

## LOCAL / REGIONAL

**Black Cowboys***continued from page 2*

guises, had a Native American sidekick and went through his whole career without being shot.



Bass Reeves was one of the first African-American lawmen

The 1956 John Ford film *The Searchers*, based on Alan Le May's novel, was partly inspired by the exploits of Brit Johnson, a black cowboy whose wife and children were captured by the Comanches in 1865. In the film, John Wayne plays as a Civil War veteran who spends years looking for his niece who has been abducted by Indians. In recent years, black characters have appeared in Westerns such as *Posse*, *Unforgiven* and *Django Unchained*.

While Hollywood is finally starting to pay tribute to the black cowboys of yesteryear, their memory is also being honored by the 200 members of the North Eastern Trail Riders Association, modern-day black cowboys and cowgirls.

Riding more than 100 miles in seven days on horses and in Western-style wagons, they regularly retrace the original trail rides that former slaves made.

As the legal scholar Michael Waldman notes, in the 1860s Southern states "passed Black Codes seeking to restore slavery in all but name. These laws disarmed African Americans but let whites retain their guns." In the West, though, all men carried firearms, regardless of race. The prevalence of African-American troops — the famous Buffalo Soldiers — in the United States Army acclimated western whites to seeing black men bearing arms. The Buffalo Soldiers served under white officers, but they exercised authority over white lawbreakers and mobs. The regular presence of black soldiers in newly established towns not subject to Black Codes often meant that businesses such as hotels and saloons served black customers, even when they did not serve Mexican or Native American customers.

Ranchers returning from the Civil War discovered that their herds were lost or out of control. A combination of a lack of effective herd containment (barbed wire was not yet invented) and with too few white cowhands, the cattle population was running wild. White ranchers tried to round up the cattle and rebuild their herds with slave labor, but eventually the Emancipation Proclamation left them without the free workers on which they were so dependent. Desperate for help rounding up maverick cattle, ranchers were compelled to hire now-free, skilled African-Americans as paid cowhands.

"Right after the Civil War, being a cowboy was one of the few jobs open to men of color who wanted to not serve as elevator operators or delivery boys or other similar occupations," says William Loren Katz, a scholar of African-American history and the author of 40 books on the topic, including *The Black West*.



Black cowboys

Black cowhands were particularly embraced by their white peers. The necessities of trail life meant that cowboys of all races had to work, sleep, and eat side by side. In their influential 1965 book, *The Negro Cowboys*, Philip Durham and Everett L. Jones write of the racist social strictures of Reconstruction-era Texas. "Upon Negro cowboys, however, these sanctions fell less heavily than upon many other Negroes, for as cowboys they had a well-defined place in an early established social and economic hierarchy." Durham and Jones do go on to note, however, that this unique social role did not offer upward mobility. Even experienced and well-respected cowhands and top hands had little chance of ever being promoted to foreman of a cattle outfit. African-American cowboys faced discrimination in the towns they

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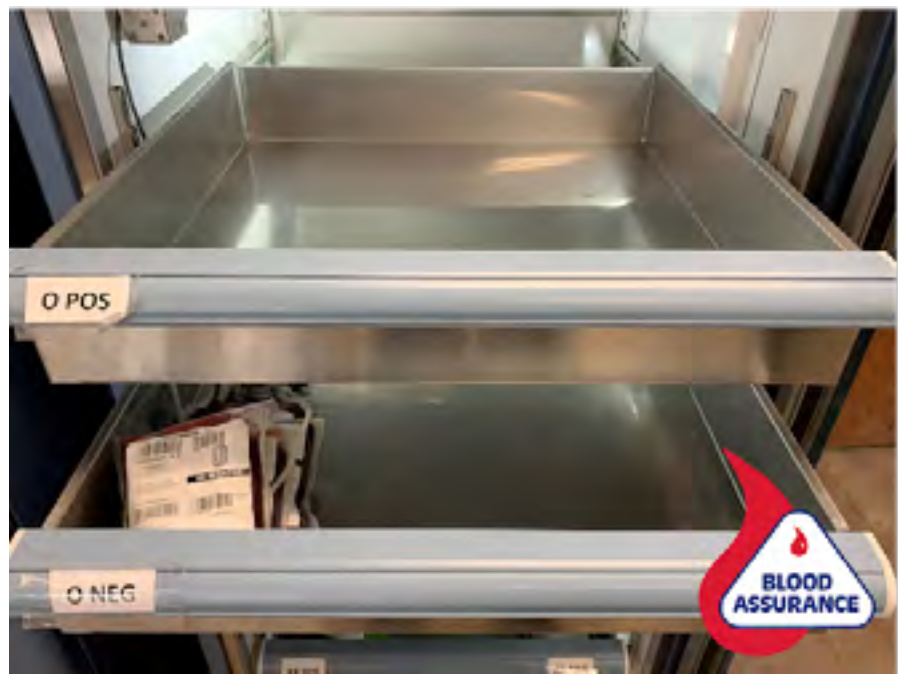
**Recent Mass Trauma Events Lead to Critical Need for Blood**

CHATTANOOGA, Tenn. (March, 8 2022) – Several recent mass trauma events in the Blood Assurance service area have exhausted the organization's blood supply.

As of Tuesday morning, Blood Assurance had less than a one-day supply of type O-positive and B-negative blood and about a day's supply of type O-negative, A-positive and A-negative blood. In order to adequately provide for area hospitals, Blood Assurance needs a five-day supply on the shelf at all times.

