



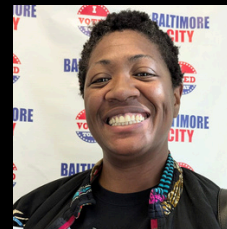
IMPACT REPORT



TEAM AFRO



FRANCES MURPHY DRAPER
PUBLISHER & CEO
PUBLISHER & CEO



AFRO
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For over 133 years, the AFRO has proudly stood as a beacon of truth and a powerful voice for the Black community. As we reflect on 2025, our commitment to uplifting, inspiring, and informing remains as steadfast as ever. Together, we continue to preserve our liberties, celebrate our achievements, and work toward a brighter, more equitable future for all. Thank you for making the AFRO part of your story this year and beyond.

Local news is facing unprecedented challenges. Across the country, newsroom closures, shrinking budgets, and job cuts have left many communities without reliable, trusted sources of news. One in five Americans now live in “news deserts,” where no local coverage exists to hold power accountable or tell community stories. The AFRO is determined not to let that happen to our community — and this year, we took bold steps to ensure our newsroom remains strong, innovative, and impactful.

In 2025, we made significant strides, including:

- Expanding our digital presence from 26 billboard sites northwest of Baltimore to 101 locations across the Baltimore metro areas, bringing the AFRO’s voice directly into the heart of the community.
- Gaining media exposure on several local and national platforms.
- Receiving numerous editorial and digital awards from the Maryland, Delaware, DC Press Association (MDDC), the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA), and Inner City Capital Connections (ICIC), Inner City 100 List. In addition, the AFRO was named among the Nation’s Top Black News Outlets on Two FeedSpot Lists.
- Integrating artificial intelligence technology to help streamline our reporting and posting processes, allowing us to deliver timely, accurate, and engaging content to our readers and subscribers.

In addition to strengthening our newsroom, we proudly hosted impactful community events, including:

- Annual Baltimore Tea honoring ten historic community organizations 75 years and older (April 26th)
- Juneteenth Celebration of Maryland HBCUs (June 18th)
- Black Business Matters EXPO celebrating Black-owned businesses (August 14th)
- Unsung Heroes luncheon honoring Department of Public Works employees (October 23rd)
- A Salute to Veterans event (November 13th)
- Mrs. Santa Toy Giveaway with Afro Charities (December 13th)

These events not only celebrated achievements but reinforced our mission to amplify Black voices and elevate the stories that matter most to our community.

As we reflect on a year of growth and resilience, we recognize that none of this is possible without your support.

With gratitude and determination,
Dr. Frances Murphy "Toni" Draper
Publisher & CEO, afro.com

KEY TOUCHPOINTS

28.6M

FB VIEWS

We are proud to share key milestones that highlight the continued growth and impact of the AFRO across digital, community, and social platforms. These accomplishments are a testament to our unwavering commitment to informing, uplifting, and empowering the Black community.

1.7M

PAGE VIEWS

Editorial Impact

- 2,582 articles posted — delivering a consistent stream of news that keeps our community informed and connected.
- 24 prestigious journalism awards — including 20 MDDC and 4 NNPA Messenger awards, recognizing the exceptional quality and integrity of our reporting.
- 10 summer interns — demonstrating our commitment to mentoring the next generation of Black journalists and storytellers.

1.3M

VISITORS

Digital Reach

- 1.7 million+ website page views — demonstrating the trust and loyalty of our growing audience.
- 1.3 million+ visitors — individuals who come to afro.com seeking accurate, timely, and relevant news.
- 1 minute, 4 seconds — the average time visitors spent on our site, reflecting deep engagement with our content.

711.3K

SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS

Social Media Influence

- Over 711,300 social media followers across platforms — amplifying the AFRO's voice and expanding our reach nationwide.
- We partnered with activist/photographer/influencer Devin Allen through a PoliSol pilot program to amplify our messages. We added two new Platforms, Squareoffs & NextDoor this year!

39K+

CONTACTS

Audience & Engagement

- Over 39,000 contacts — a robust, active database of subscribers and supporters who are part of the AFRO family.
- 6 community-centered events hosted in 2025 — each one reinforcing our dedication to celebrating Black excellence, honoring local heroes, and bringing people together for meaningful dialogue and recognition.

14,099

SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

2582

ARTICLES POSTED

1:04

AVG TIME ON SITE

6

COMMUNITY EVENTS

These touch points reflect not just numbers, but the heart of our mission: to serve as a beacon of truth and a powerful voice for our community. As we move into 2026, we remain committed to strengthening these areas and continuing to lead with purpose, integrity, and innovation.

THANK YOU

We extend our deepest gratitude to our 2025 sponsors, advertisers, and strategic partners whose generous support made this year's work possible. Your investment in the AFRO is an investment in trusted journalism, cultural preservation, and the economic and civic vitality of our community. Because of your partnership, we were able to sustain local reporting, expand innovative platforms, host meaningful community events, and mentor the next generation of journalists. Together, we are not only sustaining a 133-year legacy—we are building the future of Black media. Some of our partners include:



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A positive difference!



United Way
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PHILANTHROPY



Google Discover



**THE REV. D. KEVIN
MCNEIR,
CONTRIBUTING WRITER
FOR THE AFRO BASED
IN WASHINGTON, DC**

Journalism funded by philanthropy can be a means for social impact and systemic change. This past year we received funds from the Google Discover program in the amount of 51K, the Google News Initiative in the amount of 20k and in-kind support from the Knight LMA Bloom Lab in the amount of 25k.

LABS


COMCAST
NBCUNIVERSAL

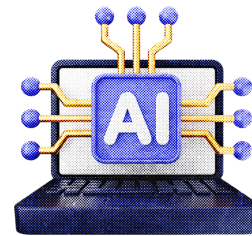


Victoria Mejicanos

LocalMedia
Association

Local Media Foundation launched an AI Community Journalism Lab focused on rural and underserved markets, investing in experiments that will be conducted by participants in the LMA Family and Independent Media Sustainability Lab and the Knight x LMA BloomLab. The effort is supported by the Walton Family Foundation. The AFRO experimented with tools to create newsroom efficiencies using artificial intelligence and circulated an AI survey to gauge reader perceptions.

The Local Media Association (LMA) and Comcast NBCUniversal announced the launch of the 2025–2026 Economic Opportunity Lab, a groundbreaking initiative supporting local journalism covering stories of economic mobility and opportunity in cities across the United States. **AFRO's former intern Victoria Mejicanos was selected use tools like the Opportunity Atlas to analyze and illustrate how neighborhood conditions, public school systems, housing access, and city policies influence economic outcomes.**



LocalMedia
Association AI Community
Journalism Lab

INTERNS

This past summer, the AFRO newsroom was energized by six talented interns who brought fresh perspectives and strong reporting skills to our coverage of community life, from politics and education to sports and cultural events. They produced impactful journalism that highlighted local protests, chronicled community celebrations and issues like immigration and Black business growth, and ensured important events received meaningful attention.

From the classroom to the newsroom: Meet the AFRO Interns of Summer 2025

By AFRO Staff

2025 Interns who have been working hard in the Editorial Department. These young

This week, the AFRO would like to take the opportunity to introduce the Summer

Continued on A10



Elijah Qualls, a rising junior studying political science and journalism at Atlanta's Morehouse College, is a native of Columbus, Ohio. His interests are in political theory, creative writing and analyses of monetary systems. Elijah joins the AFRO as a member of The Fund for American Studies' Summer 2025 cohort.



Nyla Adams, a native of Baltimore, is a third year Scripps Howard School of Journalism student at Hampton University, minoring in leadership studies and political science on the pre-law track. With a goal to be a respected modern-day activist, Nyla desires to build a career that allows her to address contemporary issues and advocate for social change while preserving cultural heritage through a variety of written and spoken media. Driven by a passion to uplift marginalized voices, Nyla aspires to be a law school educated journalist who advocates for change, particularly for people of color.

As an AFRO News Intern, Nyla is building a portfolio of articles that uplift and emphasize the Black community. She is focused on covering issues related to public policy, public health, racial equity and civic engagement. This opportunity is helping her sharpen her writing skills and preparing for future roles in journalism and advocacy.



Kyndal Foster, from Baltimore. She currently attends the University of Southern California, majoring in Journalism at the Annenberg School of Journalism and Communications. She hopes to gain direct experience and knowledge of journalism and newspaper curation through this internship. She also aims to use her writing to advocate for the Black community and give a voice to the unheard and underrepresented.



Victoria Mejicanos recently graduated with a Bachelor's of Science in communication with an emphasis in multimedia journalism from California State Polytechnic University Pomona. While at university, she served as both news and managing editor her senior year and web editor her junior year for the campus newspaper, The Poly Post. She has also recently completed a fellowship with Cal Matters, where she covered infrastructure and Title IX in the state's higher education systems. She is a proud Latina and a California native who joins the AFRO as a member of The Fund for American Studies' Summer 2025 cohort.



