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THE EPITOME OF A TRUE SERVANT LEADER

BY JOCELYN G. PIERCE

Professional, Humanitarian, Disciplinarian, and Servant are resilient qualities that contribute to Dr. Sharon M. Shields' longevity and dedication as an educator and public-school leader. For almost five decades, Shields has dedicated her life to the goals of educating others through the many capacities she has served, and her educational journey reflects her love for learning and imparting knowledge.

Shields began her educational career as a student in Waco ISD and is a proud graduate of University High School. She continued her education at McLennan Community College earning an Associate's degree and transferred to Baylor University to receive a Bachelor of Science, a Master's degree and a Counseling degree. She steadfastly pursued and earned her Ph.D. from Texas A & M University in College Station and her superintendent certification from Tarleton State University.

Starting her career in ed-



DR. SHARON M. SHIELDS

ucation in LaVega ISD at H. P. Miles Middle School as a mathematics teacher, Shields was promoted to a counselor on that same campus. For a brief period, she left the classroom and campus environments to further develop her skills and expertise at the Region 12 Education Service Center as a consultant and facilitator.

Her first opportunity to serve as an administrator was in Waco ISD at the G. L. Wiley

Middle School Campus. From there, she advanced into a position in LaVega ISD as the Director of Curriculum and then became the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum before assuming the role of Superintendent of Schools in LaVega ISD in 2006.

At the helm of LaVega ISD, Shields' motivation for seeking success has been and continues to be summarized in a quote from the first great American advocate of public education, Horace Mann, who said, "Education, then, beyond all other devices of human origin, is the greater equalizer of the conditions of men, the balance-wheel of the social machinery." In addition, the students, staff members, parents, and overall LaVega communities' understanding of the impact of quality education on one's choices and options of life as well as one's earning potential contribute to her vision for success. Other than Shields' Christian faith, family

SEE **LEADER**, PG. 13

DR. TIFFANY SPICER NAMED WACO ISD SUPERINTENDENT

BY DR. PEACHES HENRY

On October 4, Waco ISD named Dr. Tiffany Spicer as the next superintendent. Coming with 20 years of experience in Texas education, Spicer hails from Buna ISD where she served as superintendent from 2022 to 2024. Spicer will be the second African American and the first African American woman to lead the district. "I am deeply committed to working together with all members of our community to build a brighter future for our students, staff, and schools," she declared.

Spicer has not come with a "cookie cutter" plan for the district, she said. Instead, asserting that "to lead effectively, I believe it's essential to first listen and learn," she intends to engage with the district and the community from various vantage points to discover what is going well and what is not. Only then after she has gotten the full picture, she says, can she develop a plan for the district.

Spicer posted her "Community Engagement Plan for Waco ISD." During her first 90 days she conducted a comprehensive "Listening and Learning Tour" across Waco ISD engaging students, parents, teachers, staff, and community leaders to understand their experiences and insights." She established listening sessions and focus groups at every campus during which she asked questions to learn what is happening on campuses. She spoke with teacher and



DR. TIFFANY SPICER

paraprofessional groups, student groups, and parent groups. Also, she engaged with business partners and community groups.

Spicer acknowledges that there are areas that must be handled immediately such as attendance, boundaries, and upcoming construction. While dealing with right-now issues is paramount, she argues that taking the time to engage with the stakeholders will allow her to develop a vision and plan for the district for which the community can hold her accountable. That said, she does have goals for the district already which include the following: establish a strong foundation, amplify its message, build strong partnerships, champion equity and inclusion, ensure transparency and accountability, and celebrate achievements and foster pride. For a full discussion of Spicer's community engagement plan,

SEE **SPICER**, PG. 15

WACO RETIRED ADMINISTRATOR AND EDUCATOR—FOREVER A LEGEND

Dr. Hazel Rowe is a seasoned retired educator. Rowe worked in education for over 50 years, including nearly a quarter of a century in Waco ISD. Her teaching career began in Houston, Texas after she received her BS from Texas Southern University (TSU). Rowe was an elementary school teacher for several years in Clear Lake, Utah and McGuire Air Force Base, New Jersey before returning to Texas. She graduated from Texas A&M University with a doctorate in education administra-



DR. HAZEL ROWE

tion.

She began her Waco career at North Waco Elementary as a fourth-grade teacher. After serving at North Waco, Rowe was selected as WISD's first Facilitator leading to assistant principal and principal at Crestview. She then went on to WISD Director of Elementary Operations. Later, she was named the district's associate superintendent for school improvement and assistant su-

SEE **ROWE**, PG. 4



J.L. & LINDA CRAWFORD

A co-owner of *The Anchor News*, J.L. Crawford is the director of operations for the paper. He is also an instructor at McLennan Community College, a Bible teacher, and a LegalShield Senior Manager. Linda Crawford is co-owner and editor of *The Anchor News*. She is an instructor at McLennan Community College, a Bible teacher and a conference, workshop and motivational speaker.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH'S WALK THROUGH MUSEUM EXHIBIT

BY W.B. GUNTER

The E-Center, located at 809 Gray Street in Killeen will welcome its first walk through museum to commemorate Black History Month. Carolyn Brown, owner of the E-Center is excited to welcome families, vendors, organizations, and historians to this historic two day event February 22nd and 23rd from 12:00 noon until 5:00 pm.

Black History Month, founded by Carter G. Woodson, is a time to delve into historical accomplishments and learn about the tenacity and achievements to build upon a foundation of excellence and resilience. According to community advocate, Babatunde, "We will be highlighting our ancestors because we never dishonor them. This museum will follow a timeline from Africa to Black Lives Matter, with exhibits and stations covering the Transatlantic slave trade, Reconstruction,



CAROLYN BROWN

Segregation, Civil Rights, and

more."

Guests will have opportunities to learn about Killeen's Black History, the military, and view documentaries. As everyone moves between stations, vendors will be on site so guests may make purchases while they engage and immerse themselves in this historical endeavors. Vendors will need to contact MsCarolyn Brown via Facebook or call (254) 702-8845. If you're interested in participating with the exhibit or volunteering, please contact Babatunde by phone (254) 371-9532. If an organization, or group would like a guided walk through tour, please contact Ba-

batunde to schedule.

