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ARIZONA



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Local 100 Black Women Coalition Supports CROWN Act For Arizona

Open Letter Urges Action

Special to the Informant

The National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Inc., Phoenix Metropolitan Chapter penned an open letter to Gov. Katie Hobbs, co-signed by several prominent Black women leaders, in support of CROWN Act anti-hair discrimination protections in Arizona.

The CROWN Act, which stands for Creating a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair, is a law that prohibits racial discrimination based on natural textures and protective hairstyles. In Arizona, HB2593 has continued to languish in committee. If passed and signed into law, HB2593 would make it unlawful to discriminate against someone based on their hair texture or protective style either at work or at K-12 and charter schools.

This coalition of women leaders is calling upon the Governor to use her executive powers to protect Black women and girls across the state from this form of discrimination.

Arizona is one of the states that does not currently afford protections for race-based hair discrimination, even if the hairstyle is inherent to racial identity. This means, Black women could be denied opportunities for employment or professional

advancement without consequence. It also means that Black children could be denied entry to school or other educational opportunities because of their natural hair.

NCBW Phoenix Chapter President, Donna Williams, opined, "As we close out Black History Month 2023, this presents perfect time for Gov. Hobbs to use her executive powers to stand in solidarity with Black women and girls on such a relevant and timely social justice issue."

As of February 2023, 20 states have enacted the CROWN Act into law, and several more states have filed or pre-filed legislation for consideration.

"Here in Arizona, the cities of Tucson and Tempe have already passed CROWN Act measures for their cities. These protections must be expanded throughout Arizona," the organization stated. "All of Arizona should be a place where we can express our own individuality and authentic selves without fear of prejudice. No person should ever be judged or held back because of their hair texture or hair style. The time to pass CROWN Act anti-hair discrimination protections in Arizona is now."

See open letter on page 3



Kevin Robinson



Kesha Hodge Washington

District Winners

For the first time in city history, Phoenix has two Black council members.

Voters elected two political newcomers to the City Council in a runoff election which ended Tuesday. While official race results have yet to be determined, retired Phoenix police assistant chief Kevin Robinson and local attorney Kesha Hodge Washington have the most votes.

With 8,311 votes Hodge Washington defeated incumbent Council Member Carlos Garcia (6,482 votes) in District 8, which includes parts of south and downtown Phoenix. In District 6, Robinson (21,390 votes) beat Sam Stone (12,897), former chief of staff for

Council Member Sal DiCiccio, who currently represents the district but was term-limited.

Their four-year terms begin April 17, 2023. Garcia will serve through two more formal council meetings before Hodge Washington's inauguration.

Replacing DiCiccio and Garcia – the council's most conservative and most liberal members, respectively – the new members could allow Democrat Mayor Kate Gallego to build a more moderate coalition to support her political priorities, especially during a turbulent economy. Other key issues facing the city include: affordable housing; policing; and homelessness.



Kesha Hodge Washington with Mayor Kate Gallego and Rep. Greg Stanton.

Biden Budget Details Equity

By Stacy M. Brown, NNPA

President Joe Biden unveiled a \$6.8 trillion budget plan that includes aiding several social programs, raising taxes on the wealthy, and decreasing the country's debt by \$3 trillion over the next decade.

While the plan has little chance of passing through the GOP-led House, the President doubled-down on a previous executive order that directs the federal government to advance an ambitious equity and racial justice agenda.

Biden reminded lawmakers that his administration has made significant progress advancing equity across the federal government, including by releasing a second execu-



utive order last month that strengthens the government's ability to create opportunities for communities and populations that have been historically underserved, and one that "continues to build an America in which all can participate, prosper,

and reach their full potential."

Among other things, Biden's budget seeks the following:

The Budget includes \$471 million to support implementation of the White House Blueprint for *continued on page 2*

THIS WEEK IN BLACK HISTORY: MAR 19 1894

"Without that basic foundation in showmanship, an act can't remain at the top."
— Jackie "Moms" Mabley, born Loretta Mary Aiken, is one of 12 children of businessman and volunteer firefighter James Aiken and Mary Smith, a stay-at-home mother in Brevard, N.C.



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ZONE 11

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 15, 2023

ARIZONA INFORMANT

DEAN'S DUFFERS

Hall Wins APGA Event

In the first full-field event of the APGA Tour's 2023 season, **Kevin Hall** shot a final-round three-under-par 69 and birdied the first playoff hole against **DeVaughn Robinson** to win the *APGA Tour Black History Month Classic* at Indian Canyon Golf Resort in Palm Springs, Calif. Hall and Robinson finished the two-day, 36-hole event at 10-under-par – with Hall securing his fifth career win on the APGA Tour and the \$7,500 winner's prize.