Tavon Thomason of Capitol Heights, Md, is currently pursuing a degree in multimedia journalism at Morgan State University. He is honing his skills to achieve a dream of becoming an international news correspondent. He's excited to apply his academic learnings at the AFRO. Tavon's time with the publication is made possible by the Maryland, D.C., Delaware Press Association's internship program.

Continued from A9

people are the future of not only the Black Press, but the news media field as a whole. From health and education to politics, the work of the Summer 2025 Interns has been instrumental.

Read more here to learn about the next generation of great media professionals and be sure to check out their work on AFRO.com!



Marlee Jones is a rising senior at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, majoring in journalism and mass communication with a concentration in public relations and a minor in Marketing. Originally from Washington, D.C., she is excited to be a part of the AFRO News internship program. Marlee joins the AFRO as a member of The



Ali Halloum, of Harlingen, Texas, is currently a senior at the University of Texas - Rio Grande Valley, pursuing a bachelor's degree in mass communication with a focus in broadcast journalism. His background is in sports journalism and he hopes to learn as much as he can and do the best work possible while he is an intern for the AFRO. Ali was placed with the publication as a member of The Fund for American Studies' Summer 2025 cohort.



Brian Simpkins(left) hails from Fort Washington, Md, as a 2025 digital media graduate of the University of the District of Columbia. Through this internship, he hopes to merge archival research, perspectives and data journalism to empower his community to move forward. Brian's previous work was published by USA Lacrosse Magazine, Blaxters Blog and HBCU GameDay. He's also a proud member of the Baltimore Association of Black Journalists, HBCU-Pro Sports Media Association and Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Inc.



Kendra Bryant (above) is a mass communications major at Towson University, concentrating in journalism. She serves as the president and editor-in-chief of the digital magazine, Her Campus: Towson. She is also the arts and life deputy editor at Towson's student newspaper, The Towerlight. Kendra has gained experience with Hearst Television's WBAL-TV 11 News, The New York Times, CHARM: Voices of Baltimore Youth, iHeartMedia and more. She looks forward to covering business, politics, community concerns and arts and culture in Baltimore City with the AFRO.

TOP MOMENTS

2025 highlights: Historic elections, social movements and global shifts

By **Andrea Stevens**
AFRO Staff Writer
astevens@afro.com

The year 2025 delivered moments that reshaped politics, culture and daily life across the globe. Voters in several states had their say at the polls, activists demanded change and Black elected officials across all levels of government worked to challenge the 47th president,

his executive orders and the policies handed down by his administration. There were lawsuits and public demonstrations, but also community and coalition-building. Through it all, the Black community remained resilient. From historic firsts to sobering reminders of the work to come in 2026, take a look at the moments that left a lasting mark to be remembered well beyond the calendar year.



AP Photo/John Locher

Rebuilding Black Neighborhoods

In the wake of the Jan. 7 fire that spread devastation across the Los Angeles County, Calif. area, a group of Black architects, engineers and other experts came together to form the Altadena Rebuild Coalition. The organization supported recovery and reconstruction efforts after thousands of homes in Altadena, Calif., were destroyed by the fire that began near Eaton Canyon.



AP Photo/Scott Applewhite

Multistate coalition takes on DOGE

On Feb. 7, Maryland Attorney General Anthony Brown alongside 19 other attorneys general sued the 47th president's administration after Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) staffers, led by Tesla billionaire Elon Musk, were granted access to the Treasury Department's central payment system. The coalition argued that the move violated federal law and endangered Americans' sensitive, private data and could allow political appointees, like Musk, to disrupt funds for Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid and more. The lawsuit resulted in a court blocking unauthorized access to Treasury payment systems, but the case remains ongoing.

The fight was the first in many against DOGE, which ravaged the federal workforce with layoffs throughout the year.



AP Photo/Jacquelyn Martin

Jamal Bryant Target Boycott

On Ash Wednesday, March 5, Pastor Jamal Bryant began a 40-day fast from the big box retail store chain Target. What was supposed to be a short time of abstaining from the store because they slashed their diversity, equity and inclusion efforts turned into a year-long boycott that is still going strong. The company has lost billions of dollars of dollars as consumers decided to fight for equality with the power of the dollar.



Courtesy photo Facebook

13 year old breaks Dr. King's record set in 1944

In March, Joshua Suddith was accepted into Morehouse College at just 13 years old, breaking the previous record set by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. at 15 years old.



AP Photo/Staghavie Scarborough

Marylander leaders react after Supreme Court rules that Kilmor Abrego Garcia be returned to state

The U.S. Supreme Court ordered the U.S. government to facilitate the return of Kilmor Abrego Garcia, a Salvadoran immigrant who lived in Maryland and was wrongfully deported on April 10. Following the ruling, Maryland's federal delegation released statements calling on the 47th president to act swiftly to return Abrego Garcia to the states. However, his homecoming did not come until later in the year and his fate is still uncertain.



AP Photo/Alessandra Tarantino

The first American Pope

A U.S. citizen was named head of the Catholic Church in 2025. Pope Leo XIV was elected to the role on May 8, making history as the first American pope. The new pope's background sparked conversation, as his Black roots were put under the microscope.



AP Photo/Rebecca S. Gratz

Omaha, Neb., elects first Black mayor

Omaha, Neb., made history on June 9 with the election of its first Black mayor, John Ewing, marking a milestone in a city long shaped by racial and political divides. The victory signaled changing voter priorities in a competitive Midwestern battleground. Later in the year, on Nov. 4, Black leaders were elected to serve as mayors across the country, including Sharon Owens in Syracuse, N.Y., Dorcay Applyrs in Albany, N.Y., and Mary Sheffield in Detroit. All are the first Black women mayors in their respective areas.



Unplash/Element Digital

A win for HBCUs

Historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) saw increased funding of over \$1 billion and higher enrollment. Philanthropist MacKenzie Scott donated to multiple HBCUs, including \$63 million to Morgan State University in October, followed by another \$38 million to University of Maryland Eastern Shore later in the month and \$50 million to Bowie State University in November.



AP Photo/Eric Gay

States challenge SNAP suspension during longest shutdown of federal government in history

On Oct. 28, a number of state attorneys general sued the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Secretary Brooke Rollins for halting the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) on Oct. 28. Payments from the program to millions of the vulnerable Americans were put in jeopardy because of the government shutdown. On Oct. 31, a federal court deemed the suspension unlawful and ordered the benefits to be paid. The fight came during the longest shutdown in federal history, which lasted from Oct. 1 to Nov. 12.



AP Photo/LM Otter

Jasmine Crockett announces Senate run

U.S. Rep. Jasmine Crockett (D-Texas - District 30) launched a campaign Dec. 8 to serve as the next U.S. senator from Texas. Crockett made a name for herself as the outspoken legislator from the Lone Star State long before 2025.

TOP SPORTS MOMENTS

Top 10 sports moments of 2025

By Victoria Mejicanos
AFRO Staff Writer

In 2025 Black athletes gave record-breaking performances while also making historic deals on and off the court. From Jalen Hurts leading the Eagles in a landmark Super Bowl matchup to Coco Gauff capturing her second Grand Slam title, the year provided plenty of highlights. Take a look at some of the top moments in sports from the past 12 months.



AP Photo/Rebecca Blackwell

Marcus Freeman becomes first Black head coach in major NCAA championship

At the top of the year, Notre Dame's head football coach Marcus Freeman, became the first Black head coach to make it to the NCAA College Football Playoff National Championship. Notre Dame defeated Penn State 27-24 in the Orange Bowl semifinal game, but fell to Ohio State in the finals on Jan. 20.



AP Photo/Chris Carlson

Coach Dawn Staley recognized

Coach Dawn Staley, head coach for the women on the University of South Carolina's basketball team, is an NCAA basketball icon for both the men and women's divisions. On April 30 she was honored with a statue in Columbia, South Carolina for her achievements as leader of the Lady Gamecocks for 17 years.

Coach Staley is a three-time Olympic gold medalist, Hall of Fame player, and one of the winningest coaches in NCAA women's basketball history. She is the only Black coach in NCAA history—men's or women's—with multiple national titles.



AP Photo/Aurelien Meunier

Coco Gauff wins big

Coco Gauff won her second Grand Slam title on June 7. At only 21, Gauff became the first American to win the French Open since Serena Williams in 2015.



AP Photo/Dorisan Dovarganes

Black athletes break records in hockey draft

The National Hockey League (NHL) made history with a record number of Black players being drafted on June 27-28. The NHL drafted more than 20 players of color, including at least 10 Black athletes, making it the most diverse class the league has seen.

Shown here, Kashawn Aitchison (left), with NHL commissioner Gary Bettman after being drafted by the New York Islanders during the NHL hockey draft Friday, June 27, 2025, in Los Angeles.



AP Photo/Matt Stocumbe

Two Black quarterbacks shine in Super Bowl LIX

Black excellence took center stage at Super Bowl LIX on Feb. 9 as the Philadelphia Eagles and the Kansas City Chiefs squared off at the Caesars Superdome in New Orleans. Patrick Mahomes couldn't boost the Chiefs to a Super Bowl three-peat. Eagles quarterback Jalen Hurts led his team to a 40-22 victory. It was only the second time in NFL history that two Black quarterbacks led their teams in the annual matchup, happening first in 2023 when Hurts and Mahomes faced off.