This free walk through museum and program is an open door into the preservation of history. It will document the journey of the Black experience in America's history. This will mark the first year for this event. Historians on site will have a wealth of valuable information available to fill in historical deficits.

The E-Center, located conveniently in downtown Killeen serves as a hub for a multitude of events. On the 8th of March, E-Center will open its doors to the World Book Day, founded by author and founder of Killeen's Essential Workers Day, Je'NayRadcliff.

From the Editor...

CHOOSE WORDS WISELY

We often hear, "What you say is what you get." This simple phrase means our words shape our reality. Choosing words wisely can influence our attitude and actions. For example,

saying "I can" instead of "I can't" changes our mindset. Words can uplift or discourage. They can speak life or they can speak death. How do I know? The Bible tells me so.

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MEET TERESA COURTNEY: NANBPW BUSINESS OWNER HONOREE

Teresa Courtney as a single parent and caregiver for her parents, received her Associate of Science in Business Administration from Austin Community College, Austin, Texas; Bachelor of Science in Management from Park College, Parkville, Missouri (Austin Site); and a Master of Business MBA from LeTourneau University, Longview, Texas (Austin Site). While attending school she worked for the State of Texas and held several part-time jobs. During this time, she held several positions that included Clerk, Restitution Analyst, Legal Secretary, Contract Technician, Contract Specialist, Program Specialist, System Analyst, and Conservation Analyst just to name a few.

These positions she held assisted in the development of her



TERESA COURTNEY

skill in being detailed oriented, resourceful, self-motivated professional. Adaptable individual who thrives in fast-paced, dead-

line-driven environments. She exhibits strong organizational, analytical, problem-solving, and communication abilities.

Because of her passion of putting her personal touch on her creations, her family and friends always received handmade gifts possessing the talents that God blessed her with. As a member of the Cattleya Foundation of Hope, she was able to express her passion for creating beauty decorations while helping a worthy cause by providing decorations for fund raising events. After several years of working and taking care of others and with the support and encouragement from family and friends, she finally decided at the age of 63 that she was not too old to reach for her dream of owning her own business, Over The Top Creations.

THE *Anchor* NEWS

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PURPOSE

The Anchor News, dedicated to serving the community and surrounding areas, focuses on positive news and accomplishments of minorities.

POLICY

Anchored on the principles of scripture, *Anchor News* will at no time publish information that is potentially libelous material or intentionally malicious, derogatory or irrelevant.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Signed opinion articles do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the editorial staff. Unsigned editor-

ials reflect the opinions of the editor.

LETTERS & ARTICLES POLICY

The comments and opinions of our readers are welcomed. Letters and articles should be e-mailed. Letters should be no longer than 200 words and must include a name and phone number. Article submissions should be no longer than 450 words and should include an original head shot (in jpeg

format) along with your name, address and phone number. We reserve the right to edit for grammar, space, potentially libelous material and copyright infringement. We also reserve the right to refuse derogatory, irrelevant and malicious submissions.

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Subscriptions are \$49 a year (12 issues) and can be paid by check or money order. Send all correspondences to *The Anchor News*, P.O. box 24014, Waco, Texas 76702, or email to theanchornews@aol.com.

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Contributing Writer

SCOTT NEFF
Design/Layout

WACOAN, STATE REPRESENTATIVE, CHARLES EDWARD JEFFERSON PASSES

Charles Edward Jefferson Sr., of Rockford departed this earthly life Friday, January 10, 2025. He was born March 31, 1945 in Waco, Texas the son of Lee Sr. and Victoria Jefferson. Charles lived in Rockford Over 50 years coming from Waco, TX. He married the former Genell Blair, who preceded him in death. Charles was previously employed as a salesman by Rockford Humphrey Cadillac and Olds and Lou Bachrodt Chevrolet and Fairway Ford in Freeport. He served as a Illi-

nois State Representative 67th District, 13 years before retiring in 2014. He also served on the Winnebago County Board, serving as chairman. Charles was a veteran of the U.S. Army serving as a Staff Sargent in the Military Police. He was a member of Providence Baptist Church. Charles was a member of the Booker Washington Community Center, serving on the board; a member of the Lions Club; Welcome Star Lodge #36 PHA, F&AM; and NAACP. Charles graduated from A.J.



CHARLES JEFFERSON

Moore High School in Waco; and attended Paul Quinn College in Waco.

Charles leaves to cherish many fun and loving memories, three sons, Carl Edward Jefferson, Charles E. Jefferson Jr., and Curtis Lamar Sr; ten grandchildren; nine great grandchildren; one great great grandson; three brothers, Lee Andrew (Della) Jefferson Jr; Kenneth Jefferson and Rev. Frank (Bonnie) Jefferson Sr; six sisters, Joyce Sallis, Linda Pate, Dorothy (Duane) Foster, Patsy (Ken-

neth) Jones, Amie Belcher and Karen (Zachary) Thompson; a host of nieces, nephews, cousins other relatives and friends. He was predeceased by his parents; Lee Andrew Jefferson Sr. and Victoria Jefferson; wife, Genell; brother, Robert Jefferson; two grandchildren, Chantell Olsten and Katisha "Pooh" Davis.

Services were held 11:00 a.m. Saturday, January 25, 2025. Arrangements completed by Carl E. Ponds Funeral Home Inc. 200 N. Johnston Ave.

MEET KESHIA MILLER: NANBPW BUSINESS OWNER HONOREE

Keshia Miller is a dynamic, unconventional entrepreneur and dedicated community leader based in Waco, TX. Alongside her husband and partner of 22 years, Rocky Miller, Keshia has built a thriving portfolio of minority-owned businesses over the past 2 decades. She currently serves as the driving force behind Prosperity Tax & Travel Group, a comprehensive service provider for income tax preparation and all of your travel needs, and is a former owner of Slow Burn Mobile Cigar Lounge, which she transitioned to new ownership in 2024. With

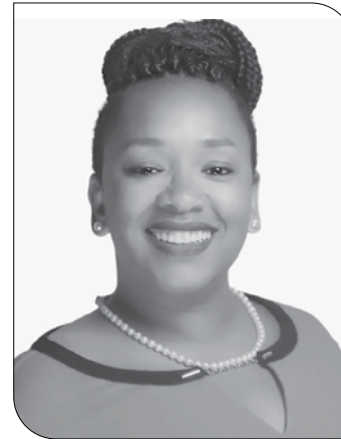
the sale of Slow Burn Mobile Cigar Lounge, Rocky and Keshia have created and are now mentoring a new Black Owned Business Partnership here in Waco. Keshia's influence extends nationwide, with clients spanning across the United States and its territories.

