



This Week in African American History

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2-year-old math whiz teaches self how to speak Japanese.

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Stacy Abrams announces second run for Georgia gubernatorial seat.

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Chattanooga News Chronicle

A Progressive Voice in the African American Community

Week of December 9, 2021

Volume XXXI, Issue XLIX

Chattanooga, TN

Complimentary

Tri-Octaves to Perform 19th Annual Christmas Concert Dec. 17-18 at Hope City Church



PHOTO SOURCE: FILE PHOTO

CNC Staff Reports

The 19th annual Tri-Octaves Christmas Concert, featuring former Impressions member Willie Kitchens Jr., will be held on December 17 at 7 p.m. and December 18 at 7 p.m., at Hope City Church, located at 7 N. Tuxedo Avenue in Chattanooga. This event is sponsored by the Chattanooga News Chronicle. The Tri-Octaves, a group formed of Tennessee natives and lifelong musicians Willie Kitch-

ens, Jr., Doug Richesin, and Michael Rodgers, each mastering a different genre of music. Their voices combined create a unique harmony celebrated by audiences across all musical tastes. Concert admission is a \$25 donation benefitting The Mary Walker Foundation, a 501(c)3 with a mission to help bring social and economic justice for all Chattanooga citizens through literacy. Space is limited. Attendees may RSVP on the Chattanooga

News Chronicle and Mary Walker Foundation Facebook Pages and on Eventbrite.com. The event will be simulcast via Facebook Live on the Chattanooga News Chronicle and Mary Walker Facebook Pages with donations kindly requested. Event sponsors are welcomed, and interested organizations may contact john@chattnewschronicle.com or call (423) 267-2313 to learn more about sponsorship opportunities.

Colored Troops Monument Dedicated at Chattanooga National Cemetery



SUBMITTED PHOTO: The 44th United States Colored Troops (USCT) Reenactment Group (above) were part of a USCT Monument Dedication Ceremony held on December 4 at Chattanooga National Cemetery. (Photo Credit: Herman Prater, Sr.)

Rep. Hakeem claims he was 'disrespected', 'kicked to side' at vocational center groundbreaking



SUBMITTED PHOTO: State Rep. Yusuf Hakeem (front row, second from left) listens as Hamilton County Mayor Jim Copping (at podium) speaks in front of the old Mary Ann Garber School. The longtime vacant building will be transformed into a college-level vocational training center.

By Camm Ashford

Rep. Yusuf Hakeem, who represents State House District 28, claims his role in establishing a new vocational center in Chattanooga's Avondale neighborhood has been overlooked by state and local officials.

"For seven years, I've been working and tilling the ground for a trade school and getting something in the neighborhood to help people prepare for jobs," Rep. Hakeem explained. "Building up the interest and need for the construction of the school concept started when I was in city council. For five years, while I was on city council, (District 1 City Councilman)

Chip Henderson and I worked to be part of this process."

Rep. Hakeem said he and his many years of hard work were overlooked, "disrespected" and "not recognized" in late October when Gov. Bill Lee joined project funders and stakeholders--as well as city, state, community, educational and industry leaders--to break ground on the new Construction Career Center at 2225 Roanoke Ave.

"You have a legislator who for seven years has been working on this project, to not be recognized at the opening is just disrespectful," Rep. Hakeem said. "It just bothers me, and I'm offended that they basically kicked us to the side and did not involve us in the development of the board, or include us in any participation in the planning process."

The 28,000 square foot career center is replacing the former Mary Ann Garber School in Chattanooga's Avondale neighborhood--which is located in City Council District 9--where Rep. Hakeem served as councilman from 1990 to 2006, and again from 2013 to 2017. He was elected the first vice chairman when elected in 1990.

A collaborative public and private partnership that aims to combat labor shortages in the high-demand field of construction trades, the vocational facility will serve as a centerpiece for construction education and training for Hamilton County high school students and adults, and a career and industry center for construction professionals.

At capacity, the school will serve 160 high school students and 40 adults per day through dual enrollment programs at Hamilton County high schools and Chattanooga State Community College/Tennessee College of Applied Technology at Chattanooga, and will hold 200 people in the event space. It will be the first such vocational learning center since Kirkman Technical High School closed in 1991.

The center boasts a "100% placement in job, union pathway or continuation in construction-related education" for those who attend the program.

Howard, East Ridge and Brainerd high schools--which have Future Ready trade schools--will function as specific feeders for the initiative, but officials said any Hamilton County Schools student can attend.

The approximately \$8 million renovation project is expected to be completed next July. Officials hope the school can be a model for other cen-

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