AP Photo/Dorian Cummings

Bubba Wallace makes NASCAR history

Bubba Wallace became the first Black NASCAR driver to win the Brickyard 400, a major race on the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. Wallace won on July 27 despite a late rain delay, two overtimes and concerns over running out of fuel.



AP Photo/Matthias Schrader

Noah Lyles makes his mark on international stage

Noah Lyles won his fourth consecutive 200-meter world title at the World Athletics Championships in Tokyo on Sept. 19. This win, with Lyles running 19.52 seconds, tied Lyles with Usain Bolt's four-peat from 2009 to 2015.



AP Photo/Rick Scuteri

A'ja Wilson keeps scores on and off the court

The Las Vegas Aces capped off their third WNBA championship Oct. 10 with a 97-86 win over host Phoenix Mercury. A'ja Wilson posted 31 points, nine rebounds, four assists, three blocks and two steals. The game also ended a historic WNBA season for Wilson, who became the first WNBA player ever to win the regular-season MVP award, Defensive Player of the Year and Finals MVP award in a single season.

The win came just months after Wilson celebrated a major accomplishment off of the court: the release of The A'One, a shoe designed in partnership with Nike.



AP Photo/Joe C. Hong

LeBron James makes history

LeBron James began his 23rd NBA season, making his the official longest in the league's history on Nov. 18. The previous record of 22 seasons was held by Vince Carter. James, 40, had been sidelined since the start of training camp due to issues with sciatica, keeping him out of the preseason and the Lakers' first 14 games of the regular season. His first game of the season ended in victory with a 140-126 win over the Utah Jazz.



AP Photo/Joe C. Hong

Mookie Betts

On Oct. 23 Mookie Betts was announced as winner of the 2025 Fielding Bible Award at the shortstop position. Just days later, on Oct. 28, he won the Roberto Clemente Award, an honor reserved for the one MLB player that "best represents the game through extraordinary character, community involvement, philanthropy and positive contributions both on and off the field," according to the organization. Betts won the award for his work as founder of 5050 Foundation, an organization aimed at helping youth improve themselves mentally, physically, financially and emotionally.



AP Photo/Julia Demaree Nikkison


Mo'ne Davis chosen in first draft for the Women's Pro Baseball League

The Women's Pro Baseball League held its first draft ever on Nov. 20, with Los Angeles drafting Mo'ne Davis 10th overall. Davis beat out 600 women from 10 countries for a spot on the team. She rose to fame when she pitched for the Taney Dragons in Philadelphia and is the first Little League player to appear on the cover of Sports Illustrated.

TOP SOCIAL MOMENTS



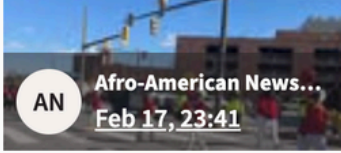
f Top posts



AN Afro-American News...
Jan 31, 04:50

The AFRO sends condolences to the friends and family of all those who


44,565 likes and react...



AN Afro-American News...
Feb 17, 23:41

Baltimore holds its first Black History Month Parade By Megan

30,245 likes and react...




AN Afro-American News...
May 20, 13:05

Rep. Al Green files articles of impeachment against 47th

25,468 likes and react...




ig Top posts



A afronews
Aug 19, 21:12

👍👍 "We love Baltimore. But we love a BETTER Baltimore even


963 likes



A afronews
Jan 31, 04:50

The AFRO sends condolences to the friends and family of all those who

903 likes




A afronews
Nov 24, 23:50

Mayor Brandon Scott named to Ebony Power 100 and Time 100,

678 likes






The AFRO-American Newspapers
5,205 followers

inator **#AngelaAlsobrooks** has been named the 2024 AFRO Person of the ar, marking her historic appointment as the first Black person to represent the ate of **#Maryland** in the U.S. Senate. Alsobrooks, a trailblazer in Maryland ilitics, has pledged to prioritize education, **#affordablehousing**, id **#reproductiverights** during her tenure. <https://lnkd.in/gKdzcNA>


1,354 48 comments - 49 repost



The AFRO-American Newspapers
5,205 followers

#Baltimore Office of the Mayor announces **#AmberGreene**—a nationally recognized equity leader and former **#WhiteHouse** advisor—as the new Director of Baltimore's Office of Equity and **#CivilRights**, marking a significant step in the city's efforts to promote inclusive governance and **#racialjustice**. <https://lnkd.in/gxwRZg9Q>

718 128 comments - 13 reposts




The AFRO-American Newspapers
5,205 followers

#Baltimore Mayor **#BrandonScott** announces **#CalvinYoung III** as his new chief of staff, effective April 9, 2025. Young, a seasoned public servant and **#Harvard** Business School alum, brings a wealth of experience in finance and public service. <https://lnkd.in/gfAKW9xP>

650 43 comments - 18 reposts






AFRO News Local publisher · 26 Oct

Copping State University names Health and Human Services Building after Henrietta Lacks


198 195 likes 23 comments



AFRO News Local publisher · 22 Oct

AFRO News to honor DPW workers as Unsung Heroes of Baltimore

83 83 likes 6 comments



AFRO News Local publisher · 31 Oct

Copping State University celebrates 125 years of service

71 71 likes 9 comments

TOP MOMENTS

2025: A year we wrote (and prayed) our way through

By Dr. Frances "Toni" Murphy Draper
AFRO CEO and Publisher

As we close the pages on 2025, we do so clear-eyed about the moment we are living in and grounded in the responsibility we carry. Journalism, especially Black journalism, is not simply about recounting events. It is about memory, witness and insisting that what happens in our communities is neither disposable nor distortable.

This year, we wrote about what was happening to us and around us, locally and nationally, urgently and thoughtfully.

We wrote about symbols and stories—coins and monuments, museums and memory—and the quiet but consequential decisions about whose history is preserved and whose is questioned. We defended Black institutions, including the African American Museum of History and Culture, because history is not a luxury item. It is infrastructure.

We wrote about violence in places that should be sacred and safe: shootings on college campuses, in schools and in sanctuaries. We wrote not to sensationalize pain, but to refuse its normalization. We insisted that safety, dignity and peace are not unreasonable expectations.

We wrote about children, not only their protection but their preparation—about



Photo courtesy of Johns Hopkins University / Bill Kirk

Dr. Frances "Toni" Murphy Draper is CEO and publisher of AFRO News. This week, she reflects on the challenges and triumphs of 2025.

teaching financial literacy early, and about Black health, because freedom and wellness are inseparable. We examined disparities in maternal health, chronic disease, mental health, access to care and environmental conditions, understanding that health is a policy issue, an economic issue and a community issue.

We wrote about elders, honoring them and listening to them, and about Black cemeteries and the fight for recognition and dignity in death, because respect does not expire when life ends.

We wrote about Black businesses, lifting them up

and naming economic realities plainly. Ownership still matters. Circulation of dollars still matters. Community economics remain community survival.

We wrote about culture and conduct—about joy and accountability—not to police Blackness, but to affirm that how we show up still carries meaning, especially for the next generation watching closely.

And yes, we wrote about sports, because community is also built through shared pride. We reflected on the longevity of LeBron James' career, celebrated progress in sports where representation has lagged, including a milestone NHL Draft with 10 Black players selected. We marked defining cultural moments—from Beyoncé's Album of the Year win at the Grammy Awards to Kendrick Lamar's Super Bowl halftime performance—affirming that Black creativity continues to set the standard.

We wrote close to home, because Baltimore and Washington are not footnotes to the national story; they are often

where it becomes real first.

We carefully covered Baltimore City and Washington, D.C. government, including the leadership of Brandon M. Scott and Marjell Bowser, as well as the work of Gov. Wes Moore, the only sitting Black governor in the nation.

We reported honestly on public safety while acknowledging progress. Baltimore's crime rates moved in the right direction this year, reminding us that accountability, community effort and smart policy matter.

We covered hundreds of social, civic, faith-based and community events and organizations, because everyday people doing faithful work rarely make headlines, yet they are the backbone of our cities. And we did not only report on our community—we gathered with it.

We paraded at our annual High Tea, recognized veterans and Department of Public Works employees, convened Who's Who in Black Baltimore, hosted our Juneteenth Breakfast, Salute to Veterans and Black Business Matters Expo events and marked

moments that strengthened community ties.

We also celebrated legacy in distinctive ways, producing a 24-page commemorative ebook honoring the 150th running of the Preakness Stakes and the inaugural Preakness Festival, capturing not only a historic sporting moment, but Baltimore's place within it.

2025 was a consequential year for journalism and the free press, particularly for the Black Press, as independence, truth and trust were tested in new and familiar ways.

We wrote about voting rights under renewed attack, about the rollback of diversity, equity and inclusion, and about how a three-letter acronym was deliberately turned into a four-letter word. We wrote about the damage done when leadership traffics in cruelty, especially toward women, and how language from the top shapes culture below.