Keshia's entrepreneurial journey is marked by notable milestones. In just three years, Slow Burn Mobile Cigar Lounge became the leading online retailer for luxury cigars owned by Black entrepreneurs. Her commitment to excellence and innovation has consistently set her

apart as a trailblazer in her industries.

A strong belief in God and the close connection of family have instilled an urgent sense of purpose that has fueled each step of Keshia's journey. These foundational values drive her passion for creating opportunities and uplifting her community.

In addition to her business ventures, Keshia is a staunch advocate for minority-owned businesses and a champion of servant leadership. She has spent five years consulting with Workshops in Business Opportunities (WIBO), equipping small business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs from under-served communities with the tools they need for financial and operational success. Her passion for uplifting her community is further exemplified through her work with the East Waco Empower-



KESHIA MILLER

ment Project (EWEP), a non-profit she co-founded with her husband and other key leaders. EWEP is renowned for its annual holiday community dinner, which has provided over \$175,000 in meals and essential items en-


abling individuals and families to battle the cold weather in East Waco over the past seven years.

Originally from Cincinnati, Ohio, Keshia moved to Waco after attending Alabama A&M University on a full music scholarship. She has showcased her musical talent by performing the National Anthem at prestigious events such as the Waco Ironman, Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure, and the National Softball Championships.

Keshia's journey is also a testament to her resilience. As a two-time cancer survivor, she embodies strength and perseverance, qualities that resonate through her personal and professional life. Whether through her entrepreneurial ventures, community initiatives, or inspiring personal story, Keshia Miller continues to make an indelible impact in Waco and beyond.

"The peoples of the world, of whatever race or religion, derive their inspiration from one heavenly Source, and are the subjects of one God."
--- Bahá'u'lláh


"Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is One"
Deuteronomy 6:4



"Your God is One God"
Qur'an 18:110

"Consort with people of all religions with spirituality and fragrance... All originated from God and returneth unto Him: verily He is the Source of creation and the Goal of the worlds."
-- Bahá'u'lláh

To learn more about the Bahá'í Faith, call (254) 717-7903 or visit wacobahais.org/


bahai.org/beliefs/

MEET SHAMIKA BRADSHAW: RECENT NANBPW HONOREE

Shamika Bradshaw is a Waco Native where she graduated from Baylor University in 2014 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Family and Consumer Sciences and in 2018 with a Master degree from Baylor's Garland School of Social Work. She has worked in several different settings such as nonprofit, school, hospital and residential.

Shamika is very passionate about helping others thrive and heal from past traumas, providing education about emotions, removing the negative stigmas around mental health, breaking generational cycles



SHAMIKA BRADSHAW

and changing the "sweep it un-

der the rug" method in the African American culture. Currently she is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker where she has co owned a therapy agency called Rooted in Resiliency since 2022.

This agency provides therapy services that allows all individuals, especially the BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) community, to build resiliency as many endure life's challenges and difficult changes. In the future, she hopes to discuss and advocate for issues such as generational trauma and mental health within the church.

SELF-LOVE

BY MONA DUNKIN

We shall not cease from exploration but at the end of all our exploring will be to return to the place from which we originated and to know it for the first time." T. S. Eliot

You were a twinkle in God's eye before you were ever a gleam in Dad's. Eventually we return to the place of our beginning. Earth to earth; dust to dust, created to Creator. We go back to the source from which we came, back to the love of God.

So why wait? Just as the Be-happy-attitudes are for today on planet earth as well as in the sweet-by-and-by, so, too, is a healthy earthly self-love.

Self-love is primal to phys-

ical and mental health and to spiritual well being.

Wireless technology and scientific discoveries confirm what mystics have known all along – we are all connected. From the vastness of the universe to the quantum iota of the atom, we are all connected. Since God is Love, then you – his offspring – are love. And lovely. And loveable.

Love is one of our greatest needs. Lovingly acts of love buds, blossoms, and blooms. Unloving acts of love may become distorted and perverted. Regardless of the circumstances surrounding your conception, you were born from God's womb of Love. Regardless of the condition of the parents – marital relationship, unloving sex, rape – you



MONA DUNKIN

originated in God's source of love.

Failure to love and accept yourself is also failure to accept God's special creation

of you; the one with a totally unique fingerprint design.

Why is self-love so difficult? Is it because we know ourselves well enough to know that we have unloving thoughts and do unloving deeds? Is it because we reject the parts of us that are in pain? Or does that cause pain?

"Consider the lilies of the field." Think about flowers. All have beauty yet some are poisonous and some have thorns. Some are planted and admired in the boundary of a garden yet are considered weeds when they jump bounds. Self-love is accepting all sides of our personality with each facet simultaneously having a part to play and a lesson to learn.

"Sell your cleverness and

purchase bewilderment." Rumi

Live in the question, the wonder and the awe. Live in the not-knowing-yet-longing-to-know. Learning to love yourself is a baby step to trusting the infinite wisdom that created you. We can only draw to us who we are. As we receive the Love that is our birthright, our genes expression is alchemically changed and we become a new creation with a fidelity to the original. You become who you really are; you become your best self.

Mona Dunkin is a Motivational Speaker, Corporate Trainer and Personal Success Coach. Read past articles at www.monadunkin.blogspot.com.

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DRINK MORE; LIVE LONGER

BY MARGARET IVORY

Drinking enough water is one of the easiest ways to support your health as you age. Staying hydrated keeps your body functioning properly, helps you feel more energized, and even gives your skin a natural glow.

Water plays a big role in keeping your skin supple and hydrated, which can reduce dryness and make fine lines less noticeable. It also helps lubricate your joints, making movement easier and reducing discomfort—something especially important as we get older.

