during which extremely lengthy prison

sentences were handed down for drug-related convictions."

In 1989 and 1992, Cole was convicted of five counts of criminal sale of a controlled substance in the first degree, one count each of criminal sale of a firearm in the second degree and criminal possession of a weapon in the third degree.

His sentence was subsequently reduced on appeal to 85 to 100 years, of which Cole has now served more than 30 years.

"If he were sentenced today, he likely would not have faced such a lengthy sentence," Hochul said.

While incarcerated, she said Cole earned his General Educational Diploma, (GED), and an associate degree and completed numerous vocational training and certification programs, including legal research and law library management.

He also earned a certificate for completing a three-year business course while incarcerated.

"Upon his release, Mr. Cole will be reunited with his mother and other family members in his home country of Jamaica, who will provide housing and help him find employment," Hochul said.

- NewsAmericasNow.com



## COVID-19 Cases Are Skyrocketing In Florida. Here's Where To Get Tested

COVID-19 cases are skyrocketing in Florida as the state leads the nation of new infections daily. So where can you get a test? Here's where to get tested for COVID-19 in Miami-Dade and Broward counties.

All testing sites are now open at their normal operating hours for testing 7 days a week, 24 hours a day. These are:

### MIAMI

**Tropical Park**  
7900 SW 40 Street  
Miami, FL 33155

**South Dade Government Center**  
10710 SW 211 Street  
Cutler Bay, FL 33189

**Dan Paul Plaza**  
400 NE 8th Street  
Miami, FL 33130

**Miami International Airport**  
Concourse E, ground floor median, in front of Door 11

### BROWARD

**Boulevard Heights Community Center (Walk-Up)**  
6770 Garfield Street

Hollywood, FL 33024

**C.B. Smith Park (Drive-Through)**  
900 N. Flamingo Road  
Pembroke Pines, FL 33028

**Dania Beach Parking Garage at City Hall (Walk-Up) – Sunday Hours**  
49 Park Ave E  
Dania Beach, FL 33004

**Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport (FLL)**  
100 Terminal Dr,  
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33315

**Lauderhill Sports Park (Drive-Through) – Saturday Hours**  
7500 W. Oakland Park Blvd.  
Lauderhill, FL 33313



## Caribbean Today Publisher's Son Says 'I Do'



Nicolas Webley, (l), the son of Caribbean Today's founder and publisher, Peter Webley, recently said 'I Do' to Kristin Evonne Spoto, now Webley, (r). We join in wishing the happy couple a long, loving and blissful marriage. (Contributed Image)

On Saturday December 18, 2021, Nicolas Charles Webley, the son of Caribbean Today publisher, Peter Webley, and Kristin Evonne Spoto united in marriage at a ceremony held at the Riverhills Country Club in Valrico, Florida and witnessed by their closest friends and family.

They merrily shared their vows to each other in a ceremony that was filled with tears of joy, heartfelt exchanges, and many memorable moments

Nicolas and Kristin, both soon to be doctors of physical therapy, met during their undergraduate career at New College of Florida, a small Honors College, in Sarasota, FL. They shared mutual friends and courses for years but didn't grow close to one another until the second half of their school careers. Nicolas and Kristin both graduated from New College of Florida in 2018

after passing their Baccalaureate exams and successfully defending their undergraduate theses.

In the following years, Nicolas and Kristin took the Graduate Record Examination, (GRE), and prerequisite courses required to apply to Graduate School to pursue a Doctorate degree in Physical Therapy. As if written in the stars, both were

accepted into USF's Physical Therapy Program's cohort of 2022 which consisted of 47 other students.

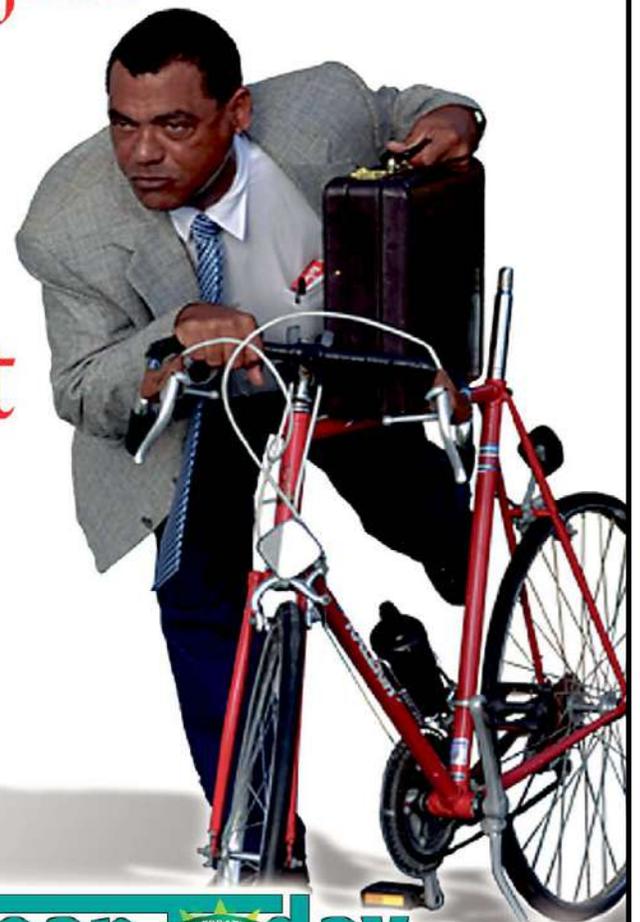
Now in their 3rd and final years, Mr. and Mrs. Webley will complete their final two clinical rotations before graduating with their Doctorate degrees.

Nicolas and Kristin are both passionate about physical therapy, but they share other interests as well. The Webleys enjoy spending time in the kitchen, with Kristin being an excellent baker and Nicolas being an exemplary quality control expert. Their other hobbies include exercising, spending time in nature, gaming, the sciences, and spoiling their dog. But what they enjoy most is laughing and spending time with loved ones, especially each other.



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# Caribbean Owned Small Businesses Get Much Needed Boost

BY DAWN A. DAVIS

Caribbean Small business entrepreneurs have always had to work doubly hard to survive in an atmosphere that at times seemed stacked against them. Indeed, the past two years, defined by the global pandemic, have created havoc for many enterprises, big and small. But there are those who see opportunity in adversity. Some of these fearless business owners have been lauded and supported by established institutions for their spunk and success-driven products and services.

Bank of America, one of the nation's top multi-national investment and financial services banks, in partnership with StartUP FIU, a Florida International University business and research incubator, and The Underline, a 10-mile linear park below Miami's Metrorail suitable for cultural, health and wellness, and art projects, launched the first ever two-week Small Business Bootcamp for local Miami entrepreneurs with a minimum revenue of \$30,000.

"We know empowering small businesses with the right tools will make a direct impact on our local community and economy," said Gene Schaefer, president, Bank of America Miami. "The focus of this collaborative effort is to drive positive impact where it is needed most, inspire Miami's entrepreneurial spirit and accelerate sustainable growth."

More than 30 technology, marketing, retail, services entrepreneurs were offered courses in navigating supply chain, pricing, team building, raising capital. At the end of each week, participants pitched their businesses to a panel of judges. Ten stood out and were declared winners based on their unique value proposition, economic feasibility, marketing and growth strategy, entrepreneurial spirit, and overall presentation. They were also presented with \$2000 to help boost their businesses.

"We are grateful for the support and partnership of Bank of America and The Underline in our mission to help South Florida's small businesses thrive at every stage of the entrepreneurial process, from concept and creation to launch, promotion and beyond," said Emily Gresham, assistant vice president of Research & Economic Development at FIU and co-founder of StartUP FIU.

**Backed By Science**  
One of the winners, Natacha Metayer, founder of JNCY Jewelers, is shattering the perception of the luxury jewelry business. This first-generation Haitian American started her company in 2019 while still working a corporate job. Embracing her entrepreneurial

spirit and passion for the science behind fine gems, she jumped into her endeavor full-time knowing she would be breaking the mold.

"I'm a black woman. One, there's not a lot of black jewelers, and two there's not a lot of women jewelers. But I think what truly makes me stand out and what makes JNCY stand out is it's backed by science," said a confident Metayer.

A Certified Professional Jeweler, Metayer is accredited through the Gemological Institute of America and is pursuing her certification to be a Graduate Gemologist.

She added: "We look at diamonds with a technical eye, we look at the four C's, which is cut, colour, clarity, and carat, how the light interacts with it. So, when I curate a list of diamonds for a customer, it's backed by science"

In fact, one of the things that was reenforced for Metayer through the StartUP FIU workshop is that businesses must have a foundation, it's not just about making money. That's why learning about the creation of diamonds, precious stones, and gems is key to her philosophy. Perhaps one of the most important persons in her journey is her mentor, 74-year-old David Levinson.

"He made me realise that science is key because everybody else can sell diamonds. They can tell you the story. They can give you the illusion, but at the end of the day, every customer wants a diamond no matter how big or small it is, that's going to shine bright and it's gonna' look good,



One of the winners is Haitian American Natacha Metayer, founder of JNCY Jewelers, who is shattering the perception of the luxury jewelry business.

but it must be based on science."

Starting her business during the height of COVID-19, the gemologist was not afraid of the challenge, and in fact was inspired by her parents' strength and tenacity and the journey they undertook when they left Haiti for America. She noted that it was difficult in the beginning, "but I've learned from every mistake, and I just keep rolling," the jeweller said.