We encountered a moment that crystallized much of this: a potential advertiser suggested that our name—standing for Black truth and self-definition for more than a century—might need to change to earn their support. We declined. Survival without integrity is not sustainability.

We also paused to mark loss, reflecting on elders like Viola Fletcher, Assata Shakur and H. Rap Brown. We also took time to honor the passing of cultural icons such as Angie Stone and Sly Stone. Throughout the year, we shared glimpses from our extensive archives, work continuing through AFRO Charities, which is preserving and expanding access to irreplaceable Black history. Preservation is resistance.

We also continued to build forward technologically. We expanded our digital footprint across Facebook, Instagram, X, LinkedIn, YouTube, TikTok, Nextdoor, and Apple News. We extended video

coverage, deepened audio storytelling through podcasts such as The Chicken Box, and for many stories on AFRO.com, readers can now listen as well as read.

As we embrace responsible uses of artificial intelligence, we are enhancing storytelling, accessibility, archiving, audience engagement and efficiency—without compromising accuracy or trust. Technology is not replacing journalism at the AFRO, it is strengthening it.

That work did not go unnoticed. This year, our journalists, photographers, editors, designers and digital teams earned multiple local and national journalism awards, and the AFRO was named among the nation's top Black news outlets on Feedspot's curated lists—an affirmation of the excellence our staff brings to this work every day.

Above all, we are grateful to God. We have come this far by faith, sustained by purpose and perseverance. None of this happens without people.

We thank our writers, columnists, photographers, editors, designers, social media, video, digital, sales, business and administrative teams; our board members and shareholders; our advertisers and sponsors; and our partners, including the National Newspaper Publishers Association and Word In Black.

And to our readers and subscribers, thank you. You are not passive consumers. You are partners.

2025 marked our 133rd year of publication, and our 133 for 133 campaign reflects that milestone—133 years of uninterrupted Black-owned journalism—and what it will take to sustain this work for generations to come. It is not about nostalgia. It is about necessity.

If this year affirmed anything, it is that journalism still matters. Local journalism still matters. Black journalism still matters. Still here. Still writing. Still standing.



AFRO NEWS
THE BLACK MEDIA AUTHORITY

Your History • Your Community • Your News

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Bearing witness: A year of reporting and resistance

By Alexis Taylor
AFRO Managing Editor

It's no secret that 2025 was a challenging year for not only members of the Black Press, but news media organizations across the country. Those who weren't under direct, targeted attack from the current presidential administration felt the pressure, as those in power publicly encouraged a disdain for anything dealing with the word "Black." Still, African-American media companies and leaders stood strong.

Covering local, national and international news in 2025 has been a challenge eased only by the assurance that the articles we write and publish will make change. From Black maternal mortality to the gender pay gap, I can only hope that my words have sparked conversation and—more importantly—action.

Looking back over the past 12 months, my top moments are clear.

In March, I had an opportunity to record the stories of nurses, five years into a world still off-kilter from COVID-19. On April 29, I saw the women of the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion receive their long overdue Congressional Gold Medal.

I think the moment that made me most proud was when I learned that Florida's Raiford Prison had banned a May special edition of the AFRO from inmates who receive the paper. Officials labeled our coverage of George Floyd, the fifth anniversary of his death, the promises broken and the change that still needs to happen as a threat to security and rehabilitation initiatives. It let me know that we are doing something right. In that same month, most humbling, was seeing my name and face in Editor and Publisher Magazine, the trade magazine of my industry, as a member of the "Editor's Extraordinary, Class of 2025."

In June, the residents of Baltimore helped me understand how they persevere, 10 years after the death of Freddie Gray. In August, Hurricane Katrina survivors from Mississippi broadened my view of the tragedies that took place 20 years ago. And on Oct. 16, at 6 a.m. in the morning, I was honored to watch the men who organized the 1995 Million Man March pour libations, discuss the work that still needs to be done and celebrate the 30th anniversary of the largest demonstration of Black men in history.

Though it was tough at times, our small editorial



Courtesy photo

Alexis Taylor serves as managing editor of the AFRO-American Newspapers. This week, she discusses top moments of 2025 and looks ahead to 2026.

department, with the help of the community, truly made miracles happen in 2025. I am very appreciative of the support and leadership of our publisher, Dr. Frances "Toni" Murphy Draper, and every writer, photographer, intern and team member who helped pull together the weekly edition of the paper, while

also working on news for our website and special projects like the AFRO special, "Preakness Festival 150: A Celebration of Heritage and Style."

Despite all efforts and against all odds, we are still here...going strong, "pleading our own cause" and looking forward to the "good trouble" of 2026.

2025 LESSONS LEARNED

AFRO reporters talk top stories, lessons learned in 2025

By AFRO Staff

Since 1892 AFRO reporters, photographers, editors and publishers have kept the publication going with a commitment to recording Black history, serving the community and seeking change. This year was no different. With an amazing group of tenacious reporters unafraid to ask the tough questions, the AFRO was able to cover everything from health and education to politics, public safety, business and more. Read below to learn a bit about the reporters and the work done in 2025.



Tashi McQueen
AFRO Staff Writer

Looking back on 2025, I thank the Lord Jesus for another year of contributing to the AFRO's vital mission: shining a light on and uplifting the Black community with the information that matters most.

One of my proudest moments was attending the Maryland, Delaware, District of Columbia Press Association (MDDC) awards. I had the honor of reporting on AFRO News taking home more than 25 awards. I was thrilled to personally contribute to our award-winning

legacy. This year, I took home four awards from MDDC and my story on the passing of renowned poet and author Nikki Giovanni earned first place at the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) awards. These achievements were humbling and serve as a powerful reminder that I'm on the right track.

Beyond the accolades, I am thankful for the opportunity to honor the lives of several significant Black leaders. By attending their services and speaking with their loved ones, I worked to convey the deep legacies they left behind. While I might not have been eager for this task in the past, I have grown to appreciate the beauty in documenting the final chapters of a life well-lived.

Many more stories and voices from this past year have left a lasting impression on me, and for those connections, I am truly



thankful.
Andrea Stevens
AFRO Staff Writer

I covered an array of topics this year, from politics, health and entertainment to community events. Most moving for me were my pieces on postpartum health. I have learned that

Black news and education can save lives and help people feel seen.



Megan Sayles
AFRO Staff Writer

This year, more than ever before, I learned that being a journalist can be an act of resistance—especially working for a media company like the AFRO. We were created more than 130 years ago to champion racial equality, the advancement of our community and Black achievement. Though the injustices we face today may not seem as blatant as the segregation, discrimination and lynching of the past, 2025 taught me that we're fighting many of the same core battles: Who gets to vote, who is protected by the law, who can afford to live in their own communities and whose history and humanity are recognized by society. As journalists at the AFRO, we confront oppression by giving a voice to the marginalized, speaking truth in the face of censorship and misinformation and holding people in power accountable.

Amid the hurdles of this year, I've learned that we cannot survive without hope. Hope

gives us purpose, motivation and strength to stay in the fight. It's why our communities—many of which have faced decades of disinvestment—take matters into their own hands. From demanding new parks and school improvements, to neighborhood beautification efforts, to showing up for local businesses and protesting big-box retailers, I've witnessed the Black community refuse to surrender. I vow to continue illuminating our struggle, resilience, collective action and wins in 2026.



Victoria Mejicanos
AFRO Staff Writer

The most moving moment from my time at the AFRO this year was learning that as a result of my reporting on credit gaps in Baltimore, the Maryland Bankers Association and Coppin State University's (CSU) Center for Strategic Entrepreneurship hosted a Community Conversation on credit equity, bringing together leaders from across the state to discuss actionable solutions. It was a great reminder of the power of journalism and that my location (I live in California) is not a limitation to quality work.

IN MEMORIAM

Remembering Black leaders and icons who died in 2025

By Tashi McQueen
AFRO Staff Writer
tmcqueen@afro.com

This week, the *AFRO* reflects on the lives and legacies left behind by leaders, entertainers and noted members of the community. Take a look at the notable Black figures who died in 2025, leaving behind loved ones and legacies that will surely last beyond their lifetime.



AP Photo/Wendell Hill, File

Sam Moore

Sam Moore, the electrifying tenor behind the legendary soul duo Sam & Dave, died Jan. 10 in Coral Gables, Fla., from complications following surgery. He was 89. Celebrated for hits such as "Soul Man," "Hold On, I'm Coming," and "When Something Is Wrong with My Baby," Moore helped define 1960s soul music alongside partner Dave Prater. Signed to Atlantic Records and nurtured at Stax by Isaac Hayes and David Porter, the duo earned Grammy honors and Rock & Roll Hall of Fame induction in 1992. After overcoming addiction, Moore enjoyed a long career, performing for six U.S. presidents and earning admiration from generations of artists.



AP Photo

Angie Stone

Angie Stone, a soul and R&B singer and songwriter, died on March 1 at the age of 63 in a car crash in Montgomery, Ala. Born Angela Laverne Brown on Dec. 18, 1961, in Columbia, S.C., she began her career as a teenager by co-founding The Sequence, a female rap trio and one of the first all-women groups signed to the emerging hip-hop industry.