Good hydration is also essential for digestion. It helps your body break down food, absorb nutrients, and prevent constipation. Plus, drinking enough water supports brain



MARGARET IVORY

function—when you're even a little dehydrated, you might feel tired, sluggish, or have trouble concentrating.

So how much should you drink? A good rule of thumb is at least eight glasses a day, but you may need more if you exercise a lot or live in a warm climate. If you're not a fan of plain water, try adding a slice of lemon, cucumber, or berries for a little flavor. Herbal teas and water-rich foods like watermelon and cucumbers can also help you stay hydrated.

Making hydration a daily habit is an easy way to support your overall well-being. A well-hydrated body runs smoothly, keeps you feeling your best, and helps you age gracefully. So keep that water bottle handy and drink up!

Margaret Ivory, Medicare Plans Broker, 254-313-7413.

ROWE | CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

perintendent for campus operations.

Rowe was the first WISD African American interim superintendent from 2000-2001 and again in 2019. She joined Education Service Center Region 12 in Waco in 2001 as associate executive director. Ten years later, she retired from the service center and continued to train teachers doing adjunct teaching in McLen-

nan Community College's alternative teacher certification program and the University of Mary-Hardin Baylor's PhD program. When Transformation Waco was created, Rowe served on its board of directors.

Dr. Hazel Rowe is now retired, but her name in education lives on. Most will agree that she will always be a Waco legend.



WANDA B. GUNTER

Author, Artist &
Contributing writer
for *The Anchor News*

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SELF TALK MATTERS

BY JERRY SNIDER

How we talk to ourselves impacts our health, possibly more than anything else we do. This includes the songs that we get stuck in our heads on repeat. If the lyrics aren't reinforcing who we want to become, they aren't helping us...no matter how popular or upbeat the music is.

For example, there is a song from the 90s by Beck that has the lyric "I'm a loser baby..." It was a very popular song and one I used to listen to. But then I realized the words that I was repeating internally. My cells don't know the difference between me singing a song simply because it's a catchy tune and telling myself "I'm a loser baby..."

I'm far from a loser and I've proven that in many different ways during my life. Do I lose at some things, sure. But I'm not a loser and I won't tell my cells that because if my cells think I'm a loser, they will become losers as well. That's not what I want my cells to be thinking when they are faced



JERRY SNIDER

with a virus, bacteria, or anything else that is trying to harm my body.

The things we say to ourselves also impact our energy. I'm not talking about the energy we need to walk around the block, but whether we face the day with a positive or negative energy. Our cells respond to our energy because they are energetic organisms. Without energy in our body we die pretty quickly. Constantly living with negative energy opens the door for health is-

sues.

I'm not saying positive energy prevents all disease. There are studies where researchers talk to plants with either negative or positive statements and find that both the quality and longevity of the plant's life changes based on the type of statements. I'd say it's also impossible to live a life without any negative thoughts. The key is not allowing the negative energy and limiting thoughts to live on repeat in our mind.

Find the positive things in your life. Let those define who you tell yourself you are.

Have a health question for Jerry? Send it to jerry@allinhealthandwellness.com.

Jerry Snider is an exercise physiologist, health coach, and owner of All In Health and Wellness. He has authored two books available on Amazon: No More Sugar Coating and Confidence Through Health, and is the host of the podcast Confidence Through Health. Visit www.allinhealthandwellness.com to learn more about Jerry Snider.

EXPLORING UNIQUE ADVANTAGES OF LEGALSHIELD

BY J.L. CRAWFORD,
LEGALSHIELD,
SENIOR MANAGER



J.L. CRAWFORD

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MEET TONJA CARPENTER: NANBPW BUSINESS OWNER HONOREE

Tonja Carpenter is the owner of Postpartum Doula & Lactation Services of Waco and is Community Doula of Waco's founder and CEO. Tonja's influence in the Waco community results from her leadership gifting and her perseverance through trial. Tonja had a traumatic post-birth experience with the fourth of her and her husband Vincent's five children, followed by a year of postpartum depression. These trials gave Tonja vision for helping women through the birthing, postpartum, and breastfeeding experience. After her children were older and phasing out of homeschooling, Tonja earned her Postpartum Doula Certification and International Board-Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC) credentials to go along with her Bachelor of Business Administration in Fi-



TONJA CARPENTER

nance from Baylor. In 2015, she introduced postpartum doula support services to the Waco and the McLennan County areas when she started Postpartum Doula Services of Waco and was the only certified postpartum doula in Waco and McLennan County. Lactation Services of Waco, which was the first privately owned lactation practice in Waco was started in 2017. Until 2022, she was the only African-American IBCLC in the county. Tonja provides highly skilled lactation support services for breastfeeding moms and specializes in oral dysfunction issues that many babies have. She is one of very few IBCLCs in the state of Texas who have earned the Orofacial Myofunctional Therapy Certification. In 2019, Tonja started Community Doula of Waco (CDOW) which provides pre-birth and post birth care for

moms. Tonja felt the Lord call her to provide postpartum doula support services to low-income families, leading her to develop the nonprofit which now provides birth doula, postpartum doula, and basic breastfeeding support to moms across Waco and McLennan County, positively impacting these vulnerable families's maternal health outcomes. CDOW further supports the community through its doula mentoring program, which develops newly trained doulas into highly skilled doulas. The professional development program has helped former clients become doulas,

significantly increasing their income and the net worth of their families. Tonja's lactation and doula organizations have truly uplifted the community through strengthening families from a healthcare and financial perspective. Additionally, she serves with DONA International and the Texas Doula Association to advocate for and advance the doula profession as well as working to get legislation passed for Medicaid to cover doula support services in the state of Texas. Tonja and Vincent have been married 31 years, and they have five grown children and two grandchildren.

AN INTENSE BATTLE

BY PASTOR
MATTHEW REED

One of the lessons to be learned is that the church is in a battle and it has become more intense. As good soldiers, we must check our equipment. Our loins (mind) must be filled with truth (God's word). After all, our battle is spiritual, not carnal. Truth helps us to identify the enemy. Ephesians 6:12 exposes the enemy. "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." Carnal weapons have no effect against these enemies. When we are engaged in battle, we must have the breastplate of righteousness. These instructions are found in Ephesians 6:14: Having on the breastplate of righteousness;



**PASTOR MATTHEW
AND LADY HELEN REED**

Next there is equipment for the feet (Ephesians 6:15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace). Another item we must have is the shield of faith. Ephesians 6:16 says, Above all, taking the shield of faith. There will be some things the enemy

will throw at you (fiery darts) that by the shield of faith only will you be able to extinguish them. We must have the helmet of salvation which protects the head. This is your command center or if you prefer, your center of operation, your communication center. All these operate from the same place. The helmet of salvation is having Jesus the Christ as your Lord and Savior. This is a must.