MICHAEL A. DEAN

Hall shot a seven-under-par 65 in the opening round and appeared to be cruising to victory after an opening four-under-par 31 on the front nine. But eight pars and a bogey on the back nine put Hall in a playoff against Robinson who posted 68-66-134. Hall admitted to playing a little more conservative on the back nine, but when he found himself in a playoff, his mind set changed.

Hall reached the par-5 green in two with a driver and then six-iron from 181 yards to 35 feet. Robinson's attempt to reach the green in two clipped a tree and left him 100 yards away. Hall two-putted for birdie and Robinson's birdie attempt just missed giving Hall the victory. Robinson earned \$3,750 for his second place finish.

Robinson began playing golf at age 11 and has been playing his trade for many years. He played collegiate golf at Texas Southern University in Houston and won seven times while in college. He also won the 2017 Houston Amateur Championship. After turning pro in 2021, Robinson joined the APGA Tour in 2022. This past November, he won the local qualifier to earn an exemption into the Korn Ferry Tour's Great Exuma Classic in the Bahamas. He failed to make the cut after the first two rounds but felt good about getting a chance to compete alongside some top notch golfers from around the world.

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DeVaughn Robinson

Kevin Hall



BRIDGING DIVIDES

StrongTIES volunteers (Tracey Kennedy and Jordan Cheeks) with Zion Institute Director Harold Branch (right)

Special to the Informant

The power of community and taking action was on full display when a group of Strong TIES volunteers and Zion Institute Director Harold Branch, came together on a Saturday during March to make a difference in south Phoenix. They were on a mission to set up a computer lab that would provide access to technology and digital literacy programs to underserved communities.

Their efforts are a shining example of what Dr. Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., meant when he talked about creating a beloved community and exemplifies the importance of community engagement

and empowering individuals with the tools to succeed in a digital age.

The idea of taking what's in your hand and community coming together to make a difference is at the heart of Strong TIES' mission. This non-profit organization based in Arizona is committed to promoting STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics) lifelong learning through digital literacy and educational services. They believe that everyone deserves access to the skills and resources they need to thrive in a technology-driven world, regardless of their race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status.

In today's digital era, digital literacy

has become a fundamental requirement for participating in the workforce and society at large. Unfortunately, many communities, especially African American, Hispanic and Native American populations, are disproportionately underrepresented in industries that are part of the digital landscape. Strong TIES is taking bold steps to bridge the digital divide and ensure that all Americans can participate in a society that is increasingly dependent on technology.

One of the ways Strong TIES is promoting digital equity is by collaborating with partners to donate computers to underserved communities, like Zion

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ASU Gammage Brings 'Simply The Best' Of Broadway

ASU Gammage has unveiled its 2023–2024 Desert Financial Broadway Across America – Arizona season that includes six Tempe premieres, a pre-Broadway tour of *The Wiz*, a family favorite *Peter Pan*, and back by popular demand *Hamilton* and *Les Misérables*.

"ASU Gammage is ready to bring 'simply the best' of Broadway for the upcoming season," said Colleen Jennings-Roggensack, ASU Vice President for Cultural Affairs and Executive Director of ASU Gammage. "We've lined up an eight-show package that will keep you rocking in your seats and excited about coming to see live theater at ASU Gammage."

Kicking off the 2023–2024

Broadway season is the story of the "Queen of Rock and Roll" in *Tina: The Tina Turner Musical*, which will make its Tempe premiere Oct. 10–15. One of the world's best-selling artists of all time, Tina Turner has won 12 Grammy Awards and her live shows have been seen by millions, with more concert tickets sold than any other solo performer in music history. Featuring her much loved songs, *Tina* is written by Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Katori Hall and directed by the internationally acclaimed Phyllida Lloyd.

Next up, get ready because here they come! *Ain't Too Proud: The Life and Times of The Temptations* will be Nov 14-19. The electrifying,

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SPORTS:
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Strong TIES, Community Come Together To Bridge Digital Divide For Underserved

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Institute in Phoenix, Ariz. By providing access to technology and digital literacy programs, Strong TIES is helping to ensure that African-American communities are not left behind in the digital era.