After her early hip-hop work, Stone transitioned into soulful R&B and neo-soul. Her 1999 solo debut, "Black Diamond," launched a career spanning more than two decades, producing hits including "No More Rain (In This Cloud)," "Brotha" and "Wish I Didn't Miss You."



AP Photo/Lenica McLendon, File

George Foreman

George Foreman, legendary boxer, Olympic champion and entrepreneur, died March 21 at age 76. He won a heavyweight gold medal at the 1968 Olympics and became world heavyweight champion in 1973.

Despite his loss to Muhammad Ali in the 1974 "Rumble in the Jungle," he staged a comeback in 1994 and regained the heavyweight crown at age 45, becoming the oldest man to win the title in boxing history. Outside the ring, he became a household name with the George Foreman Grill.



AP Photo/Scott Applewhite

Alexis Herman

Alexis Herman, the first Black U.S. secretary of labor, died on April 25 at age 77. Born in Mobile, Ala., on July 16, 1947, she contributed to American politics and women's rights.

She served as secretary of labor under President Bill Clinton (D) from 1997 to 2001. Prior to that, she held positions in social work and civil rights advocacy, including social worker for Catholic Charities in 1969 and director of the Women's Bureau at the U.S. Department of Labor. She was known for her dedication to minority and women's workplace rights.

Norman Hutchins

Norman Hutchins, pastor and gospel singer, died on June 5 at age 62. Born Sept. 27, 1962, in Delaware, he began preaching at age 8 and was ordained at 12. Hutchins launched his solo music career in 1992, releasing 10 albums over 21 years, seven of which charted on Billboard's Gospel Albums chart. He earned multiple Dove and Stellar Award nominations and a Grammy nomination.



AP Photo/Mark J. Terrill, File

Sly Stone

Sly Stone, musician and funk pioneer, died on June 9 at age 82. As frontman of Sly and the Family Stone, he fused gospel, soul, rock, funk and psychedelia into a sound that defined the late 1960s and early 1970s. Hits like "Everyday People" and "Dance to the Music" promoted unity, equality and social change.

Esaw Snipes-Garner

Esaw Snipes-Garner, mother and activist, died on June 18 at age 58. She became known for her advocacy following the death of her husband, Eric Garner, in 2014, which sparked national discussion on police brutality.

Lynn Hamilton

Lynn Hamilton, best known as Verdie Foster on "The Waltons" and nurse Donna Harris on "Sanford and Son," died on June 19 at age 95 in Chicago. Her career included roles on "Gunsmoke," "The Young and the Restless," "Good Times," "Dangerous Women," and more than 130 episodes of "Generations."

Mosie "Mama" Burks

Mosie "Mama" Burks, gospel pioneer and lead vocalist of the Mississippi Mass Choir, died on July 7 at age 92. Born June 18, 1933, in Happersville, Miss., she brought gospel staples such as "They Got the Word," "I'm Not Tired Yet" and "This Morning When I Rose" to life with her iconic voice, defining the choir's mission and sound worldwide.



AP Photo/Jordan Strauss

Malcolm-Jamal Warner

Malcolm-Jamal Warner, actor and poet, died on July 20 at 54 from drowning while on vacation in Costa Rica. Best known as Theodore "Theo" Huxtable on "The Cosby Show," Warner earned an Emmy nomination for his eight-season performance. Fans remembered him as a relatable representation of Black youth and as a positive portrayal of Black middle-class family life on television.



AP Photo/Timothy D. Easley

Rahaman Ali

Rahaman Ali, boxer and youngest brother of Muhammad Ali, died on Aug. 1 in Louisville, Ky., at age 82. He boxed professionally in the 1960s and 1970s and also served as his brother's sparring partner and corner man.

Danielle Spencer

Danielle Spencer, actress known for depicting Dee Thomas on "What's Happening," died on Aug. 11 at 60 of gastric cancer and cardiac arrest. Born June 24, 1965, in the Bronx, N.Y., she was the first Black female child to feature regularly in a network TV series. Her legacy is recognized at the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture.

Vivian Ayers Allen

Vivian Ayers Allen, poet and cultural activist, died on Aug. 18 at 102. She authored "Spice of Dawns" and the verse novel "Hawk," advocating for arts education and literacy. She was Rice University's first African-American faculty member and influenced generations of youth and the arts.



Photo courtesy of March Funeral Homes

Dr. Clayton C. Stansbury Jr.

Dr. Clayton C. Stansbury Jr., educator and Morgan State University alumnus, died on Aug. 30 at age 93. Born March 20, 1932, in Havre de Grace, Md., he served as a counselor and dean of the Honors College. His funeral on Sept. 16 drew hundreds of students, alumni, faculty and friends.



Photos courtesy of Meta (Facebook) / Morgan State University

Dr. Earl S. Richardson

Dr. Earl S. Richardson, Morgan State president from 1984 to 2010, died at 81 on Sept. 13. He led the university through its "Renaissance," expanding doctoral programs and adding schools including Architecture and Planning, Social Work, and Global Journalism and Communication.



Photo courtesy Dhanubini Waidia via New York Amsterdam News

Assata Shakur

Assata Shakur, political activist and Black Panther Party member, died on Sept. 29 in Cuba. Born JoAnne Deborah Byron on July 16, 1947, she later adopted the name Assata Shakur. She became a prominent voice for freedom and justice and fled to Cuba after a life sentence for involvement in a state trooper's death.

Arthur Jones

Arthur Jones, former Baltimore Ravens defensive lineman and Super Bowl champion, died at 39 on Oct. 3. He helped the Ravens win the 2013 Super Bowl and later played for the Indianapolis Colts and Washington Commanders. He was the older brother of Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) fighter Jon Jones and former Ravens player Chandler Jones.

Ike Turner Jr.

Ike Turner Jr., Grammy-winning musician and son of Ike and Tina Turner Sr., died on Oct. 4 at 67 of kidney failure. He began touring with his father at age 13 and later earned a Grammy for Best Traditional Blues Album for his contributions to "Risinq' With the Blues."

Dr. Paulette C. Walker

Dr. Paulette C. Walker, former national president of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority and educator, died on Oct. 8 at 77. She served as the 25th national president from 2013 to 2017 and influenced countless students throughout her career as a teacher, counselor, assistant principal and supervisor of state and federal programs.



Photo by Cheryl Gerben/Invision/AP, File

D'Angelo

D'Angelo, Grammy-winning neo-soul star, died on Oct. 14 at 51 after a long battle with cancer. Born Michael Archer on Feb. 11, 1974, he rose to fame with his 1995 debut, "Brown Sugar," and helped define the neo-soul movement with his 2000 album "Voodoo," featuring the track "Intuition (How Does It Feel).

Herb Brown

Herb Brown, Baltimore businessman, civic leader and World War II veteran, died on Nov. 4 at 101. He founded Mondawmin Travel Agency in 1968, one of two Black-owned businesses in the West Baltimore mall, and co-founded the Vanguard Organization, helping elect several Black politicians, including state Sen. Verda Welcome.

Marshawn Kneeland

Marshawn Kneeland, defensive end for the Dallas Cowboys, died on Nov. 6 at 24. Police are investigating his death as a potential suicide. Drafted in the second round of the 2024 NFL Draft out of Western Michigan, he played in 18 games and scored his first NFL touchdown by recovering a blocked punt.

Viola Ford Fletcher

Viola Ford Fletcher, one of the last known survivors of the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre, died on Nov. 24 at 111. She was 7 years old when the massacre destroyed Greenwood, Tulsa's thriving Black neighborhood, uprooting her family. In later years, she worked to preserve Greenwood's memory and advocate for justice.



AP Photo/Wong Maye E

Jimmy Cliff

Jimmy Cliff, the charismatic and pioneering reggae star and actor, died Nov. 24 at 81. The native Jamaican delivered classics like "Many Rivers to Cross," "You Can Get It If You Really Want" and "Vietnam," and starred in the seminal "The Harder They Come."



Courtesy photo

Bishop Reginald T. Jackson

Bishop Reginald T. Jackson, a longtime leader of the African Methodist Episcopal Church and an outspoken civil and social justice advocate, died Nov. 25 at age 71. Jackson, who was consecrated as the 132nd bishop of the AME Church in July 2012, most recently served as presiding prelate of the AME Church's Second Episcopal District, which includes Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina and Washington, D.C.

The Dover, Del., native, in his more than five decades of ministry, combined faith and activism, championing voting rights, education equity and economic justice across New Jersey, Georgia and beyond.



Courtesy The Washington Informer

James L. Wright Jr.

James L. Wright Jr., the internationally respected former *AFRO* reporter and editor, died at age 62 on Dec. 2.

Wright was a resolute and focused sports, political and public affairs reporter who also served as a city editor for the *AFRO-American Newspaper* for many years. At the time of his death, he worked as business and political correspondent for the Washington Informer.