An emotional Metayer talked about how her father crossed the waters in a boat to get to Miami. Her mother, who came via air, worked hard to build a future for their children by buying and selling items. Today, the family is settled and proud of their entrepreneurial children.

"They truly inspire me because I know that they made a sacrifice to come here."

Now a growing business, Metayer is proud of her accomplishments and her direction. Her social media marketing strategy really paid off. In particular, she focused on black community pages and targeted African American professionals such as engineers,

doctors, lawyers showcasing fine jewelry in luxury settings. Metayer developed a large following. She now has plans to open a Miami showroom but still maintaining a heavy online presence.

## FAMILY

Truly a believer in the importance of family bonds and legacy, Metayer's company represents not just her talents, but also that of her three brothers. JNCY is an acronym for Jonas, Natacha, Carlo, and Yrvence. One sibling is interested in watches, another is focused on Computer Aided Design, while the other has interest in casting, or actually making the jewellery.

"In two years I want to see that they are involved in it fully and are in the best position to grow in each of their respective parts of the industry," said Metayer.

Like the gemologist, another Bootcamp winner, Haitian American Rose Jean of T-Shirt Mayhem Corp, strongly believes in family and building a lasting legacy.

"I have a vision. I want to be the first one in my family to own a big corporation, to carry that on to our family heritage and leave a legacy, said Jean.

Jean started her T-shirt business in 2015 and after a few years, was doing well enough to secure a government contract, albeit, through the certifications she already had. The start of the pandemic however, created havoc basically depleting her revenues. The manufacturer held on and through small funding opportunities managed to stay afloat. Today, she is grateful for the lessons learned through the StartUP FIU Bootcamp she and her fellow business owners went through.

"They made me realize what my weaknesses were, that I need

to restructure my branding and market my business properly. It made me realize you need to bring out what makes you who you are. And they made me come out of my comfort zone. It was an eye opener for me, Jean remarked."

At the end of the Bootcamp, the winners got the opportunity to showcase their products and services at the innovative 10-mile open air linear hub, The Underline. Imagine showcasing your fine jewelry, T-shirts/uniforms, health and fitness services in a space extremely visible throughout Miami's business and entertainment district.

"We are so honored to partner with Bank of America and FIU to bring small businesses and entrepreneurial opportunities to The Underline," said Meg Daly CEO/Founder The Underline. "The open-air economy is proving to be one of the best ways to provide equitable access and experiences to all, including Miami's emerging businesses."



## Caribbean American Company Owned By CT Editor Wins Comcast RISE Award



Felicia J. Persaud, CT' Editor, founder of Hard Beat Communications and CEO of the ICN Group of Companies.

A company founded by a Caribbean immigrant in the US Diaspora has been named a Comcast RISE 2021 winner.

Hard Beat Communications, (HBC), the award-winning digital Caribbean PR and AD agency founded by Guyana-born Felicia J. Persaud, who is also the editor of Caribbean Today, is among the awardees of the fifth round of the Comcast RISE program for small, women and minority-run businesses in the US, that was just recently announced.

Comcast RISE was created by Comcast Corporation, the US multi-national telecommunications conglomerate headquartered in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to

invest in the success of critical businesses owned by women and people of color, by providing valuable and practical support. The award to HBC includes television advertising and marketing promotion, creative insight, and support over a significant period, beginning in 2022.

Persaud, once an undocumented immigrant turned US citizen, who has evolved from a journalist to an entrepreneur, thanked Comcast RISE for the award, calling it "an early Christmas gift."

"The win and recognition of a company I birthed with very little money, and has stuck

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## New Year, New Normal



The endless procession of persons falling ill to this pandemic is mind numbing, and almost everyone knows someone personally, or has a relative who has succumbed to this plague of biblical proportions. "It's as if this damn virus has come to wipe out mankind," is what I hear people saying.



**TONY ROBINSON**

In order to survive, we have to change our lifestyle, adapt, and hope to eliminate it. Life as we know it is no longer the same.

Who remembers going to a social gathering, mingling with friends and colleagues, and chatting and laughing in close proximity? That was the old normal, and no one knows if and when it will ever return. I'm sure that the younger generation in years to come won't even know what the old normal was.

When last did you shake somebody's hand, hugged a colleague, shared a drink with a friend? Now we literally scorn each other, and justifiably so, for this virus does not come with a bumper sticker that says: 'virus on board.'

We rarely see beautiful smiles anymore, as the masks, made to protect us from each other, have put a damper on those flashes of teeth.

But we have expressive eyes, and our smiles are reflected in our orbs even though our lips are obscured by the masks. But as in all things, there are detractors who refuse to accept the new normal.

There are still some people who refuse to distance themselves physically, and stick to others, breathing down their necks like lovers in the back seat

of a car. If you speak to them about it, be prepared for a tongue lashing, for their normal is the right normal, and nothing will change them. Unfortunately, it's not just their peril, for by not wearing a mask, they jeopardize the lives of others.

Despite the overwhelming evidence and scientific findings, there are still some 'know it all experts' who never even walked through the lobby of medical school, but somehow 'know that the virus doesn't exist.'

Over five million people have died worldwide from the pandemic, but the armchair experts still don't believe that it's real.

One proven weapon to fight this virus is the vaccine. Vaccines have been a part of our lives from childhood, and no child is allowed to attend school unless fully vaccinated.

Because of vaccines many diseases have been put in check or eliminated... smallpox, polio, tuberculosis, rubella and others. But somehow, this vaccine is different, the detractors say, as it was developed too quickly. That is so far from the truth, as vaccines to combat SARS of which the Coronavirus is a family, have been in development for years.

Even from a mathematical perspective the evidence is overwhelming. People who are vaccinated are less likely to contract the virus, and even if they do, are less likely to get seriously sick or die. Of course, nothing is 100% foolproof, and there have been 'breakthrough cases' where even people who were vaccinated still contracted the virus, but they are rare.

The figures show that 97% of persons hospitalized from COVID were not vaccinated.

As far as I see it, if you don't want to take it, that's your freedom of choice, but don't go on a fear campaign and berate those who wish to take the

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 10)

## My 2022 Immigration Crystal Ball

It's finally 2022 and in this the Chinese Year of the water Tiger, many are predicting a good year. But will this forecast good fortune extend to immigrants. I tried hard to look into my crystal ball of January 1, 2022, and here's what I'm forecasting:

1: There will be more deportations this year as the Joe Biden administration tries hard to clamp down on the Republic talking point that they are for "open borders." The new Return to Mexico policy that the courts upheld and the administration reimplemented late last year is definitely the beginning of that move. With more and more Central American, African and Haitian migrants still braving the jungles of South America to trek to the US border and try to cross the Rio Grande, the US has no option but to try to keep out as many as possible because of fear of a further deluge. I also expect ramped up use of secretive air "expedited removal" deportations via ICE air flights, such as those to Haiti, Guatemala City and to southern Mexico, which began in August 2021. I also expect Title 42 will also stay in place as well, especially given the spike in cases of COVID-19 in the US again.

2: The US will continue to deny temporary entry for Afghans

seeking to enter on a humanitarian basis. The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services has already received more than 35,000 applications for humanitarian parole from Afghans while in the past, the program has received fewer than 2,000 requests from all nationalities. It is why I see the administration fast shutting that door despite the predicament of Afghans.

3: On immigration reform, I see the US congress still struggling to get anything passed into the House Election season. The 2022 United States House of Representatives elections will be held on November 8th and it's unlikely Republicans will want to give the administration a win on this issue as they see a Red wave coming, even as Joe Manchin continues to hold up the progress in the Senate. I don't see that changing anytime soon so don't hold your breath for any breakthrough on this front, not even for the love of DREAMERS.



**FELICIA J. PERSAUD**

4: There may be some progress on the H-1B visa program for professional workers. So far it looks like the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS), will make administrative changes to the H1B visa program to include redefining the H-1B employer-employee relationship and establishing new guidelines for employer site visits. The administration's latest regulatory plans also reveal that it will continue to reform the H-1B visa program for professional workers, including raising the wages of those workers.

5: Those wanting to come to the US and immigrants applying to U.S. CIS, can expect to pay more this year for visas. The Department of State is expected to raise visa application filing fees at consulates while the USCIS plans to increase its petition and application filing fees in March. These increases are to help fully cover the costs of adjudications, as the agency has been operating at a loss of \$3 million per business day.

Happy New Year? Not for immigrants.

- The writer is publisher of *NewsAmericasNow*



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# Why Stacey Abrams Is Important For Georgia And Our Democracy

BY BEN JEALOUS

You know the old game, two truths and a lie? Here are two truths and a lie about Georgia and Stacey Abrams, who recently announced that she's running for governor.

Let's start with the lie. The big lie is that Donald Trump lost Georgia in 2020 because of illegal votes. The big truth is that Stacey Abrams helped achieve not one, not two, but three legal state-wide victories in Georgia for President Joe Biden and Senators Raphael Warnock and John Ossoff.

Another truth is that Brian Kemp was Georgia's vote suppressor-in-chief long before he became the governor. In every cycle, he manages to come up with new strategies that are even more aggressive than ones he used before. Like a comic book villain, Kemp does not grow weary in his evildoing. He's always hatching a new plan, more dastardly than the last one.

That's why we cannot take anything for granted, even though Abrams demonstrated last year how effectively she can mobilize voters. She has seen every anti-voting-rights trick in the book. Many of them were used against her when she ran

for governor in 2018. Back then, Kemp was secretary of state and used the power of his office to shape election rules in his own favour.

As Abrams said at the time, Kemp "won under the rules of the game, but the game was rigged against the voters of Georgia."