The last item of your equipment that enables the church to overcome (conquer) the enemy is the sword of the word of God (Ephesians 6:17 and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. After putting on the whole Armor of God (equipment), follow instructions. Pray (Ephesians 6:18): Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.



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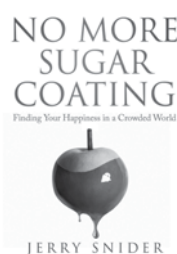
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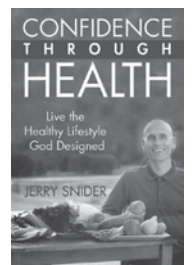


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MEET OLGA RODGERS: NANBPW BUSINESS OWNER HONOREE

Olga Y. Rodgers is a native of Corpus Christi, Texas, and is the daughter of Gertrude and Clifton Woodson. She is the niece of Nannette Hutchison, one of the founders of the Alpha Rho Sigma Chapter of Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc. in Waco, Texas. She is the mother of one son, Lavert Rodgers.

Rodgers has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Speech Pathology from Baylor University in Waco, Texas. She is the first four-year African American woman to have started and graduated from Baylor



OLGA Y. RODGERS

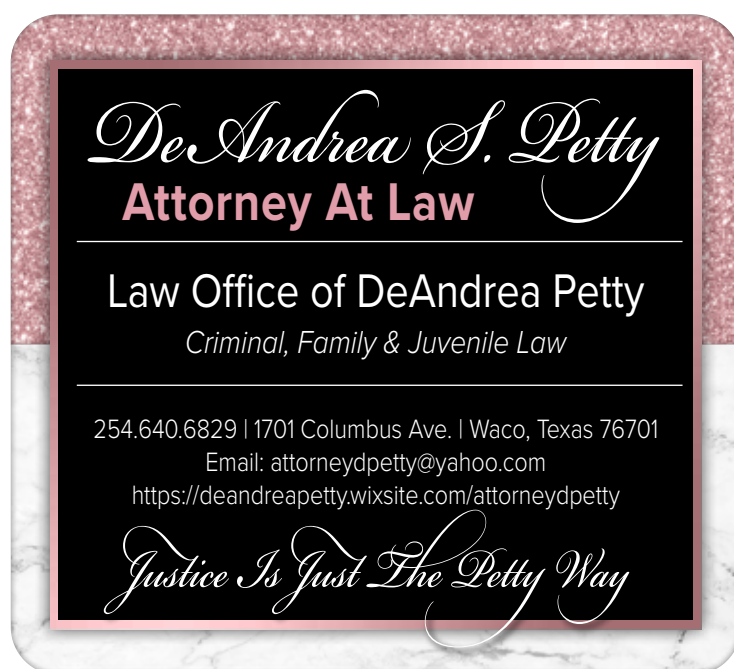
University. She continued her post-graduate education at Baylor University, obtaining a Master of Science degree in Speech Pathology and Audiology. She holds a Certificate of Clinical Competence from the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA CCC/SLP).

Rodgers has worked as an English instructor, math instructor, American Sign Language instructor, Speech Language Pathologist, and Educational Audiologist throughout Texas, California, Arizona, and Minnesota. As a Speech Pathologist and Audiologist, she has become an experienced trainer, sign language instructor, and

interpreter for the deaf. She has provided speech therapy services for individuals with communication disorders, autism, and hearing impairment for over 30 years. She is the founder and operator of Rodgers Speech, Hearing and Educational Service, PLLC. The office provides children and adults with individual speech, language, and hearing therapy. Ms. Rodgers is also the owner and operator of Mathnasium of Killeen, a math-only learning center. Her son, Lavert Rodgers, serves as the Center Director.

Rodgers has served and continues to serve on many committees at the local, state, and national levels for Alcohol & Drug Addiction and Recovery as a spokesperson and coordinator of services. She is the founder and operator of The Recovery Hope House, Inc. in Waco, Texas.

Rodgers says that her heart lies at the local level for providing treatment and services for families and individuals with communication disorders and special needs. She states, "My primary purpose in life is to be of maximum service to GOD and to my fellow man."



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"After God, Destiny, and a Glass of Wine, I felt like I could take the author's response to certain circumstances and apply to my own life. Each chapter is a life learning lesson of praising God through hard times, and walking into God's plan for my life. It may appear as an easy read, because I read it in one day my first time reading it. Then I had the opportunity to re-read and breakdown each chapter week by week."

Rey

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(Reviewed in the United States on June 13, 2020)

"This is an amazing book. I found it helpful in navigating my fear of not reaching my full potential. It helped me understand how I can have a positive God-ordained destiny. Excellent work!"

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MEET DIONNDRIAH SIMMONS: NANBPW BUSINESS OWNER HONOREE



DIONNDRIAH SIMMONS

Dionndriah Simmons was born and raised in Waco, Texas. She holds a Bachelor's and Master's degree in Social Work and is currently pursuing her teacher's certification in Special Education. Dionndriah is employed as a Behavior Intervention Specialist and a Coach at G.W. Carver Middle School. She is a proud member of Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority Inc. and actively contributes to her community by volunteering at various local events. Among her most valued roles are being a daughter, sister, and most importantly, a mother.

In addition to her profession-

al and community roles, Dionndriah is an entrepreneur and the proud owner of Dion's Secret Closet. As a plus-sized woman, she struggled to find clothing that catered to her size or aligned with her budget, a challenge she knew others faced as well. Recognizing that many individuals also struggled with self-esteem and confidence, she created Dion's Secret Closet in August 2020 to provide affordable plus-sized apparel. Together

with her co-owner, SaLetha Staples, she developed this online retail platform to offer a convenient and safer way to shop during the COVID pandemic. Dion's Secret Closet strives to not only offer stylish clothing but also empower individuals blessed with curves. As their motto states, they encourage women to embrace their curves and stop keeping them a secret. Shoppers are invited to join and become a "Secret Doll for LIFE."