Wright will be greatly missed by his *AFRO* News family.



Thomas Fordham Institute

Rod Paige

Rod Paige, the first African American to serve as U.S. secretary of education and a central architect of the No Child Left Behind Act, died Dec. 9 at age 92. Appointed by President George W. Bush, Paige helped implement the 2002 law that set nationwide testing standards and imposed consequences on schools that failed to meet benchmarks, a framework modeled on reforms he pioneered as superintendent of the Houston Independent School District.

Though he only served as secretary from 2001 to 2005, he remained engaged in education into his 90s, returning to Jackson State — where he formerly coached — as interim president.



Courtesy photo

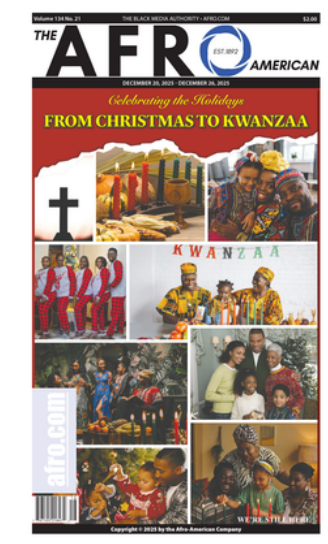
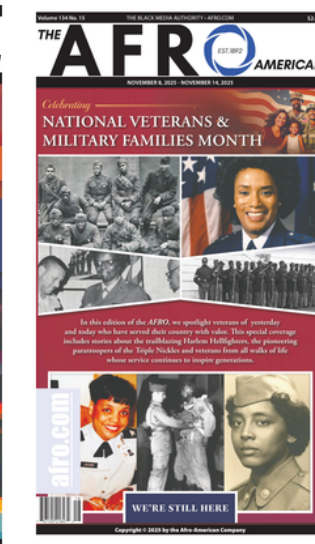
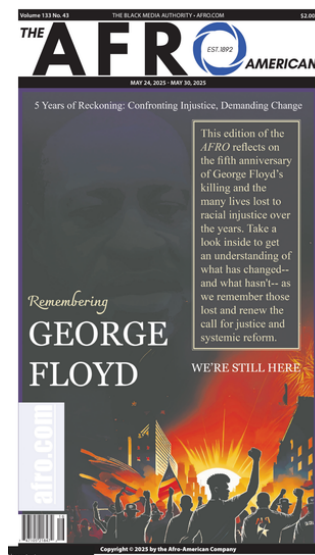
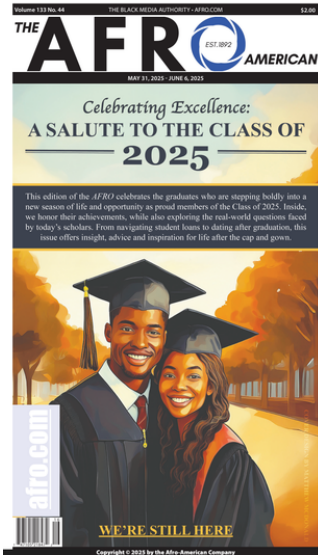
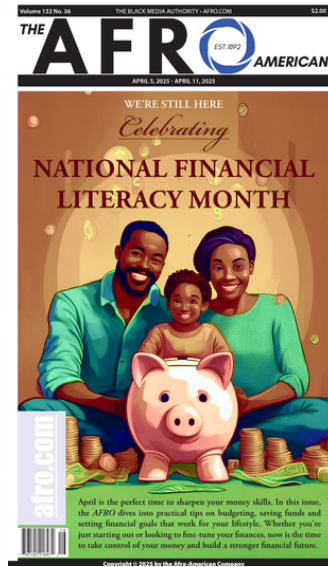
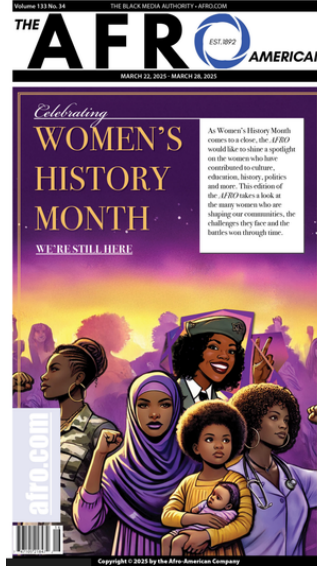
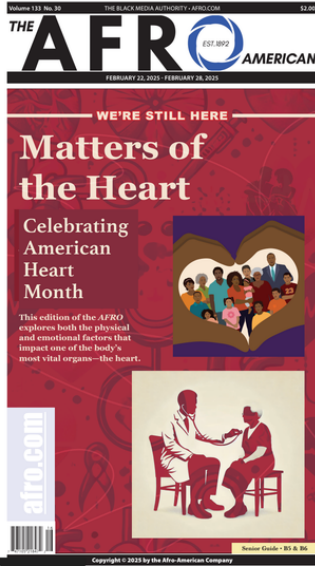
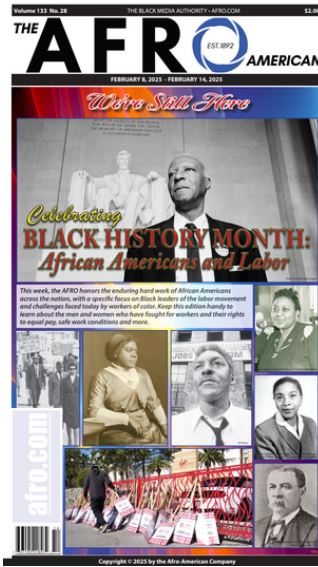
Charles F. Robinson III

Charles F. Robinson III, a veteran journalist and news director, died on Dec. 15. He was a leader of the Black Press and a key member of the Maryland Public Television team, where he'd worked for the past five years.

He was known for being a help to the younger generation of journalists, providing them with opportunities like speaking with lawmakers and helping them visit the Maryland State House to sit in on sessions.

Continued on B4

2025 COVERS



AWARD WINNING

AFRO WINS OVER 20 AWARDS IN MARYLAND, DELAWARE, D.C. PRESS ASSOCIATION CONTEST MAY 2025



- AFRO Staff: Second place for Editorial
- Helen Bezuneh: Second place in Medical or Science Reporting.
- Aria Brent: Second place for Investigative Reporting.
- Erica Alston Buck: Second place for Local Column: Feature or Humor
- Denise Dorsey: First place in Sports Page Design; First place for Feature Page Design
- Dr. Frances "Toni" Draper: Second place for Breaking News – Social Media; Second place for Headline
- James Fields: First place in Sports Page Design; First place for General News Photo
- Angela G. Geleano: Second place for Local Column: Critical Thinking
- Ariyana Griffin: First place for Feature Story: Profile; First place for Continuing Coverage; First place for Religion Reporting
- Diane Hocker: First place for Best Event
- Lenora Howze: First place for Advertising Campaign; First place for Best Event
- Davyon Love: First place for Local Column: Critical Thinking.
- Kevin McNeir: First place for General News Story
- Tashi McQueen: First place for Continuing Coverage; First place for Religion Reporting; Second place for General News Story; Second place for State Government
- Dana Peck: First place for Advertising Campaign; First place for News-driven Informational Graphics; Second place for Breaking News – Social Media
- Benjamin Phillips: First place for Advertising Campaign
- Megan Sayles: First place for Continuing Coverage
- Alexis Taylor: First place for Editorial and Blog Video; Best of Show for Editorial and Blog Video; Second place for Feature Story: Profile; Second place for Investigative Reporting; Second place for Breaking News – Social Media
- Kofi Tyus: First place for Editorial
- Mekhi Abbott– Second place for Local Government and Second place for Arts and Entertainment Reporting



45 Best Black News RSS Feeds

13. AFRO News RSS Feed



RSS Feed afro.com/feed [+ Follow RSS](#)
 Website afro.com
 The AFRO knows what it's like to endure challenging times. John H. Murphy, Sr., a former enslaved man founded **more** Facebook Followers 650.4K · Twitter Followers 12.8K · Instagram Followers 21.5K

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 The AFRO knows what it's like to endure challenging times. John H. Murphy, Sr., a former enslaved man founded **more** Facebook Followers 650.4K · Twitter Followers 12.8K · Instagram Followers 21.5K · Domain Authority 67

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AFRO WINS 4 AWARDS AT THE JUNE 2025 NNPA MESSENGER AWARDS CEREMONY



THE INITIATIVE FOR A COMPETITIVE INNER CITY (ICIC) RECOGNIZED THE AFRO AS ONE OF THE 100 FASTEST-GROWING BUSINESSES IN UNDER-RESOURCED COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE U.S IN 2025

OCTOBER, 2025

AFRO AI IN ACTION

As a 133-year-old legacy media company, the AFRO is committed to evolving with new technologies while staying true to our core mission. As we explore the use of generative AI in our newsroom and opinion pieces, these three guiding principles will inform our approach and clarify how and why we intend to use this technology:

1. Enhancing Our Mission through Technology

Generative AI is a tool that can support our mission of uncovering truth and helping our readers understand the world more deeply. AI and machine learning already assist us in telling stories that would otherwise be untold, and generative AI has the potential to strengthen our journalistic capabilities further. From delivering audio versions of our stories via Everlit, to creating social captions and keys words via NOTA, or graphics via Canva, we aim to use AI in ways that make The AFRO more accessible to a wider audience.