Dr. Loretta Cheeks, Ph.D., the founder of Strong TIES, highlighted the importance of digital literacy and readiness in promoting equity, opportunity and socio-economic upward mobility for all American citizens. She stressed that everyone should have access to the skills and resources they need to thrive in a digital era. This is critical for promoting equity and opportunity for marginalized populations like the African American community, who have historically faced significant barriers to accessing STEAM education and careers.

Strong TIES' collaboration with Zion Institute is just one example of its efforts to support STEAM life-long learning through digital literacy. Together, they are making a difference in the lives of underserved communities. From accessing healthcare information to online voting, technology impacts nearly every aspect of our lives. Therefore, all Americans must engage in its design and devel-

opment to ensure that it serves the needs of the entire population.

The success of Strong TIES' efforts is a testament to the power of community coming together to create positive change. By taking what's in their hand and sharing it with others, Strong TIES volunteers and the Zion Institute director are helping to bridge the digital divide and promote digital equity.

Through digital literacy programs, Strong TIES is empowering individuals with the skills they need to succeed in the workforce and participate in society. This is particularly important for communities that have historically faced barriers on all fronts. By promoting equity in STEAM fields, Strong TIES is driving innovation and progress by bringing new perspectives and ideas to the table.

"As community, we must keenly be aware that digital literacy is no longer an option, but a necessity in today's world. With the advancements in technology, we are witnessing a transformation in the way we learn, work, and communicate. As we move towards a more tech-driven future, it is essential to ensure that every American has access to the resources and skills they



need to succeed. We must work together to bridge the digital divide and provide equal opportunities for socio-economic upward mobility.

"By supporting organizations like Strong TIES and the Zion Institute, we can work together to create a more equitable and innovative future for all Americans. Let us join hands and take what's in our hand

to make a positive difference in our communities. Together, we can create a beloved community that break down socio-economic barriers and promote upward mobility, and ensures that everyone has the opportunity to succeed."

Visit strongtiesaz.org for more information about GEM Consortium.

FROM LEFT: **Jordan Cheeks, Tracy Kennedy, Dr. Loretta Cheeks with Strong TIES and Harold Branch. Together, they are helping to bridge the digital divide and to promote digital equity in underserved communities.**

PHOTOS COURTESY STRONG TIES

Through June, 'Black History At ASU: The Legacy Of Dr. Eugene Grigsby Jr.' At Hayden Library

ASU Library's Black Collections Unveils New Exhibit At Opening Reception March 22

ASU Library's Black Collections is honored to present a new exhibit featuring renowned artist, educator and community activist Dr. J. Eugene Grigsby Jr. (1918-2013) and his impact on Arizona's Black art scene. "Black History at ASU: The Legacy of Dr. J. Eugene Grigsby Jr." features engaging works of art by local Black artists who were mentored by Grigsby or worked with him, including Clottee Hammons, Leonard Wilson, Dee Dee Woods and Roosevelt "Rip" Woods.

The exhibit is on display at Hayden Library on the ASU Tempe campus until June 30, 2023.

"Dr. Grigsby left an incredible impact at the university and in the Arizona community," said Jessica Salow, curator of Black Collections



at the ASU Library. "I'm thrilled to help tell his story for a new generation of students on campus, and I'm grateful to the friends and students of Dr. Grigsby who have shared

their art and stories."

Black Collections, a new archival repository within the Community-Driven Archives Initiative at ASU Library, is focused on creating

a robust community collection dedicated to documenting the lived experiences of Black people living and thriving in Arizona.

In addition to the exhibit, the

public is invited to a series of events to celebrate and critically examine Black history in Arizona.

- Dr. J. Eugene Grigsby Jr. Exhibit: Opening Reception, Wednesday, March 22 from 5:30-7pm at Hayden Library

- Dr. J. Eugene Grigsby Jr. Exhibit: Artists Roundtable, Tuesday, March 28 from 5 -6:30pm Zoom

- Black Memory and Storytelling Symposium: Presentations, Thursday, April 20 from 8:30am-4:30pm in Hayden Library, Room 236 & Zoom

- Black Memory and Storytelling Symposium: Archives & Storytelling 101 Workshops, Saturday, April 22 from 10am-3pm at Burton Barr Central Library, Pulliam Auditorium

- Juneteenth Celebration at the Arizona Heritage Center, Sunday, June 18 from 12 noon-5pm.

To learn more and register, visit lib.asu.edu. For questions about Black Collections or the exhibit, contact Jessica Salow at jessica.salow@asu.edu.



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