If we want Georgia to be safe for democracy, two things need to happen in the next 12 months. First, Congress must pass urgently needed voting rights legislation in time to go into effect by next fall.

And second, everybody who showed up and turned out in Georgia in 2020 has to show up and turn out again - every individual and every group.

I'm proud that the organization I lead, People For the American Way, was among those that Abrams credited with helping to achieve the historic victories of the past year. We're going to spend the next 11 months fighting to help her get elected. And we're asking everyone to join us in making the same level of commitment in Georgia that they made in 2020.

Because here's one more big truth. Stacey Abrams' campaign is not only important for Georgia. It's important for our



Stacy Abrams

democracy.

It is easy to get discouraged by what's happening across the country, where politicians are passing laws to discourage voting and protect their own power. Right-wing activists who are angry that Donald Trump lost the election - who refuse to admit that he lost - are being put in positions with authority to oversee next year's elections. The very basis of our democracy is being undermined.

There's something profoundly important about Stacey Abrams demonstrating

leadership at this moment. Abrams has always been guided by a fundamental faith that people can make the system work. That faith has been at the heart of her organizing. It inspired her 2018 race and her work to make Georgia's law fair for all voters.

Many people might be tempted to lose faith in democracy when they see elected

officials abusing their power to make it harder for some people to vote - and to limit the ability of their votes to make a difference.

Stacey Abrams knows what she is up against. And knowing all that, she still isn't giving up on our democracy. That's inspiring.

As governor, she will work tirelessly to make democracy, and Georgia, work for everyone. So, let's get to work for her.

**EDITOR'S NOTE: Ben Jealous serves as president of People For the American Way. Jealous has decades of experience as a leader, coalition builder, campaigner for social justice and seasoned nonprofit executive. In 2008, he was chosen as the youngest-ever president and CEO of the NAACP. He is a graduate of Columbia University and Oxford, where he was a Rhodes Scholar, and he has taught at Princeton and the University of Pennsylvania.**



## ...CT Editor Wins Comcast RISE Award

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8)

with despite many odds since June 2004, will help to support Hard Beat's expansion plans for 2022, that was laid this year as we regrouped and rethought our business strategies to establish new partnerships on the heels of the pandemic last year," said Persaud, who was earlier this year named "A Woman Of Impact" by the South Florida-based International Career and Business Alliance, ICABA.

In August, Hard Beat Communications, Inc. was also named a Top Event Planner in Miami for 2021 by Clutch. Hard Beat Communications is now part of the ICN Group of Companies that includes CaribPR Wire, Invest Caribbean, The Ritzury Group and News Americas News Network with offices in New York City, South Florida and Barbados.

The company now offers a full suite of digital products to suit any company - from small start-ups to established Fortune 500 companies and influencers.

They include reputation management online, press release creation and distribution globally; annual SEO and digital marketing campaigns, including backlink building; social media promotion, including video creatives and verification services of Instagram, Tik Tok, Facebook and Twitter accounts; websites, apps, and experiential creative development; affiliate management systems; CRM and brand identity including spokesperson videos; as well as cybersecurity, including penetration testing and malware removal.

Hard Beat "is your one-stop digital partner that will take you and your business to the next level, no matter the stage," added Persaud, who is also the founder of Invest Caribbean and the new Chief Executive Officer, (CEO), of ICN Group of Companies.

For more about HBC see <https://hardbeatcommunications.com/>



## New Year, New Normal

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9)

vaccine.

The news is rife with stories of public officials who were against the vaccine but succumbed to the virus. There are countless stories of private citizens who on their deathbed expressed regret for not taking the vaccine. Yet still, the rhetoric persists.

Our lives have changed forever, and we don't know when

we will ever get back to the way we used to be. That old normal has gone, possibly forever, and we have to adjust and normalize this normal. Despite this, have a wonderful New Year my friends and stay safe.

**EDITOR'S NOTE: Tony Robinson can be reached at [seidoIyard@gmail.com](mailto:seidoIyard@gmail.com).**



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- **VIA CREDIT CARD:** [miamifoundation.org/givenow](http://miamifoundation.org/givenow). Choose the Fund from the dropdown menu and submit payment. Please look for the Fund name Caribbean Today Foundation.
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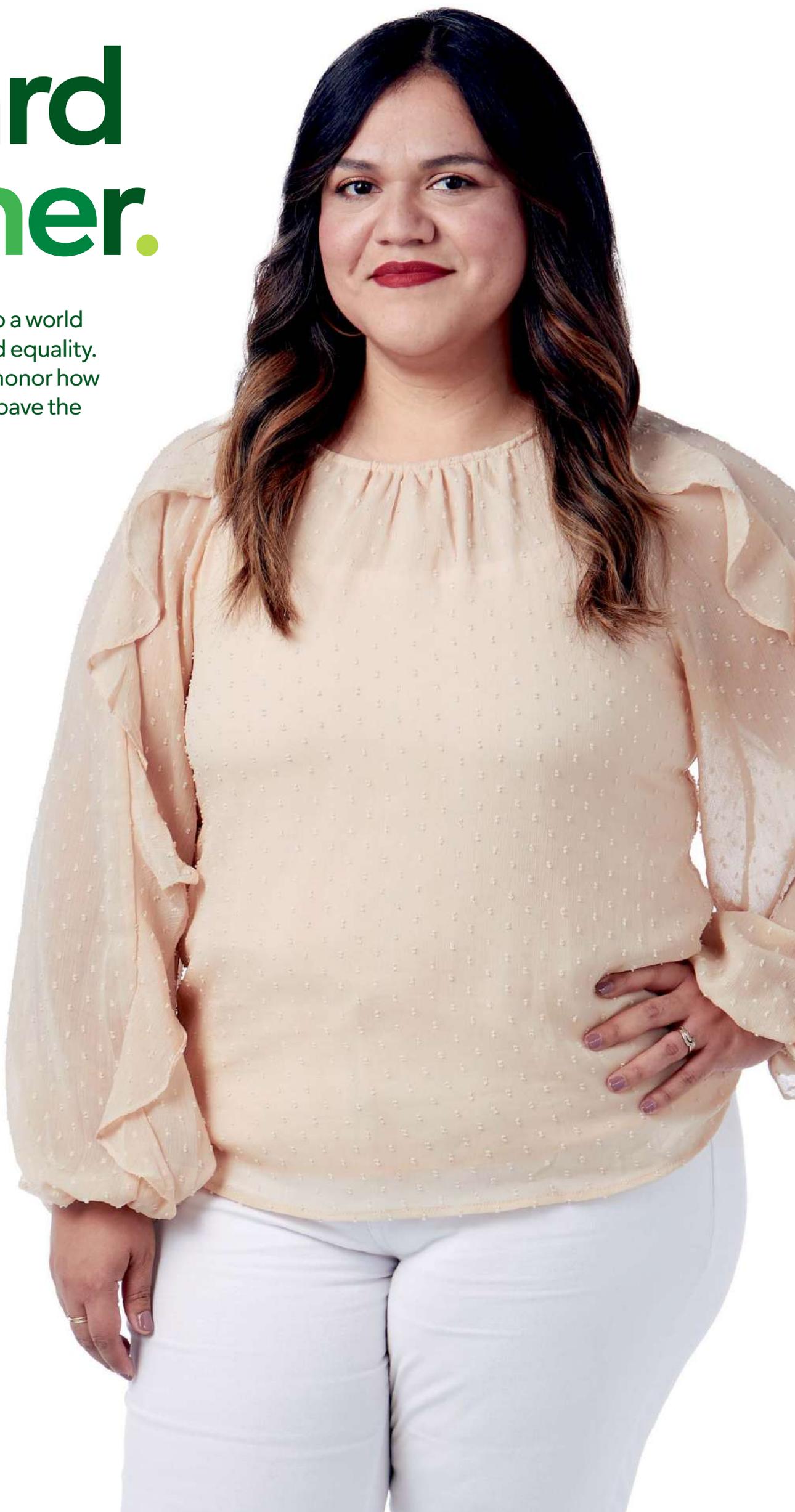
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**Elida Rodriguez**  
Group Manager CIM - Multicultural



# MARTIN LUTHER KING



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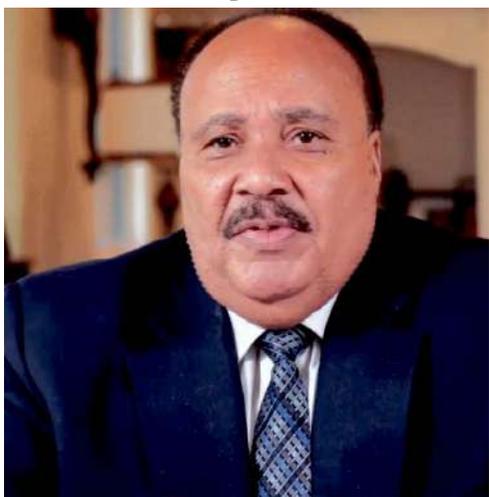
## MLK Family Wants No Celebration, But Action On Voting Rights

Martin Luther King III and his family and other advocacy groups will spend Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday in Phoenix, Arizona, rallying and organizing for voting rights.

The family of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is calling for "no celebration" of MLK Day without the passage of voting rights legislation, putting pressure on President Joe Biden and lawmakers to act on federal voting rights bills that have stalled in Congress.

The march will kick off a nationwide campaign with more than 50 other groups to press Congress to pass federal legislation protecting the right to vote ahead of the national MLK holiday, observed annually on the third Monday in January.