2. Guided by Human Expertise

The judgment and expertise of our journalists are irreplaceable, providing an edge that machines cannot replicate. This human element is what makes The AFRO a trusted source of news and information. While generative AI, Chat GPT or Tansa may assist with certain aspects of our work (i.e. editing, social media captions, article summaries, headlines, newsletter creation, etc.), our journalists must remain in control of the process.

3. Committed to Transparency and Ethics The core principles of journalism—accuracy, accountability, and ethical reporting—are even more essential when incorporating AI into our work. Our readers must trust that the information we provide is factual and adheres to the high standards that have defined The AFRO for over a century. Whenever we make significant use of generative AI, we will be transparent with our audience, explaining how the technology was employed and ensuring that it aligns with our standards for ethical journalism.

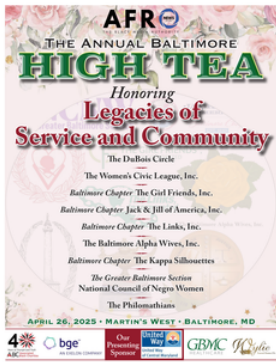
As we continue to experiment with AI, The AFRO remains dedicated to delivering trustworthy news while responsibly navigating this technological frontier.

The logo for Everlit, featuring a blue rectangular background. On the left, there are four vertical white bars of varying heights. To the right of the bars, the word "Everlit" is written in a white, serif font.The logo for NOTA, consisting of the word "NOTA" in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The letters are positioned above a horizontal yellow brushstroke that is slightly wider than the text.The logo for Canva, which is a circular gradient from light blue at the top to purple at the bottom. The word "Canva" is written across the center in a white, cursive script font.

ChatGPT

The logo for Tansa, featuring the word "Tansa" in a white, bold, sans-serif font. The text is set against a solid red rectangular background.

EVENTS



BALTIMORE AFRO TEA SATURDAY APRIL 26, 2025
1,000 ATTENDEES
9 HONOREES
5 SPONSORS



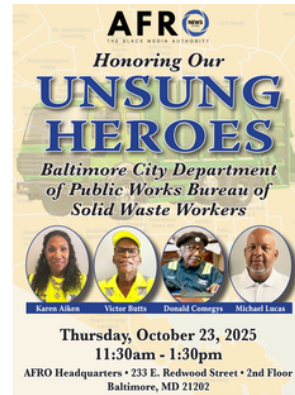
5TH ANNUAL BLACK BUSINESS MATTERS EXPO
AUGUST 14, 2025



THIRD ANNUAL SALUTE TO VETERANS
NOVEMBER 14, 2025
164 ATTENDEES
5 HONOREES
3 SPONSORS



AFRO JUNETEENTH: HONORING MARYLAND'S HBCUS
JUNE 18, 2025
140 ATTENDEES
7 SPONSORS
5 HONOREES



UNsung HEROES
BALTIMORE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
OCTOBER 14, 2025
50 ATTENDEES
4 HONOREES
3 SPONSORS



MRS. SANTA
DECEMBER 13, 2025
40 FAMILIES SERVED
OVER \$5,000 RAISED + IN-KIND GIFTS

NEWSLETTERS

10,548 new
subscribers in 2025



4,289 subscribers
50 eblasts

13,055
subscribers
12 eblasts



Stay informed and inspired with stories
that matter most **to our community.**

33,174
subscribers
162 eblasts

IN THE MEDIA



Advertisement

The Afro American Newspaper's archives dating back 133 years have new home in West Baltimore

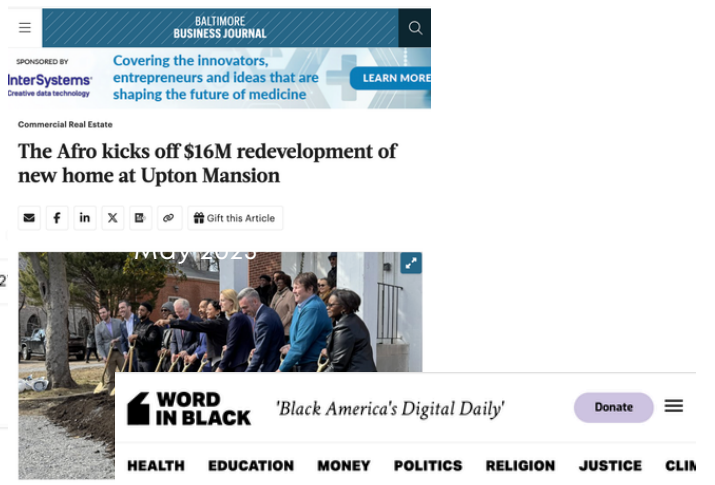
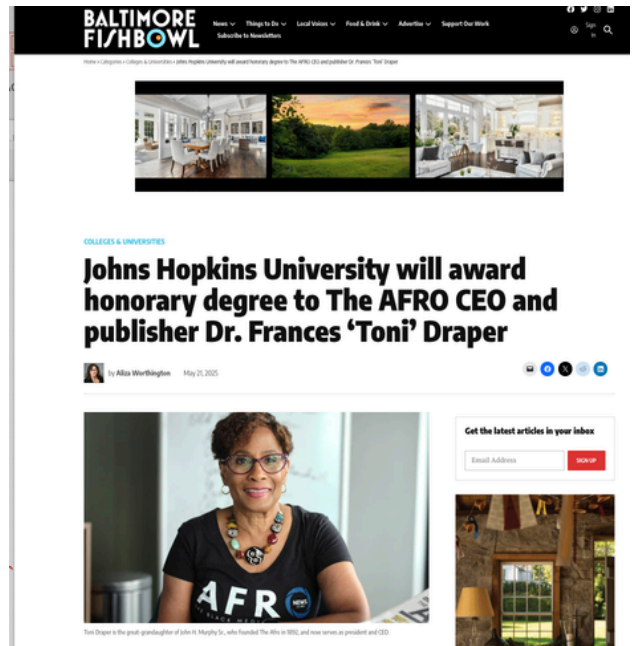


The nonprofit [Afro Charities](#) is processing and reorganizing the [AFRO American Newspapers'](#) archives as it prepares for a move to the historic Upton Mansion in West Baltimore. The goal is to turn the collection into a public-facing research archive.

"For the past, let's say 130 years or so, the collections have primarily been used internally for AFRO staff and for some savvy researchers who knew how to find these materials," said Afro Charities Executive Director Savannah Wood.

The AFRO Archives store millions of photos and thousands of newspaper editions and letters. It even holds some audio recordings which all live at the Maryland State Archives.

"We have letters in the collection from Booker T. Washington, for instance," said Wood.



Frances "Toni" Draper Savannah Wood, led Upton Mansion on Fel MELODY SIMMONS/

133 Years Strong: How the AFRO Is Still Defending Black Truth in 2025

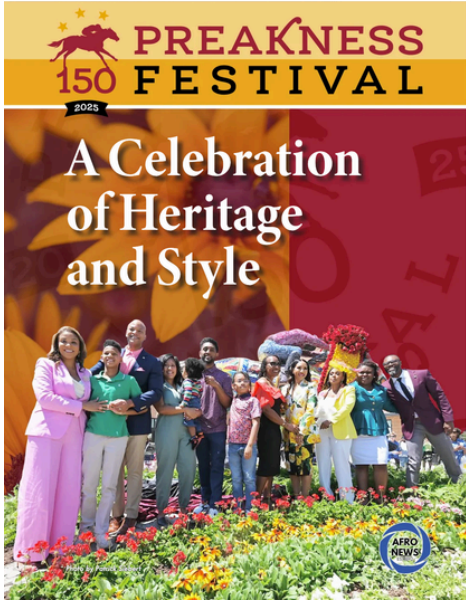
Frances Toni Draper, publisher of the nation's longest-running Black American family-owned newspaper, refuses to let our stories disappear.

BY FRANCES MURPHY (TONI) DRAPER
August 11, 2025



Now in its 133rd year, the AFRO-American Newspapers continues to thrive under the leadership of Publisher and CEO, Dr. Frances "Toni" Murphy Draper, who blends the paper's historic legacy with modern innovation. Credit: Photo courtesy of John Hopkins University / Will Kirk

IN THE COMMUNITY



First Lady Dawn Moore, Honorary Preakness Co-Chair, commissioned the AFRO to create a publication for distribution Preakness weekend

To: Government Operations Committee
From: Lenora Howze, Executive Director, AFRO Newspapers
Date: March 6, 2025
Re: AFRO FAVORABLE HB 1119

The AFRO is Maryland's oldest Black-owned business, providing news and information to the Black community for over 132 years. HB 1119 is a win for both Maryland state agencies and local news organization like the AFRO and we strongly support this bill.