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MEET TAMARA HENDERSON: NANBPW BUSINESS OWNER HONOREE

Tamara Henderson, née Dowdy, is the daughter of Ervin Lofton and Deborah Dowdy-Lofton. Born and raised in Waco, Texas, Tamara graduated from Waco High School and the MCC. cosmetology program, which she completed while in high school in 1998. Tamara says even at a young age, hair has always been her passion.

When Tamara was very young, her great-aunt recognized her gift and introduced her to Marcel Irons. By the 2nd grade, Tamara was combing her own hair and most of the little girls' hair in the apartment complex where she lived. By the age of 12, she was doing Jeri Curls and temporary colors on her grandmother.

Tamara was accepted into a cosmetology program during her last years of high school. When she found out she was pregnant her junior year, she was determined to fulfill her dreams and graduate from both high school



TAMARA HENDERSON

and cosmetology school. Despite the challenges of being a teenage mother, she persevered and completed her education, finishing last in her class but graduating nonetheless.

By the age of 23, Tamara was a single mother of three boys until she later married in 2013. Now, 27 years later, she remains passionate about her craft. Though it hasn't been easy,

thanks to the strong support of family, friends, resilience, and her faith, she has maintained her passion for touching others in more ways than just making them gorgeous.

After managing salons and working for others for many years, Tamara is now a salon owner for the second time. Her first shop, Hair Explosions, was established in 2005. She decided to rename it and give it a different vibe. The name "I Be Glamm'd Beauty and Health Bar" was inspired by her father, who passed away in 2013.

The salon is now located at 825 Elm Ave. Tamara specializes in alopecia treatment, natural hair, short cuts, weaves, sew-ins, color, and holistic hair care. She also makes her own antibacterial hair growth oil, conditioner, and hair growth capsules with sea moss. Contact her to schedule a consultation at 254-265-9111.

WHAT IS AN APPRAISAL? PART 1

SUBMITTED BY LINDA MCDONALD

An appraisal is an opinion on a home's market value that helps a lender ensure the purchase price is in line with the property value. The process is led by a licensed or certified residential appraiser—an independent third party engaged by the lender to provide a professional judgment on the home's value. Appraisers do not represent the buyer or seller; their sole duty is to come up with a fair and accurate valuation of the property. While all appraisers follow a set of standards, appraisers who are REALTORS® have the added commitment to uphold the REALTOR® Code of Ethics.

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If you are taking out a mortgage on your new home, your lender will usually require you to get an appraisal to help establish the "loan-to-value ("LTV") ratio," or the percentage of



LINDA MCDONALD
REALTOR, CRS, GRI, PMN, SRS

the home's price that you'll borrow. Higher LTV ratios are riskier investments for the lender, so generally they look for LTV ratios of 80% or less. If you are paying in cash, an appraisal isn't required, but it can still be useful to get a third-party opinion to make sure you aren't overpaying. In certain instances, the requirement for an appraisal may even be waived by either the lender or the buyer to make their offer more attractive to a seller.

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MEET ANDREA MCDOWELL: NANBPW BUSINESS OWNER HONOREE

With nearly thirty years of experience in the death care industry, Andrea Jaquay McDowell, a native of Waco, Texas, is best known for her style, dedication to others, empathy, mentorship, courage under stress, attention to detail, and exemplary service to families across Texas. A "Vessel of Grace" is what defines this dynamic woman of excellence.

During high school, Andrea graduated from LaVega High School and earned a license as a cosmetologist. In addition to serving the community and raising a family, Andrea earned two degrees, an associate degree in general studies from McLennan Community College and a bachelor's degree in business from Tarleton State University.

By rendering paramount service in a distinctive manner, Andrea takes pride in her calling. The tasks she performs include the preparation of remains for burial, cosmetizing, and assuring the satisfaction of bereaved families.

Dating back to adolescence, she worked at the prominent family firm McDowell Fu-



ANDREA MCDOWELL

neral Home, L.L.C., in the heart of Waco, Texas, and Hillsboro, Texas, alongside her father, the late Lester McDowell. Formally serving as Vice-President and Funeral Director in Charge, now currently serving as President and Funeral Director in Charge.

Andrea is a member of To-liver Chapel Missionary Baptist Church. She is the daughter of Lester and Lois J. (Cotton) McDowell and the mother of three sons, Cedarian, Brenton, and Ayden.

MEET JESSICA HORNE: NANBPW BUSINESS OWNER HONOREE

Jessica Horne is the current owner of Jess Soul Food Cafe in Waco, Texas. She spent over 25 years in quality assurance in the corporate world; however, her passion has always been cooking. She began cooking at an early age, preparing meals for her family as her mother worked evenings. Her first cooking job was at a nursing facility in Waco, Texas, and with dreams of becoming the Food Service Manager, she enrolled in the TSTC Culinary Arts Department.

Jessica's first production job was at a local bakery, where she also assisted in the quality department. From there, her career took



JESSICA HORNE

off. Throughout her career, quality and integrity have always been her main fo-

cus. She worked in various quality control and inspection roles before deciding to retire in 2021. Knowing she wanted to open her own restaurant, she had been accumulating cooking equipment since 2003 and recognized a need for soul food in South Waco. She contacted the owners of her current location, expressing her interest in renting the space. In the meantime, she bought a food truck and began putting it together.

Ironically, two days after her birthday in 2022, the owners contacted her about leasing the space for six months. That marked the beginning of Jess Soul Food Cafe.

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MEET MARGARET IVORY: NANBPW BUSINESS OWNER HONOREE

For over 40 years, Margaret Ivory has been dedicated to making complex topics easy to understand. Whether teaching children about the Bible in Sunday School or explaining Medicare to new recipients, her gift for simplifying difficult concepts has always been invaluable.

When she is working with Medicare clients, her priority is ensuring they fully understand what Medicare is, how it works, and how it can best serve their needs. Only after achieving this clarity does she guide them through selecting the right plan. Rather than overwhelming clients with numerous options,



MARGARET IVORY

she carefully analyzes two or three plans that best suit their

needs for the upcoming year.