MLK Jr.'s granddaughter



**Martin Luther King III, the oldest surviving child of MLK Jr., says there should be no celebration on MLK Day until Congress ends the Senate filibuster and pass legislation such as the Freedom to Vote Act and the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, both of which have stalled in the Senate.**

Yolanda Renee King will join her mother Andrea Waters King and father Martin Luther King III, the oldest surviving child of MLK Jr., in Phoenix on Jan. 15th to call on Congress to end the Senate filibuster and pass

legislation such as the Freedom to Vote Act and the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, both of which have stalled in the Senate.

"President Biden and Congress used their political muscle to deliver a vital infrastructure deal, and now we are calling on them to do the same to restore the very voting rights protections my father and countless other civil rights leaders bled to secure," Martin Luther King III said in a statement Wednesday, adding that they "will not accept empty promises in pursuit of my father's dream for a more equal

and just America."

The family will be joined in Arizona by a consortium of state and local groups, including the African American Christian Clergy Coalition (AACCC), Arizona AFL-CIO, the Central Arizonans for a Sustainable Economy and the local branches of its sister organization UNITE HERE, an international union.

Jan. 15 marks what would have been the 93rd birthday of the slain civil rights leader. Interestingly, Donald Trump is set to hold a rally in Arizona also on Jan. 15th as the King Jr. family will arrive in Phoenix for its own rally.

Senate Republicans have blocked both Democratic-sponsored bills from advancing, leading progressive Democrats and activists to demand the Senate filibuster rule, which requires 60 votes to advance most legislation, be eliminated. Democrats, however, don't have the votes to end the filibuster rule, and they face some opposition within their own party, too including from Senators Joe Manchin and Kyrsten Sinema.

- Rewritten from CNN.com



## Here's What Dr. King Once Said About Jamaica

Few may know that civil rights icon, the late Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr, whose birthday we celebrate as a federal holiday on January 17th, actually was in Jamaica and took away a profound lesson from his visit there.

Dr. King Jr. had visited Jamaica in June 1965 and delivered a riveting sermon to University of the West Indies graduates at the Mona campus in St Andrew.

Reverend King Jr's sermon was entitled, "Facing the Challenge of a New Age" and he spoke about the passing of an old colonial order, the need for a worldwide brotherhood, the need to fight any kind of injustice with love and the need for us to strive to be the best we can be at whatever we chose to do in our lives.

Following the service, Dr King attended a dinner at Kings House hosted by then Governor-General Sir Clifford Campbell and Lady Campbell. The next day, at a packed civic reception at the National Arena, Dr King was given the Keys to the City of Kingston after delivering another stirring 40-plus-minute address.

He began by saying that he had never felt more at home anywhere else in the world adding: 'In Jamaica I feel like a human being.' He said he was proud to be among his "brothers and sisters on this wonderful island."

Following that address, Dr. King attended a reception at the home of the United States Agency for International Development



**The Rev Dr Martin Luther King delivering the sermon at a valedictory service at the University of the West Indies in June 1965. Others on platform (from left) are the Rev John Hoard, the Rev Florice Russell and the Rev P.R. Hazell. (Jamaica Gleaner image)**

(USAID) director and then visited the grave of National Hero Marcus Garvey to lay a wreath out of respect for a man he said gave negroes in the United States a sense of dignity, a "sense of personhood, a sense of manhood, a sense of somebodiness."

### Later he would say the following of Jamaica:

"The other day Mrs King and I spent about ten days down in Jamaica. I'd gone down to deliver the commencement address at the University of the West Indies. I always love to go to that great island which I consider the most beautiful island in all the world. The Government prevailed upon us to be their guests and spend some time and try to get a little rest while there on the speaking tour.

"And so, for those days we travelled all over Jamaica. And over and over again I was impressed by one thing. Here you have people from many national

backgrounds: Chinese, Indians, so-called Negroes, and you can just go down the line, Europeans, European and people from many, many nations. Do you know they all live there and they have a motto in Jamaica, 'Out of many people, one people.' And they say, 'Here in Jamaica we are not Chinese, we are not Japanese, we are not Indians, we are not Negroes, we are not Englishmen, we are not Canadians. But we are all one big family of Jamaicans.'

"One day, here in America, I hope that we will see this, and we will become one big family of Americans. Not white Americans, not black Americans, not Jewish or Gentile Americans, not Irish or Italian Americans, not Mexican Americans, not Puerto Rican Americans, but just Americans. One big family of Americans."

- Rewritten from the Jamaica Observer and the Jamaica Gleaner



## MLK Day Will Include Free Federal Park Visits

Martin Luther King Jr. Day 2022 will be the first federal holiday of 2022, and also the first fee-free day at public lands across the U.S.

National parks, national forests, national wildlife refuges and other federal recreation areas will waive parking and entrance fees on Monday, Jan. 17, one of several such days on the calendar.

This year's slate of fee-free days is nearly identical to last

year's, with the same number of total days, nine, and most of the same occasions recognized by the National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – the four federal agencies in charge of the bulk of our public lands.

The only notable change for 2022 is the addition of Juneteenth. That means a big chance to see national parks for

free, and one additional chance to visit national wildlife refuges free as well.

Federal parks in South Florida include the Biscayne National Park, the Everglades National Park, the Hugh Taylor Birch State Park and the Florida National Parks Association in Homestead, FL. Find a federal park near you at [nps.gov/findapark/index.htm](https://nps.gov/findapark/index.htm)



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## Guess Who Is The Most Streamed Reggae Artist?



Sean Paul (William Richard Photo)

Care to guess who the most streamed reggae artist on YouTube is? According to a report from Reggaeville.com, that honor belongs to Grammy winning Jamaican-born artist, Sean Paul.

The site found that Paul had 1.6 billion views and plays globally in 2021. The numbers were compiled from the official YouTube Music Charts.

Meanwhile, in the second spot with 909 million was Bob Marley and the Wailers while in the third spot interestingly, was Argentina-born reggae star Dread Mar I with 760 million.

Paul has been nominated for best Reggae album of the year at the upcoming Grammy Awards.

This comes as the Recording Academy has

postponed the 64th annual Grammy Awards, originally set for Jan. 31 at Crypto.com Arena in Los Angeles due to the omicron variant.

This is the second year in a row that the Grammys have been postponed due to COVID-19.

Last year's show was originally set for Jan. 31, 2021, but on Jan. 5, 2021, it was delayed to March 14 due to a spike in COVID-19 cases in Los Angeles. At that time, the show was also relocated from Staples Center (the former name of Crypto.com Arena) to the nearby Los Angeles Convention Center, which allowed for less crowding.

- NewsAmericasNow.com



## Trini Parang Star Falls Victim To COVID-19

Trinidad and Tobago parang start, Kenny J, is among the millions who have now died from COVID-19 globally.

The Soca Parang artiste whose full name is Kenrick "Kenny J" Joseph, died at the Augustus Long Hospital in Pointe-a-Pierre at 11.25 am Sunday, Jan. 2, 2022.

Kenny J was 69. Some would remember his hit Soca Parang songs like 'De Paint Brush,' 'Alexander,' 'Cork

in She Hand,' and 'Hush Yuh Mouth.' Kenny J joined the fight against COVID-19 and was featured in a Ministry of Health advertisement in T&T to encourage people to get vaccinated. However, some used his death to criticize the effectiveness of the COVID-19 vaccines. According to his daughter, the singer had no known illnesses.



## Bolt Second Album Coming

Retired Track and Field star turned Dancehall producer Usain Bolt is cooking up a second album, according to the UK Sun, just months after the release of his debut project, 'Country Yutes,' with friend and manager Nugent "NJ" Walker.

Bolt told The Sun in a recent interview that the onslaught of the pandemic provided an opportunity to explore his passion for music. "Music is just a part of me. In lockdown I wasn't doing much so I thought I could take the opportunity to get into music as it is something that I love to do," he shared.

"For me the album we did was just to show people that we were serious. When we started out people thought I was just messing around and bored with nothing to do but I wanted to let them know I was serious. I wanted to do a proper body of work and put it out there. Now we have done that, people are



Usain Bolt in Country Yute.

reaching out to work with us so I am going to be doing a lot more this year."

Released in September, the 14-track 'Country Yutes' album debuted at No. 6 on the Billboard Reggae Albums chart with 1,807

equivalent album units sold in the United States during its first week, according to MRC Data.

- DancehallMag.com



## A Blue & Bougie Honor For This Jamaican Roots TV Star



Jamaican roots TV star, Nick Creegan

Jamaican roots TV star, Nick Creegan, received the Blue & Bougie Impact Award on Sunday, January 2, 2022, at the Elegant Loft in Mt Vernon, NY. The event was part of the upscale Blue & Bougie party series.

Creegan was born and raised in White Plains, N.Y. and he is currently a series regular as Marquis Jet on the DC Universe's Batwoman. He is best known for his major recurring role on NBC's hit Law and Order spin-off, Organized Crime, as Richie Wheatley; the son of Mob boss Richard Wheatley played by Dylan

McDermott.

Acting has always been a passion of his, and after leaving the corporate world of producing branded documentaries, Creegan has been paving his path in the film and TV space.

His mother is from Jack's River in St Mary, Jamaica. After having stints as a sportswriter and on-camera host at ESPN, Yahoo Sports, VICE Media and Bleacher Report, the acting bug took hold of him.

A sketch he created in a Jamaican accent about Oxtail gravy a few years ago went viral and Oprah Winfrey's team

caught wind of it. He was cast as DESMOND in the Oprah network's hit drama, 'David Makes Man,' in 2018 and he never looked back.