The AFRO reaches deep into Maryland's Black community and is a trusted resource for news and information. Although many think print newspaper when they think of the AFRO, we bring many more advertising opportunities to the table. Digital, email, sponsored content and even a Digital Billboard network create trusted advertising opportunities to reach our demographic.

Increasing advertising spends from the State would be a gamechanger for the AFRO. Our revenues st local, driving our newsgathering, special events and content to uplift the community.

We urge a favorable report.



Mrs. Santa held in partnership with Furman L. Templeton Preparatory Academy served forty families.

IN THE COMMUNITY

The screenshot shows the AFR NEWS website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'AFR NEWS THE BLACK MEDIA AUTHORITY' logo, and buttons for 'Donate', 'Subscribe', and 'Advertise'. Below the navigation, there's a promotional banner for 'Watch Super Bowl LX live on NBC with YouTube TV'. The main content area features an article titled 'AFRAM 2025 offers star studded line up and fun for the whole family' by Michelle Richardson, dated July 7, 2025. A video player is visible below the article. On the right side, there's a 'Chesapeake BAY CROSSING STUDY TIER 2 NEPA' banner and a 'DRAFT EIS PUBLIC HEARINGS' announcement for 'Feb. 9, 10, and 12'. A 'Media Sponsor' badge is overlaid on the article.

REBUILD LOCAL NEWS

Growing Community Journalism

CASE STUDY: THE IMPACT OF THE LOCAL JOURNALISM SUSTAINABILITY ACT



Archival photo - Courtesy of The Afro-American

The Afro-American in Baltimore, Maryland is a newspaper with a rich history. The longest continuously published Black newspaper run by a single family in the United States, it was created by John Henry Murphy Sr. in 1892 as a place for the Black community in Baltimore and beyond to tell their stories.

It offered a platform for Black Americans to plead their case against discrimination, publishing some of the most influential commentary on Civil Rights. But it was also a place for Black Americans to celebrate their victories. Birth announcements, retirements, business anniversaries and graduations all had a place in The AFRO's pages and have for 129 years.

IN THE COMMUNITY

CIAA Tournament returns to Baltimore
 By Catherine Pugh Special to the AFRO
 February 24, 2025

Media Sponsor

AFRO NEWS
EST. 1992

CIAA Tournament returns to Baltimore

By Catherine Pugh Special to the AFRO

The Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA), the oldest African American athletic conference founded in 1902, will return to Baltimore for the fifth year at the CJO Bank Arena in downtown Baltimore from Feb. 25 to March 1. A total of 13 historically Black colleges and universities will compete in the tournament, including one team from Maryland, Bowie State University.

The men's and women's basketball tournament is expected to attract nearly 150,000 attendees to the city for basketball games and various activities, comprising step shows, educational programs, and performances by a number of artists, including Lloyd Jeezy, DJ Quick Silva and other bands.

The CIAA is regarded as a celebration of Black culture.

BOOKLOVERS' BREAKFAST
 featuring **Angela Flournoy**
 Saturday, February 7, 2026
 8:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
 Suburban Market Waterfront
 700 Riverside Street
 Admission: \$10
 \$10 per person, table of 10, \$100

ENOCH PRATT free LIBRARY

HOME / LOCATIONS & HOURS / CENTRAL LIBRARY / JOB & CAREER INFORMATION CENTER / WIW HONOREES

Women in Workforce Luncheon Previous Honorees



AFRO Executive Director, Lenora Howze, 2025 honoree

AFRO NEWS
EST. 1992

The AFRO Polls: Where Legacy Meets Your Voice

SQUARE OFFS

For 133 years, the AFRO has been the trusted voice of our community—telling our story and shaping the conversation. Now, we're excited to take that legacy a step further with the launch of a brand-new **Polls Section** on Afro.com, powered by **SquareOffs**. This interactive feature invites you to weigh in on the issues that matter most—politics, culture, sports, and everyday life—while seeing where others in our community stand. It's another way the AFRO continues to reflect, uplift, and engage the voices of Black America.

As the nation's only Black Gov., do you believe Wes Moore's exclusion carries...

Do you think the current level of alarm about the pending weather is necessary?

Should student loan debt forgiveness be part of fulfilling MLK's dream of economic...

Do you think eviction shielding protections go too far and unfairly hurt...

As the nation's only Black governor, do you believe Wes Moore's exclusion carries racial implications?

As the nation's only Black Gov., do you believe

afro.com/polls

UPTON MANSION

The AFRO Archives at the Upton Mansion

Baltimore, Maryland

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Located in West Baltimore's Upton community, the Upton Mansion is a nationally registered historic structure originally built in 1838 as the primary residence of a prominent Baltimore family. The campus will serve as the headquarters for the 132 year old AFRO American Newspapers, its affiliated non-profit, Afro Charities, and most importantly, will become the new permanent home for the AFRO American Newspapers Archives.

As owner's rep and development consultant, Cross Street Partners worked with Afro Charities to build a design and engineering team, navigate real estate due diligence and entitlements, hire a general contractor, and assemble the project capital stack which includes historic and New Markets Tax Credits, over 15 public and private grants, as well as individual contributions. Currently under construction, the redevelopment includes the renovation of the historic mansion and the construction of a new annex at the rear of the building.

The Upton Mansion, which will be certified LEED Gold, will also feature a gallery and exhibit space, recording studio, research and digitization space, leasable offices for similarly aligned organizations, community events space, and green space. The redevelopment will transform the Upton Mansion into an international destination for study and celebrating African American history and culture.

The redevelopment of the Upton Mansion will help the community actualize its community vision, which commits to "reclaim[ing] the vestiges of its distinct African American heritage and be[ing] the hub of a cultural revitalization where the memory of the great entertainers, artists, and civic leaders who proudly proclaimed Upton as their neighborhood will serve as a beacon by drawing investments back into the community."

Upon the expiration of the 7-year tax credit compliance period, Afro Charities will own the building debt free.



CLIENT / DEVELOPER

Afro Charities and
AFRO American Newspapers

ARCHITECT

Ziger Snead Architects

GENERAL CONTRACTOR

Commercial Group Construction

CSP ROLE

Development Consultant
Financial Advisory
Owner's Representative

PROJECT TYPE / USES

Adaptive Reuse, Archival Storage and
research, art and cultural exhibition,
education and community programming,
journalism

PROJECT SIZE

17,000 square feet
(11K SF historic mansion & 6K SF new annex)

PROJECT COST

\$14MM

START / COMPLETION

Q1 2025 / Q2 2026

2101 E. Biddle Street, Suite 1201
Baltimore, MD 21224

www.CrossStPartners.com

www.afrocharities.org/upton-mansion

LIVE VIDEO

Most
viewed
episode

Black People vs Giving Back to Our Communities

Published on Mar 14, 2025



**Thursdays
at noon**



@AfroAmericanNews



In 2025, the AFRO's video content demonstrated strong community engagement and reach:

- Over the past year, Chicken Boxx delivered more than 20 live-streamed episodes examining critical social, economic, cultural, and wellness issues affecting Black communities and the African diaspora. Chicken Boxx is an intergenerational, fact-based talk show that challenges stereotypes, amplifies expert voices, and creates space for authentic dialogue.
- Standard Content: Regular live broadcasts consistently draw between 3,000 and 10,000 views per episode.
- High-Impact Content: Special segments or those featuring high-profile leaders frequently go viral, surpassing 30,000 views.
- Overall Footprint: The total digital ecosystem generates more than 120,000 monthly views, driven by the page's status as the #1 local media Facebook page for engagement in its region.

TOP SOCIAL VIDEO CONTENT

Video uploaded to #socialmedia shows an officer of the #Baltimore Police Department running down a man in his squad car, ultima...
Reel · Published on: Oct 30, 2025

Overview

Views 2,043,241,583,714 29,484 467d 13h 2,619

Viewers Interactions Watch time Follows

This post received more views compared to your recent Facebook posts.

Views **2.0M**

Total Audience

This post's views Your typical post views

This post received more interactions compared to your recent Facebook posts.

Interactions **2.0M views**

29.5K

Likes and reactions 13.5K Comments 4.5K Shares 10.1K Saves 1.4K

Feed preview

Afro-American Newspapers
Published by Hootsuite · October 30, 2025

Video uploaded to #socialmedia shows an officer of the #Baltimore Police Department running down a man in his squad car, ultimately crashing into private property. Read... See more

Boost

👍👎👁️ 13K 4.5K 9.8K

View post on Facebook

11:25

THE BLACK
AHO
CE 1
AHO.O

Reels Friends 133

968

99

20
133
63

Devin Allen
PHOTOGRAPHER

afronews and bydvnln

"We love Baltimore. But we love a ..."

11.5K · View insights Boost reel

Add comment...

11.5K views

Jasmine Crockett (D-Texas-30)

it

Afro-American Newspapers

The AFRO's #capitolhill Reporter Ashlee Banks spoke with U.S. Rep. #JasmineCrockett (D-#texas-30) about her run for U.S. #Senate.

3K

1.1K

416

35.8K views

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