Ivory finds the most joy in breaking down benefits and features, helping clients see how each plan aligns with their specific needs. Importantly, the final decision always rests with the client—not her. With a strong commitment to integrity, she has never been accused of placing someone in the wrong plan. If clients need adjustments during the Medicare Open Enrollment Period, she ensures they receive the right assistance.

For Ivory, counseling is more important than selling. She prioritizes what is truly best for each client, even

advising some to remain on their current group plans if that's the right choice. Her

approach is built on trust, education, and a deep commitment to serving others.

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LEADER | CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

support, and genuine friends, education has been pivotal in her career and quality of life.

Over the past eighteen years, Shields has been blessed to share many successes with the students, staff, parents and all other stakeholders in the LaVega communities, and she gratifyingly proclaims, "I'm extremely proud of LaVega Elementary School being recognized as a National Blue Ribbon School,

the passing of two bond elections that have allowed new schools and facilities' renovations throughout the district, three State Championships in Boys' Track and Field, two State Championships in Football, and three Girls' Basketball State Championships."

Other great accomplishments during Shield's progression include the Early College High School Partnership Program with McLennan Com-

munity College which enables LaVega High School students to earn core complete or associate degrees before earning their high school diplomas and the Pathway in Technology Early College High School (P-TECH) Partnership with Texas State Technical College which allows students to earn industry certifications.

In performing her responsibilities as a Servant Leader, Shields acknowledges her

relationship with her Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ. Upon arriving at her office, her daily ritual is to recite the Work Prayer to cover her actions and encounters. Next, she renders prayers for the students, staff members, families, and communities and always seeks opportunities to leave individuals more encouraged. She is very appreciative of the support of the LaVega ISD Board of Trustees that strives to make sound decisions in the best interests of the students and staff. Likewise, the Board's consistency allows the district to continue an upward trajectory with limited delay.

As Dr. Shields enters her nineteenth year as the Superintendent of Schools in LaVega ISD, she continues to embrace the district's mission statement that emphasizes the beliefs "to provide a needs-satisfying environment where everyone can produce successfully, with the understanding that learning adds quality to life. Preparing each student to contribute to an ever-changing interdependent society is our commitment." Likewise, her ongoing support of the district's

vision, "Making excellence a tradition..." is evident in her energies toward maintaining celebrated atmospheres and eminent expectations that are articulated well. At the core of Shields' Servant Leadership is her dedication in upholding the educational philosophy of the district and her commitment to the belief, "All students can, should, and will learn when provided a physically, mentally, and socially safe environment that is comprised of equity, respect, and unconditional acceptance for others while engaging in ethnically relevant curricular and enrichment experiences."

The unwavering dedication, genuine concern, willingness to go above and beyond, ability to create an engaged, productive, and positive work environment, the presence of commanded respect, and prioritizing the needs of students, staff, parents, and community members above her own, solidifies the exceptional role that Dr. Sharon Shields fulfills in her role as Superintendent of Schools in LaVega ISD. The leadership that Dr. Shields exemplifies is not about power, but about empowering others to reach their full potential.

MEET CORLISS MCBRIDE: NANBPW BUSINESS OWNER HONOREE

With over 50 years of accounting experience, Corliss McBride has a clientele that includes both individuals and corporations. She has worked in both the public and private sectors, with a significant understanding of governmental regulations pertaining to individual, corporate and not-for-profit organizations.

She is the owner of McBride Business Services where she devotes her practice to providing accounting services, consultation, tax planning and preparation and training for individuals, small businesses, churches and other not-for-profit organizations. Her dedication to accuracy, financial security, transparency and individualized service has earned her the trust of many and a very diverse clientele.

Corliss graduated from Alabama A&M University Magna Cumulate with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration/Accounting. Her past work has included setting up accounting books manually and with various accounting software, preparing accounting entries representing assets and liabilities



CORLISS MCBRIDE

for clients, documenting all financial transactions completely, preparing tax returns which

include federal, state and local for taxing units across the country. She has trained individuals in the utilization of accounting software, budgeting and management for new startup and ongoing business.

Corliss is a member of One Fellowship United Methodist Church where she currently serves as the lay leader and Chairperson of the Staff-Pastor-Parish Relations Committee. She is a Certified Lay Servant in the United Methodist Church and has served on various agencies and committees church wide.

Corliss's mission is to empower individuals and provide them with the knowledge needed to make them successful in life.

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"BE HOLY" IS A COMMAND, NOT A SUGGESTION. PART 1

BY EVANGELIST
RUBY MCCRAY

"But now you must be holy in everything you do, just as God who chose you is holy. For the Scriptures say, 'You must be holy because I am holy.'" 1 Peter 1:15-16

The following is how Webster's New World Dictionary with Student Handbook describes Holy: 1. Dedicated to religious use; consecrated; sacred. 2. Spiritually pure; sinless. 3. Deserving reverence or worship. 4. Associated with Jesus and his life.

Holy people are set apart for the Lord's purpose. Holy things are set apart for the Lord's purpose. If you are truly a born-again believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, you are holy. You can't go everywhere, do and handle everything, and neither can you be handled by everyone or thing. Here is an account as recorded in 2 Samuel 6:1-8.

King David along with thirty thousand of his troops went to bring back the Ark of God, which is also called the LORD of Heaven's Armie, to the City of David. They placed the Ark on a new cart which was driven by oxen. They were so happy to be able to get the Ark back. They were celebrating by playing all kinds of musical instruments, singing and rejoicing. The oxen stumbled so Uzzah took hold of the Ark to keep it from falling. God became angry and killed him. King David became angry and afraid; therefore, the Ark of God was left at Obededom's house for three months.

Why did God kill Uzzah for simply trying to keep the Ark from falling? The Ark was HOLY, it was never supposed to be carried on a cart, and certain hands were not supposed to touch it. The Ark of God was square with a golden ring on each corner. Two long poles were to be placed through each of the two rings, and carried by four priests. You may look it up on YouTube.