"I very much appreciate this award! As a proud product of Jamaican roots and Westchester County this means a lot," he shared.

Blue & Bougie's mission is to recognise outstanding individuals from our community who have made an impact in the arts, entertainment, fashion and the food industry.

Creegan joins an elite list of past Blue & Bougie honourees including:

1. Safaree (Lloyd Samuels), Love & Hip Hop, NY TV star.
2. Bounty Killa, International dancehall DJ.
3. Nadine Sutherland, International reggae singer,
4. Cristy Barber, Grammy-nominated music producer and VP of Creative Planning & Development at Downsound Entertainment, producers of Reggae Sumfest, and,
5. Kurt Riley: Jamaican broadcaster, producer & elite club disc jock.

- NewsAmericasNow.com



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Peter A. Webley  
Publisher

## Haiti's Soup Joumou Now On The UNESCO Intangible Cultural List

Haiti's Soup Joumou has gotten top honors.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, (UNESCO), has added the Haitian soup, served usually on its independence day on January 1st, as one of the agency's new intangible cultural items on its heritage lists.

UNESCO said its Intergovernmental Committee decided to add Haiti's Joumou soup to its inscription "based on the advice of the Evaluation body and following a fast-track procedure, given the specific circumstances due to the hardships recently endured by the country."

UNESCO noted that Joumou, or giraumon soup, is a traditional Haitian pumpkin soup made with vegetables, plantains, meat, pasta and spices.

"It is a celebratory dish, deeply rooted in Haitian identity, and its preparation promotes social cohesion and belonging



Traditional Haitian pumpkin soup, Joumou soup

among communities," said UNESCO in a statement, adding that originally reserved for slave owners, Haitians took ownership of the soup when they gained independence from France, turning it into a symbol of their newly acquired freedom and an expression of their dignity and resilience.

"It is made from giraumon, a variety of pumpkin once cultivated by the indigenous peoples of the Caribbean, and is prepared and consumed specifically on the first of January – Haiti's Independence Day – when it constitutes the first meal

of the year. It also serves as traditional Sunday breakfast."

UNESCO said the preparation of Joumou soup is a "family and community affair: women manage the overall activities, children help to prepare the ingredients, artisans make the aluminum pots and other utensils used to prepare the soup, and farmers work the land to harvest the vegetables.

"Today, several variations of the soup can be found in Caribbean and Latin American cuisines," UNESCO said.

"It is a great joy and a point of pride to see this project come to fruition today, just two weeks before the Haitian Independence Day," said UNESCO Director General Audrey Azoulay.

Haiti, the world's first Black republic, gained its independence from France on January 1, 1804.

"It is an important gesture of recognition for the entire Haitian culture and identity, which will further strengthen its influence throughout the world," Azoulay added.

The Haitian delegation to UNESCO said the inscription was "not only a fabulous sign of hope and encouragement but also a unifying call for a Haitian people currently facing an exceptionally difficult moment in their rich history.

"A symbol of the rejection of a system of oppression and discrimination, of the struggle against colonization and all forms of racism, the soup also strengthens cultural identity, encourages coexistence and social cohesion and plays a key unifying role," said the delegation in a statement.

"This heritage generates a strong sense of belonging to the Haitian nation, connects new generations with their roots and has become an expression of their dignity as a people," it added.

Soup Joumou is traditionally consumed on New Year's Day, (January 1st), as a historical tribute to Haitian independence in 1804.

### Here's How To Make It

#### INGREDIENTS:

- 1 lb of beef
- 1/2 cup of olive oil
- water as needed
- 1 large scallion, diced
- 1 half medium cabbage, diced
- 2 potatoes, peeled and chopped
- 2 yam, peeled and chopped
- 2 malanga, peeled and chopped
- 2 butternut squash, peeled and chopped
- 2 turnips, peeled and chopped
- 1 stalk of celery chopped
- 3 medium carrots, chopped
- 1 6 oz. package of spaghetti
- 1 tablespoon of tomato paste
- 1 scotch bonnet pepper
- 4 parsley sprigs
- Meat seasoning spices:
- 1 tsp black pepper
- 1 tsp thyme
- 2 shallots, diced
- 1 tsp Adobo seasoning salt
- 2 Maggi chicken bouillon cubes
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- 1 tsp onion powder

#### METHOD

##### Meat

1. Marinate the meat overnight or for at least 1 hour.
2. Place the seasoned meat in a stockpot and cover with water.
3. Add oil and let boil over high heat. Keep covered until the water has evaporated.

4. Uncover, stir and simmer a few drops of water occasionally to brown the meat.
5. Keep stirring and simmer water occasionally until you have a nice browning color to the meat.
6. Stir in one tbsp of tomato paste. Remove meat and set aside pot for the vegetables.

#### Vegetables

1. In a separate bowl, cut into small pieces the large scallions and half medium cabbage.
2. Peel and chop the potato, yam, malanga, butternut squash, carrots, and turnip.
3. Wash the vegetables. Add to a separate pot of boiling water.
4. Cover and cook over high heat for about an hour. Reduce heat and add scotch bonnet pepper.
5. Once the squash is fully cooked, remove it from the pot. Use some of the cooking water to blend the squash into a puree.
6. For best flavoring, pour the cooked vegetables, the squash puree and cooking liquid into the pot that cooked the meat.
7. Add parsley, thyme, and broken spaghetti (or substitute with macaroni).
8. Let it all cook, until tender.
9. Combine meat into soup. Serve hot.

Tip: Clean the meat with lime and/or sour orange juice. Season well for a few hours. For best results, refrigerate overnight. Cooking Time – 2 hours Servings – 6-8

- *Rewritten from CMC & NewsAmericasNow.com*



## Jamaica Spice Company Plans Frozen Food Launch

Kingston, Jamaica company, Spur Tree Spices, has revealed plans to launch frozen foods and a variety of canned beans as it goes into expansion mode, following its initial public offer (IPO) on December 29th.

Spur Tree specializes in the production, distribution and sales of premium quality ready-to-use marinades and sauces, primarily for export.

It is offering approximately 335.3 million ordinary shares up for purchase in the IPO that is scheduled to close on January 19. The total amount to be raised if the invitation is successful is \$335.3 million.

The sauce manufacturer plans to use the money raised from the IPO to fund capacity

building, innovation, and expansion and repay existing debt.

In detailing its expansion plans, Spur Tree said: "On the horizon are plans to launch Jamaican patties, chicken wings, frozen festivals, frozen ripe plantain, frozen cassava and several varieties of canned beans: butter, red, pigeon peas."

Though the company sells locally to numerous hotels, restaurants and supermarkets, the major focus remains exports, with approximately 95 percent of revenue generated from export markets.

- *Rewritten from Loop Caribbean News*



## Final Expense Insurance

So many of us are unprepared financially when our Love One dies, or more unfortunate, when we die.

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## Tips To Encourage Your Child To Adopt Healthy Eating Habits

While there is a lot of guidance available about what to feed children, until now, there has been little guidance about how to feed them. New recommendations offer parents and caregivers practical tips for encouraging healthy eating habits vital to growth, development and health.

In an effort to make mealtimes easier for families, HER, a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) based at Duke University, recently convened a panel that reviewed scientific research to develop recommendations for how to feed children ages 2-8.

Here's a snapshot of the panel's top tips:

• **Promote independence:** Giving kids some control at mealtime helps them learn to like healthful foods. Avoid pressuring kids to finish everything on their plate. Instead, help them learn to identify when they're hungry or full.

• **Get them involved:** Get kids involved in meal selection and preparation. Even very young



children can help wash fruits and vegetables.

• **Make mealtime fun:** Give foods fun names, share family recipes and food traditions, and talk about your favorite dishes.

• **Avoid food rewards:** Bribing with sweet treats is tempting, but non-food rewards are more effective in the long run. You can also use praise, like "Good job trying the beans!" to convey love and encourage trying healthy food.

• **Create a positive environment:** Provide an environment that lends itself to healthy habits. Keep a bowl of fruit on the counter and chopped vegetables in the fridge. Portion healthy snacks into individual-serving size containers and leave them at kids' eye level and

within reach. Offer vegetables as an appetizer to give kids the opportunity to eat healthy foods when hungry and without other competing food. Limit the number of unhealthy snacks in the house.

• **Try, try again:** Toddlers and pre-schoolers commonly go through a phase of fearing new foods, however, most kids grow out of this. Try to be patient. It often takes time for kids to develop new, healthy eating habits. Repeated exposure matters. In fact, kids may need to try something 10-15 times before knowing if they like it or not, and this can happen over weeks or months and through different preparations. To avoid food waste, start small. For a new food, consider offering just a few bites.

• **Be a role model:** Kids often look around them for cues about what to eat, and they look up to you! Let them see you make healthy choices, for your sake and theirs.

- *StatePoint*



# Modern Day Lynching? This Caribbean Immigrant Was Killed By White Men On A Hunting Trip

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4)

Christina Rugh ruled his death a homicide. Rugh told exploreClarion.com that she examined the body at the scene and determined that Spencer had been shot nine times, once in the mouth, twice in his buttocks, and six times in the chest and abdomen.

A 25-year-old-man was taken into custody, as well as three additional individuals. They were detained and questioned by police and were later released as the men with Spencer reportedly claimed they acted in "self-defense."

To date, no charges have been filed as The Pennsylvania State Police says it is still investigating the case – but not as a hate crime. Multiple guns were also reportedly found at the scene, but no charges have been filed.