"The inventory is critically low," according to Christopher Swafford, Blood Assurance's chief operating officer. "We also fear that with spring break approaching, the numbers are going to dwindle even further. We need about 400 donations per day to adequately supply our local hospitals. The time to donate and be someone's hero is right now."

As an incentive, Blood Assurance is giving away free St. Patrick's Day-themed t-shirts to all individuals who donate through March 17. Additionally, all donors will be entered into a drawing to win a \$500 Mastercard gift card. Moreover, double red cell and platelet donors will receive a \$20 virtual Amazon gift card after their donation through



March 12.

To find the nearest blood drive or donation facility, and to schedule an appointment, donors can visit [www.blood-assurance.org/schedule](http://www.blood-assurance.org/schedule). Donors may also call 800-962-0628 or text BAGIVE to 999777

To be eligible to donate blood, you

must be at least 17 years old (16 years old with parental consent), weigh 110 pounds or more and be in good health. Donors are asked to drink plenty of fluids — avoiding caffeine — and eat a meal that is rich in iron prior to donating.

**Muriel Malone Nolen Named Interim Executive Director of the Tennessee Human Rights Commission**

NASHVILLE, TN (TN Tribune) – The Tennessee Human Rights Commission (THRC) Board Chair Robin Derryberry, has named Muriel Malone Nolen to serve in the capacity of interim executive director effective February 15, 2022.

Nolen joined THRC in April 2021 as the deputy director, and will continue to oversee the agency's day-to-day operations.

In addition to directing the agency operations, Nolen will oversee enforcement and administration, policy and procedure development, case management, mediation, contract negotiations, agency budget, human resources, and staff development.

"In the coming weeks, the Commission's Personnel Committee will review the job description and the core competencies for the position and will update any necessary changes prior to posting for the job possible candidates" said Derryberry.

Prior to joining THRC, Nolen served as an Assistant District Attorney General in Shelby County Tennessee for 18-years. Mrs. Nolen is a trial lawyer by trade and has worked for various governmental and non-profit agencies throughout Tennessee including, the Tennessee Attorney General's Office, Memphis Area Legal Services, Hamilton County District Attorney's Office,



Muriel Malone



Robin Derryberry (THRC) Board Chair

and Southwest Tennessee Community College. Mrs. Nolen received her Bachelor of Science and a Master of Science from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. She received her Juris Doctorate from the University of Memphis.

The Commission's role is to enforce the state's anti-discrimination laws which prohibit discrimination in employment, housing and public accommodation based on race, creed, color,

national origin, religion, sex, disability, age (40 and over in employment), familial status (housing only) and retaliation in employment, housing and public accommodations and coordinate compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. It is the mission of the Commission to safeguard individuals from discrimination through education and enforcement.

**IDOL: from front**

From left, Camm Ashford, Associate Editor, *Chatt News Chronicle* with Ruben Studdard, *American Idol* winner and UTC Masterclass Instructor; are joined by Studdard's long-time friend, Stacy Lightfoot, UTC vice chancellor for diversity and engagement. (Photo: John Edwards, III, CNC)

Noting that he tries "to give my best to the world," Studdard at one point asked the students, "Am I being positive? I want to make sure I'm positive."

Reflecting on his own struggles to develop as a young singer in the church choir in his hometown of Birmingham, Ala., Studdard said he was careful not to overcorrect or come on too strong with the UTC singers.

"These young people are still developing as musicians," he explained. "This is exactly what I was at this age, and I remember it. It's my job to encourage them to be better than they are today. It's not my job to come in and berate or intimidate or make them feel unworthy. My number one hope

is that they have a good time."

The son of two educators — his mother, Emily, still teaches in the Birmingham public school system while his father, Kevin, is a former auto body collision technology teacher — Studdard received a bachelor's degree in vocal studies from Alabama A&M University in 2000.

Studdard's road to UTC began Oct. 16 of last year when, at the behest of longtime friend Stacy Lightfoot, UTC vice chancellor for diversity and engagement, he sang the National Anthem at Finley Stadium prior to the football game between the Mocs and East Tennessee State University.

Before leaving town, Studdard had dinner with Lightfoot and a group that included the head of the UTC Department of Performing Arts. Someone suggested he consider teaching at UTC. And the rest is history.

Studdard, who earned the nickname "Velvet Teddy Bear" from R&B legend Gladys Knight, has seven studio albums to his credit. The Recording Industry Association of America awarded him platinum status — more than 1 million sold — for his debut album, "Soulful." His follow-up record, "I Need an Angel," was the best-sell-

ing gospel album in the U.S. and was certified gold — more than 500,000 sold.

Studdard also has appeared in several television shows as a guest star. His theater credits include starring as Fats Waller in a national tour revival of the musical "Ain't Misbehavin'," which received a Grammy nomination for Best Musical Theater Album and touring alongside actress Robin Givens in the play "I Need a Hug."

In 2018, Studdard, who has long been compared to R&B singer Luther Vandross, released a cover album called "Ruben Sings Luther" and launched his Always & Forever national tour.

After winning "American Idol," he created an advocacy program, the Ruben Studdard Foundation for the Advancement of Children in the Music Arts, to promote music education for students in Birmingham. He has run summer music camps for middle school and high school students since 2003.

Studdard will return to UTC on March 28 for another masterclass.

**Got News?  
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