Precious people, God tells us in the Bible exactly how we are to live our lives. We are supposed to study the Bible daily so that we can learn how to do everything that's written in it. Then we will make our own way prosperous, and we will have good success. That's a promise. Joshua 1:8 and God can't lie. Titus 1:2

Psalms 119:9, 11 says, "How can a young person stay pure? By obeying your Word. I have hidden your Word in my heart, that I might not sin against you."

"Do not love this world nor the things it offers you, for when you love the world, you do not have the love of the Father in you. For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions. These are not from the Fa-



EVG. RUBY MCCRAY

ther, but are from this world. And this world is fading away, along with everything that people crave. But anyone who does what pleases God will live forever [in Heaven]." 1 John 2:15-17

Christians are supposed to be the examples in this world. The people of this world should be able to watch Christians to find their way to Jesus. Jesus said that we are the light of the world on hilltops—not hiding under bushel baskets. We need to give light so that sinners can find their way to Jesus. He also said that we are the salt of the earth. We are to preserve and bring out the flavor that others have buried within themselves. Matthew 5:14-16

It's a shame how so many professing Christians have watered down Christianity that the precious people of this world can't see the difference. I love what the Evangelist Morris Murillo says about some of our churches, "Big Screens, Smoke Machines and Skinny Jeans." In other words,

not only do some of us try to act like people of the world, but also have the same smell of alcohol, nicotine, weed, etc., knowing that our body is the temple in which God dwells. 1 Corinthians 6:15-20.

"And what union can there be between God's temple and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God said: 'I will live in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they will be my people. Therefore, come out from among unbelievers, and sepa-

rate yourselves from them, says the LORD. Don't touch their filthy things, and I will welcome you. And I will be your Father, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the LORD Almighty.'" 2 Corinthians 6:16-18

I know that we are living in the age of the Speech Police and are limited to what we can say, but I'm determined to obey God rather than man. We are not to fear mankind who can only destroy our body, but we are to fear God who can destroy both our soul

and body in hell. Matthew 10:28 Please join me in March for the continuation of this series. All Scripture is taken from the New Living Translation Version of the Bible unless otherwise stated. You may not believe me, but just what if I'm right?

Evangelist Ruby McCray is the founder of A City of Refuge Ministries. For questions or comments e-mail rubbyacorm@yahoo.com or write to: A City of Refuge Ministries, P. O. Box 2025, Waco, Texas 76703.

MEET BRIA WHITESIDE : HONOREE AT THE RECENT NANBPW'S BLACK HISTORY CELEBRATION

I am Bria Danielle. A self taught hairstylist and entrepreneur. I offer different hair styles for the African American community. I have been doing hair for the last 10 years and I've enjoyed the journey. I started experimenting with hair at 11 years old. I knew then that this was something I always wanted to do. My initially thought was to learn to do hair for myself and close friends. But realizing I had a great talent, I opened up the idea of doing others hair. During the Covid-19 pandemic is when I thought to just teach myself the real skill of doing hair and being in today's hair world. Within a year, I had a solid clientele to start my entrepreneurship journey. I've worked in



BRIA WHITESIDE

Picture Perfect Cuts barbershop

in Bellmead, Tx, for the last 3 years. I have my own suite room. I've been able to manage it and run things exactly how I would like. This has given me the opportunity to grow as an entrepreneur and craft myself, staying on top of my small business

My absolute favorite part about doing hair is seeing the smiles on my clients faces. It's a great feeling knowing that I am able to build up confidence and enhance the beauty in women. I have had social media celebrities as a client, and that was by far one of the best highlight of my career thus far. I've grown so much in the industry.

I look forward to expanding my knowledge and continuing this path.

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THE ONENESS OF GOD

BY MICHAEL JONES

Suppose I asked you to download a picture of God. A good choice might be Michelangelo's painting of God creating Adam on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel; magnificent, but in western civilization God and Jesus are too often depicted only as blond Caucasian men. In any case, how could anyone possibly hope to visually depict God?

While Bahá'í writings teach of a personal God with a personality, including the capacity to reason and to feel love, this does not imply a human or physical form. How could any conception of God, the supreme and ever-present reality in the universe, be human-like? Surely God transcends all human attributes and is obviously beyond any human understanding. Realizing this helps us to see God as a being powerful enough to transcend the differences between different religions' depictions of divinity.

One of the principles of the Bahá'í Faith is that all religions are more alike than not. Beginning with Adam, through Abraham, Moses, Zoroaster, Krishna, Buddha, Jesus and Muhammad, we have gradually learned more about the oneness of God. Bahá'ís believe that Bahá'u'lláh, the founder of our Faith, has even further advanced our understanding of God. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the son of Bahá'u'lláh, exclaimed in one of his Paris Talks: "A star has the same radiance whether it shines from the East or from the West. Be free from prejudice, so you will love the Sun of Truth from whatsoever point on the horizon it may arise!"

Bahá'ís are taught that one develops a closer relationship with God through prayer, meditation, study of the holy writings, and service to humanity. 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote: "Nearness to God is likeness, possible only through devotion to Him; it is attained by unity with mankind and through loving-kindness to all; it is dependent upon investigation of truth, acquisition of praiseworthy virtues, and service in the cause of universal peace and personal sanctification. In a word, nearness to God necessitates sacrifice of self and the giving up of all to Him."

We should investigate all of the divine teachings available to us. The question, "Is this religion right for me?" isn't the right thing to ask. The meaningful question is, "Do these



MICHAEL JONES

teachings come from God?" If they don't, discard them. But if we can't find anything we feel is not of God, doesn't that compel us to investigate further? If they come from God, our duty, our destiny, is to accept them, all of them, and put them at the core of our beings, so that we can rise to our true potential. As 'Abdu'l-Bahá said, "Nearness is likeness."

To learn more, please visit our local Bahá'í website at www.wacobahais.net or the global information site at bahai.org/beliefs.

SPICER

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

visit Waco ISD's website.

Having heard about the "community" repeatedly during the hiring process, Spicer says she wants to "get the pulse of the community" and "hear people's voices."

Spicer attended the University of Texas at Austin where she obtained her Bachelor of

Social Work, Texas State University-San Marcos for her Masters in Educational Leadership, and Texas A&M University for her Doctorate of Philosophy. She is the proud mother of two adult daughters.

Sources: *Waco Tribune*, www.kxxv.com, wacoisd.org

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