The Pennsylvania State Police is investigating the case. So far, only an initial report has been released. This report did not include any details on the suspect or the motive. Calls for arrests in the case continue to grow as no charges have been filed. Police are urging patience

while they continue their investigation.

Spencer was born on August 30, 1992, in Kingston, Jamaica to Conrad Spencer and Icilda Spencer-Hunter. He attended school at St. Andrew Technical High School in Jamaica before relocating to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in 2013.

His family says he was a devoted Christian with a good moral compass, who lived his life showing compassion for others and helping anyone in any way he could.

In 2021, Spencer was working on starting his own business doing home repairs and renovation and recently got engaged to the love of his life, Carmela, and found out they would be having a little baby. He was working hard to provide a great life for his bride and baby to be when he was killed.

Police said the investigation is ongoing pending the result of a second autopsy, toxicology reports, ballistic reports and lab results. Rugh stated the autopsy has not been completed as she is waiting on the toxicology reports. She said it is standard for the autopsy report to take

two to three months to complete. The state police are handling the forensic investigation.

Once the investigation is complete, the Venango County District Attorney's Office will review the case and all reports to make a recommendation on charges, police said.

"The Pennsylvania State Police requests the public to remain patient, we are actively investigating this incident and are providing all investigative updates to the District Attorney's office as appropriate," the release said.

State police also said the department's Heritage Affairs team is now involved. The team is responsible for, in part, preventing and responding to hate or bias-related crimes.

Police ask anyone with information about the incident to contact PSP Franklin at 814-676-6596.

The Black Political Empowerment Project has called for answers as to why no charges have been filed.

"We demand the immediate investigation of this murder by the Venango County District Attorney, the U.S. Attorney General, and the PA State

Attorney General," it said in a statement.

CEO Stevens has also blasted the alleged claim that the men were acting in self-defense.

"Which we think is a defenseless defense, an unexplainable defense ... we can't help but wonder if there was some racial animosity and if this possibly could be a hate crime," he said. "This is serious

and people need to know they can't do this in Pennsylvania or hopefully anywhere in the nation."

King has launched a GoFundMe to ask for support for her unborn child and to help get Spencer justice.

- NewsAmericasNow.com



## EMPLOYMENT

### Bethel Enrichment Center

#### EVALUATION SPECIALIST

Bethel has a need for a Part-time, upper-level applied evaluation manager 10-20 hours/weekly, suitable for a retired person. The candidate should have a Bachelor's or Master in psychology, social work, public health or education and 4+ years of experience in education and social service evaluation. The successful candidate will have strong knowledge and application of theory-based evaluation, evaluation design implementation, research methods, and quantitative skills (SPSS preferred). Working knowledge of community psychology is a plus. The candidate should also have experience in grant writing and be familiar with structures of community based healthcare settings.

The candidate must be able to integrate into the current Bethel's team structure and small business work flow, as well as communicate professionally with partner organizations within the South Florida community.

Salary is commensurate with experience.

Send resume to [betfamlife@yahoo.com](mailto:betfamlife@yahoo.com) or Apply at 17025 NW 22 Avenue, Miami Gardens, FL 33056

## Barbados Voters Will Choose A New Leader This Month

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4)

Leader and is leading a coalition Alliance Party for Progress (APP) into the election.

The APP is contesting 20 seats and Bishop Atherley, told voters that a BLP administration would not take Barbados in the right direction and suggested that there was a need for a change.

Both Prime Minister Mottley and the DLP leader, Verla De Peiza, say they are confident of victory.

"We have to take some decisions that will position this country to face some of the most difficult circumstances in the next 10 to 15 years,"

Mottley told reporters, while De Peiza said "it is clear that the dissatisfaction with present administration did not take long to set in and let's face it, it's a series of own goals that brought them to that point and our people are very pleased to have the opportunity to signal their discontent earlier than they expected."

It is now left to be seen whether Mottley will be returned to power come Jan. 19th.

- Rewritten from CMC and NewsAmericasNow.com



## EMPLOYMENT

### Bethel Enrichment Center

#### HEALTH OUTREACH WORK I

Bethel Enrichment center seeks Health Outreach Workers to recruit Black/African American males for HIV/AIDS, Substance Abuse/Use, Mental Health, and Wellness Intervention and Treatment Service. Candidate must have the ability to outreach and recruit clients in need of services.

Prospective hire must have own TRANSPORTATION/VEHICLE. Candidate must be willing to transport potential clients to and from our and our partner facilities. These clients will be, young men that are high-risk for contracting HIV, substance use/abuse, prostitution/sex for drugs and alternate sexual life styles. Lived experience is a plus as well as experience working in inner city neighborhoods.

Must be familiar with The Miami Gardens and North Miami-Dade Region.

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Job Type: Full-Time

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## HIT & RUN FATALITY



### VICTIM/PEDESTRIAN

Rupert Webley  
B/M, 68 years old

On **Sunday, May 2, 2021**, at approximately **9:25 p.m.**, the above-pictured victim/pedestrian began crossing at **SW 184 Street and SW 112 Avenue, Miami, Florida**, when the subject vehicle, a Hyundai silver in color, struck and killed him. The driver of the subject vehicle fled the scene without rendering aid and/or reporting the crash.

**SUBJECT VEHICLE DESCRIPTION: HYUNDAI SILVER IN COLOR. NO OTHER INFORMATION AVAILABLE AT THIS TIME.**

Anyone with information on the above **HIT & RUN FATALITY**, the whereabouts of the subject vehicle and/or its driver is requested to contact Miami-Dade Police Department Traffic Homicide Detective J. Childers at (305) 471-2425. If you wish to remain anonymous, then contact Miami-Dade County Crime Stoppers at the following:

- (305) 471-TIPS (8477) or 1 (866) 471-8477
- Visit [www.CrimeStoppers305.com](http://www.CrimeStoppers305.com) and select "Submit a Tip"
- Visit [www.facebook.com/crimestoppers305](https://www.facebook.com/crimestoppers305) - "Contact Us"
- Visit the App Store – Get P3 and sign into Miami for Tips

If the tip leads to the arrest of the subject(s), the tipster may be eligible for a reward **UP TO THE AMOUNT OF \$5,000.00**. All calls are kept strictly anonymous.

ISSUE DATE: 5/11/2021 RN SUPERVISOR: Sgt. Francisco Armendariz MDPD C/N PD210502138114

If this flyer aids in your investigation in any way, please advise Deborah Simons, I.A., of the South Florida Homicide Clearinghouse at 305-471-2400.

## Florida Leads In COVID-19 Cases

According to CDC data, the state of Florida is now leading the country in new coronavirus cases. On Friday, January 7th, Florida reported 76,887 cases to the CDC — the state's largest single-day increase on record for the pandemic.

"Ever since omicron really started rearing its ugly head in the first week of December, our cases numbers have been doubling every two to three days," Dr. Thomas Unnasch, a distinguished health professor at the University of South Florida, told ABC Action News.



Unnasch says the case count will continue to trend up over the next two weeks until

omicron hits its peak in mid-January.

A positive projection that

the highly contagious variant will not hang around as long as its alpha and delta counterparts. However, one effect it could share, Unnasch says, is its hospitalization rate.

"The real issue here is that this still could be really serious if you're not vaccinated," he said.

Unnasch says omicron tends to infect the nasal passageways as opposed to the lungs, meaning symptoms are milder than the other variants. However, he says, the record-high number of new cases in

Florida could shrink hospital capacity especially among the unvaccinated.

"Those people are still going to have a really high chance of getting really sick."

Health experts still say the best protection against serious infection is full vaccine and booster shot. Unnasch agrees and says it is also our best chance to leave the virus behind in this new year.

- *Rewritten from ABCActionNews*



## Menopause Affects Your Skin, Too. Here's How to Fight Back

By 2025, there will be over 1 billion women experiencing menopause in the world, which will be 12% of the entire world population. Most women hit menopause by their 50s. However, changes in the body start to appear earlier than you might think, often many years before a woman officially hits menopause. This time in a woman's life can bring bothersome and debilitating symptoms which can significantly affect a woman's health and daily routines.

Women may notice physical changes in their skin as one of the first symptoms as they age. "When you're young, your body produces an abundance of collagen, the main skin-supporting protein that keeps your face supple and hydrated," said nationally renowned natural health physician and author, Dr. Fred Pescatore. "Studies show that

women lose about 30% of their skin's collagen during the first five years of menopause due to hormonal shifts."

With collagen loss, skin becomes thinner and prone to wrinkles. It also loses the ability to protect itself, maintain hydration, and produce strong collagen the way it once could. Many women see these changes reflected in increased bags under the eyes, sagging neck skin, and increased hyperpigmentation in the face and hands.

There are several ways for women to minimize and manage skin health concerns that appear during this period.

### Minimize Sun Exposure

Try to avoid direct sun exposure. Some women experience increased hyperpigmentation on their face and hands, often referred to as dark spots, leading up to

and during menopause. This is caused by a combination of hormonal changes and sun exposure. "You can help minimize your skin's exposure to the sun by wearing SPF, hats and gloves when outdoors," said Dr. Pescatore.

### Take Shorter Showers

Keep showers short and not too hot. "Spending too much time in water, especially hot water, strips natural oils from your skin, leaving it dry," said Dr. Pescatore. In the time leading up to and during menopause, your skin is at increased risk for dryness, so try to take short, lukewarm showers to keep skin optimally hydrated.

### Add a Proven Supplement

Look for ingredients that can stimulate collagen production and help improve the health of your skin from inside and out. Numerous

clinical studies have shown that daily supplementation with the super-antioxidant Pycnogenol (Pic-noj-en-all) French maritime pine bark extract can help minimize various skin concerns middle-aged women experience.

Pycnogenol binds with existing skin proteins, collagen and elastin, stimulates the genesis of new collagen and hyaluronic acid, and protects skin from various harmful enzymes, helping to rebuild elasticity for a smooth, younger look. Additionally, Pycnogenol has been shown to reduce hyperpigmentation for a more even complexion. A recent study, published in 2021, found that those who supplemented with 100mg of Pycnogenol for 12 weeks during dry winter months experienced a 13% improvement in both skin elasticity and skin firmness.

"Pycnogenol is one of the

most studied ingredients on the market, with decades of research showing the benefits of this natural extract for a variety of health applications," said Dr. Pescatore. "In fact, the extract has specifically been studied on menopausal women, so the skin benefits complement its additional women's health benefits nicely."

Available in more than 1,000 dietary supplements, topical creams, and health products worldwide, more information about Pycnogenol can be found by visiting [pycnogenol.com](http://pycnogenol.com).

As women enter the middle phase of life, a host of new skin concerns can appear. Evolving one's skin care routine and making natural lifestyle changes can help women meet the challenges of menopause.

- *StatePoint*



## It's Cervical Cancer Awareness Month

The United States Congress designated January as Cervical Health Awareness Month.

More than 14,000 women in the United States, including many from the Caribbean, are diagnosed with invasive cervical cancer each year, but the disease is preventable with vaccination and appropriate screening.

For people aged 25 to 65 years, the preferred screening recommendation is to get a primary human papillomavirus (HPV) test every 5 years. A primary HPV test is an HPV test that is done by itself for screening. The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved certain tests to be primary tests.

Because these HPV tests may not be widely available in the US yet, the guidelines include these two other acceptable screening methods and schedules.

A co-test every 5 years that combines an HPV test with a Pap test or a pap test alone.

The most important thing

to remember is to get screened regularly, no matter which test you get.

The new guidelines also recommend that people older than age 65 with a cervix stop being screened as long as they've had 10 years of regular screening with normal results. Otherwise, they should continue to be screened until they do.

Those who have had their cervix removed, such as from a hysterectomy, don't need screening as long as the surgery was done for reasons not related to cervical cancer or serious pre-cancer.

People who have gotten the HPV vaccine should still follow the screening guidelines as listed above.

### How Cervical Cancer Starts And How To Find It Early

The cervix connects the uterus to the vagina. It's part of the path babies pass through during birth. Cancer that starts in the cells of the cervix is called cervical cancer.



Almost all cervical cancers are caused by an HPV infection. Most people will never know they have HPV because the body can usually fight the infection before any symptoms occur. But high-risk types of HPV (such as HPV 16 and HPV 18) can cause serious pre-cancers and cancers of the cervix.

The goal of cervical cancer screening is to find pre-cancers

that are likely to progress to cancer and to remove or treat them before they do. Screening can also find cervical cancer at an early stage, when it is easier to treat.

Both types of screening tests, the HPV and Pap tests, require a small sample of cells from the cervix. A healthcare provider collects these by using a special, small tool to gently

scrape or brush the cervix. The same set of cells is used for both tests.

The Pap test looks for changes in the cells that might be pre-cancer or cancer.

The HPV test looks in the cells for infection by high-risk types of HPV that are most likely to cause pre-cancer or cancer.

Although all the screening tests are good at finding cancer and pre-cancer, primary HPV testing is better at finding them than a Pap test done alone. Plus, primary HPV testing does not lead to more follow-up tests for abnormal areas that turn out to not be pre-cancer.

In the US, the expectation is that over time fewer people will have a co-test or Pap test alone as the primary HPV test become more widely available. So, the best thing you can do as a woman is to ensure you get a pap test annually.



## Caribbean Governments Asked To Align Isolation Periods For Travelers With New U.S. And U.K. Criteria

The Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association, (CHTA), has asked Caribbean government leaders to reduce the isolation periods for travelers to align with the United Kingdom and the United States to avoid reversing the progress made by the tourism sector since the COVID-19 pandemic slammed the Caribbean's most important economic driver.

In a letter to Prime Minister Gaston Browne of Antigua and Barbuda, who currently serves as Chairman of CARICOM (Caribbean Community), CHTA President Nicola Madden-Greig noted that both the U.K. and the U.S. are reducing the isolation period for COVID-positive persons. The revised U.S. protocol allows for five days and the U.K. for seven days' confinement.

By contrast, some Caribbean jurisdictions require as many as 14 days in isolation. The data no longer substantiates that length of time, which presents unnecessary financial and personal hardship to residents, visitors, destinations and companies and increasingly will deter travel, the CHTA said as it recommended a seven-day period.

While the Omicron variant is highly contagious, Madden-



The CHTA call comes as several Caribbean countries recently shut their ports to cruise ships amid the spike in cases from the Omicron variant.

Greig said, it causes only a "low level of severe illness requiring hospitalization, and a low death rate and has proven to be particularly less virulent for those who are vaccinated."

Accordingly, the faster recovery rates justified moves by the British and American governments to reduce the isolation periods, she added.

Madden-Greig commended Caribbean Governments for restraining from closing borders and restricting travel.

"Government policies coupled with the efforts of health and tourism officials to enforce health safety protocols have resulted in the restoration of employment and airlift to near pre-pandemic levels, higher

vaccination rates for tourism-related employees, and low positivity test result rates for travelers, preventing massive business failures which would be detrimental to our long-term recovery," Madden-Greig added.

Meanwhile, to help reduce the high cost of PCR tests, the association recommends greater flexibility in sourcing the test as local health authorities work with suppliers to reduce the cost.

The CHTA president also reminded the CARICOM head that "well-balanced precautionary and preventive actions have successfully steered our economies towards recovery and must continue to do so."



## Air Canada Suspends Flights To These Two Caribbean Countries

Air Canada has halted flights from Toronto to two Caribbean regional countries.

The carrier stopped flying to Bermuda as of January 9th because of the latest surge in coronavirus (COVID-19) cases driven by the new Omicron variant.

An Air Canada spokesman said the airline "continues to evaluate and adjust its route network as required in response to the trajectory of the pandemic, government-imposed travel restrictions and quarantines, and

regulatory requirements."

"Affected customers will be contacted by Air Canada and offered options, including refunds for eligible customers and alternative routings where available," the spokesman said.

The airline gave no date for resuming the service.

The news came after the January flight schedule showed that Canadian low-cost carrier WestJet is to reduce its service between Bermuda and Toronto from two flights a week to one.

Bermuda currently has over

234 active cases of COVID-19. In all, the island has recorded 6,014 cases of the virus since March of last year with 106 deaths. It has also reported the most cases of the omicron variant in the Caribbean region.

Air Canada has also suspended flights to Antigua and Barbuda as the country also battles with a surge in coronavirus (COVID-19) cases.

- NewsAmericasNow.com



## US Warns Against Travel To This Caribbean Country



The US is warning against travel to Aruba.

With COVID-19 rates spiking and cases of the omicron variant growing, the US is warning against travel to one Caribbean nation.

The US State Department is warning Americans against travel to Aruba as the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, (CDC), says rates of the virus is spiking there.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

has issued a Level 4 Travel Health Notice for Aruba due to COVID-19, indicating a very high level of COVID-19 in the country.

COVID-19 infections spiked by 912 cases on January 7th alone as the total case load surpassed 26,166 and its death tally climbed to 181.

- NewsAmericasNow.com





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## US Women's Cricket For Historic Caribbean Tour

USA Cricket Women's Under 19 team is set to make history on January 24th as they travel to the Caribbean to play their first overseas matches against the Windward Islands U19 Women's team.

The four Twenty20 matches will be played in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

In partnership with both the Windward Islands Cricket Board and the St. Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG) Cricket Association, the tour is part of the wider long-term strategic partnership that USA Cricket has with Cricket West Indies (CWI), our nearest Full Member Nation of the ICC.

USA Cricket Board Member and Women and Girls Committee Chair, Nadia Gruny said, "We are pleased to partner with the Windward Islands Cricket Board (WICB) and the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Cricket Association to create a T20 series that would be mutually beneficial to both our under 19 teams. Congratulations to all of the girls selected and we look forward to a successful tour."

WICB President, Dr. Kishore Shallow added: "This exciting tour represents a shared vision of both USA Cricket and



Geetika Kodali will captain the first ever USA Women's Under 19 team to undertake an overseas tour. (USA Cricket Image)

WICB to offer more development opportunities for female cricketers. We are grateful for the initiative and cooperation of USA Cricket to execute what I anticipate to be a fantastic series of competitive cricket."

### Team USA Women's U19 Squad

Geetika Kodali (Captain)  
Laasya Mullapudi (Vice Captain)  
Anika Kumar  
Bhumika Bhadriraju  
Chetna Pagyadala  
Disha Dhingra  
Jivana Aras  
Mitali Patwardhan (WK)  
Pooja Ganesh (WK)

Ritu Singh  
Sai Tanmayi Eyyunni  
Snigdha Paul  
Trisha Bhima  
Tya Gonsalves  
Yashaaditi Teki

### Match Schedule

- Monday January 24 – 1st T20 - 9 a.m. EST
- Tuesday January 25 – 2nd T20 - 12:30 p.m. EST
- Wednesday January 26 – Rest
- Thursday January 27 – 3rd T20 - 9 a.m. EST
- Friday January 28 – 4th T20 – 9 a.m. EST



## Can Phil Deliver For West Indies Fans?

All hopes are now pinned on West Indies head coach Phil Simmons as the Windies face Ireland.

Simmons says he is expecting more energy and enthusiasm from a new-look squad as the team bowled off on January 8th.

The Caribbean team has endured a disappointing few months on the back of a disastrous showing at the T20 World Cup, followed by defeats in Sri Lanka and Pakistan.

A few of the team's most experienced players have retired following a lackluster showing at the World Cup and the team did not select a few other regulars for the tour of Pakistan. Despite a 3-0 T20 series loss in Pakistan, Simmons was encouraged by the team's fervor.

"The way we started in Pakistan is the way we want to play now, have a lot more energy, more enthusiasm," Simmons told members of the media earlier this week.

"It's a young group of guys and we are trying to mould them and get them into a winning frame of mind. We want to win, and we want to do everything that it takes to win," he added.

The West Indies host Ireland in the three-match CG Insurance One-Day International (ODI) Series and a one-off CG Insurance T20 International (T20I) from January 8 to 16th in Jamaica. The two-time World Champions will then travel to Barbados to face England in five T20Is at Kensington Oval from January 22nd to 30th.



West Indies head coach Phil Simmons

Chris Gayle has been noticeably left out of the Windies-Ireland matches.

### Ireland Series at Sabina Park, Jamaica

- January 11: 2nd CG Insurance ODI (9:30am local time/10:30am Eastern Caribbean)
- January 14: 3rd CG Insurance ODI (9:30am local time/10:30am Eastern Caribbean)
- January 16: one-off T20I (4pm local time/5pm Eastern Caribbean)

### England Series at Kensington Oval, Barbados

- January 22: 1st T20I (4pm local time/3pm Jamaica)
- January 23: 2nd T20I (4pm local time/3pm Jamaica)
- January 26: 3rd T20I (4pm local time/3pm Jamaica)
- January 29: 4th T20I (4pm local time/3pm Jamaica)
- January 30: 5th T20I (4pm local time/3pm Jamaica)

- *Rewritten from Digicel Sports Max and Windiescricket.com*



## Man Charged With Bermuda Footballer's Murder

A 24-year-old man appeared in Magistrates' Court on Jan. 4th, charged with the murder of national team footballer, Osagi Bascome, a week before Christmas.

Raheem Wray was accused of killing Bascome, 23, during an alleged stabbing incident on December 18 last year at the island's east end. He did not have to enter a plea as the matter must be heard before the Supreme Court.

Senior Magistrate Juan Wolffe remanded Wray into custody and referred the case to the next Supreme Court arraignments session on February 1st.

The young footballer, son of national team cricket coach Herbie Bascome, was alleged to have been stabbed multiple times during an altercation near the Fun Zone in St David's.

Bascome, a midfielder, made his debut for Bermuda in 2016, scoring one goal in 19 appearances.



The late Osagi Bascome

At the time of his death, he was playing for Bermuda club St George's Colts, having returned home from England where he turned out for Bristol City Under-23s and later for National League North outfit Darlington.

His final match in Bermuda was for the Colts in a 1-0 victory over Somerset Eagles on December 5.

Bascome's killing was the seventh murder of the year in Bermuda.

- CMC



## Women in Business



In March, Caribbean Today will spotlight Successful Women In Business. Join Caribbean Today as we showcase these hard-working women who have left their mark on the business community in South Florida. If you would like to nominate someone, please send your nominees to [peter.webley@caribbeantoday.com](mailto:peter.webley@caribbeantoday.com) or [editor@caribbeantoday.com](mailto:editor@caribbeantoday.com)

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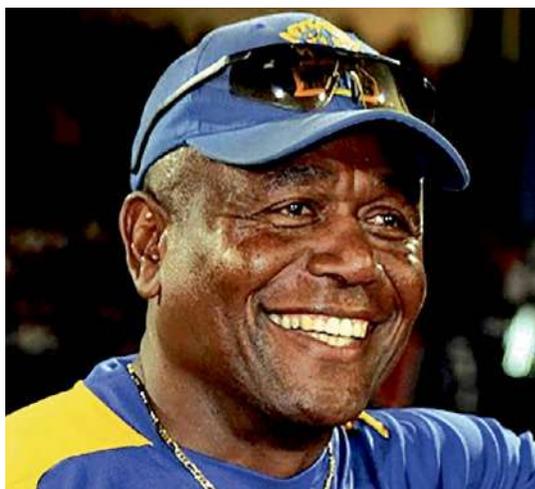
## West Indies Cricket Board Names New Selectors

The West Indies Cricket Board, (WICB) has empaneled a new set of selectors, in the hopes of taking the Windies cricket team to higher heights.

Former West Indies stroke-maker, Ramnaresh Sarwan, joins new chairman Desmond Haynes and head coach Phil Simmons in a new-look panel which will serve for the next two-and-a-half years.

A former West Indies captain who played 87 Tests and 181 One-Day Internationals between 2000 and 2013, the Guyanese replaces Miles Bascombe who was sacked last month, along with chief selector Roger Harper.

Significantly, Sarwan will also serve on the youth selection panel, which is currently chaired by Robert Haynes, and includes Under-19s head coach Floyd



The new selectors are batting legend, the Most Honourable Desmond Haynes (l) and Ramnaresh Sarwan (r).

Reifer.

“I want to thank CWI and everyone involved for giving me this opportunity to again serve West Indies cricket as a member of the selection panels,” said Sarwan, who will now

step down from his current position as chairman of selectors in his native Guyana. “I look forward to working with my colleagues, the Most Honourable Dr Desmond Haynes and Mr Robert Haynes, and the two head coaches, as well as everyone else involved in the development of this sport we love and respect so much.”

Batting legend Desmond Haynes was on Thursday, Jan. 6th, appointed the new men’s chairman of selectors on a two-and-a-half year contract, as Cricket West Indies’ overhaul of its selection system continued in the wake of last October’s

Twenty20 World Cup fiasco.

The 65-year-old, who featured in 116 Tests and 238 One-Day Internationals between 1978 and 1994 and who in the past served as a batting consultant to the men’s squad, replaces Roger Harper who was sacked last month.

Only last November, Haynes was awarded the Order of Freedom – Barbados’ highest national honor – during the country’s Republic Day celebrations.

While CWI did not name the other members of the panel, President Ricky Skerritt hailed the appointment of Haynes as the

“right man for the right job.”

“I would like to thank President Skerritt and the CWI Board of Directors for giving me the opportunity to serve West Indies cricket once again,” said Haynes, who formed part of perhaps the most celebrated opening pair in history, alongside fellow Barbadian Sir Gordon Greenidge.

“Being a selector is a thankless task but a critical role in our cricket system and I am honored to be appointed.

“I have always indicated that I would assist West Indies cricket in any way possible and I see this as an opportunity to do just that. I pledge to carry out my duties in a fair and professional manner.”

Importantly, Haynes will oversee the selection of squads for this year’s ICC Twenty20 World Cup in Australia and next year’s 50-over ICC World Cup in India.

The Barbadian was a member of the star-studded squad which repeated as champions at the 50-over World Cup in England in 1979, under Sir Clive Lloyd.

- *Rewritten from CMC*



## Reggae Boyz Gear Up To Face Peru And World Cup Qualification



Jamaica’s Michail Antonio (18) celebrates scoring against United States during a qualifying football match for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 in Kingston, Jamaica, Tuesday, Nov. 16, 2021. (AP Photo/Fernando Llano).

It’s a New Year and the Reggae Boyz are looking to make some serious moves ahead of the World Cup Qualifying games.

Damion Lowe, Kemar Lawrence, and Je-Vaughn Watson have been named to the Jamaica squad for the upcoming international friendly against Peru in Lima on January 20th.

The date of the game does not fall within a FIFA window and as a result, none of the Europe-based players were selected by head coach Paul Hall in his first squad since he replaced Theodore Whitmore who was sacked earlier this month.

Whitmore’s sacking came following an eight-game CONCACAF World Cup qualification run that yielded just seven points for the Reggae Boyz.

Hall will be in charge for the duration of this World Cup cycle.

Goalkeeper Andre Blake, Oneil Fisher, and Alvas Powell were not called for the game as the coach will be using the opportunity to look at other players who are unfamiliar to him.

A release from the Jamaica Football Federation stated that “all the players, including those not called on this occasion, have made themselves available and are committed to be ready for the three World Cup qualifying games from January 27th to February 2nd.

The release further stated that the 23-man squad for three World Cup qualifying games will assemble in Jamaica on January 24th.

The squad for the Peru game will assemble in Jamaica on January 13th.

Jamaica squad: Dwayne Miller, Jeadine White, Amal Knight, Damion Lowe, Richard King, Jamoi Topey, Javain Brown, Kemar Lawrence, Je-Vaughn Watson, Kevon Lambert, Tevin Shaw, Ramone Howell, Devon Williams, Peter Lee Vassell, Lamar Walker, Alex Marshall, Dwayne Atkinson, Deshane Beckford, Kaheem Parris, Devonte Campbell, Jourdain Fletcher, Cory Burke, Oquassa Chong.

- *LoopNews*



# Spring Cargo & Shipping

March is the start of the Spring shipping season. More than 500,000 Floridians identify their primary ancestry as West Indians, that is over 117% increase from 1990. Florida’s black household income for 2000 was a whopping \$32 Billion, that has continued to increase healthily over the subsequent 16 years. C.T will spotlight the various shipping services available to them, via Land Air and Sea to get their goods safely home in time for the season.

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