# Historic Westside News









December/ January 2019

"Linking Neighbors and Celebrating Diversity"

Issue 12

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## What Manner of a Man?



By Dr. Jabari Simama

As big of a man as Ivory Young was his true assets were understated. The 56-year-old Atlanta City Councilman passed November 16 after a courageous battle with Multiple Myeloma. He was one of 15 councilpersons who decided on whether or not to fund Arthur Blank's Mercedes Benz Stadium, the development of the Gulch, and the expansion of the Atlanta Beltline. No small ticket items.

My relationship with Ivory was personal and political. When I relinquished the city council seat he held at the time of his death, it was first filled by Councilman Michael Bond, followed by Young. Councilman Young charted his own course but did not hesitate to call and ask for advice when he needed it. I was careful not to offer it unless it was solicited barring a few occasions.

Ivory was keenly perceptive and always looking out to push his constituents forward. I remember in 2011 when the Atlanta School Board chairman Khaatim Sherrer El resigned to take a position in another state. Ivory called me and asked if I would be willing to serve on the Atlanta School Board on an interim basis. At the time I was serving as Deputy Chief Operating Officer and Chief of Staff for DeKalb County, so I politely declined. But I told him I knew of someone better than me—my wife, Nisha, who had been in pre-K thru-12 education for nearly a quarter of a century. He agreed and immediately went to work supporting her in what turned out to be a successful appointment.

That was Ivory; his word was gold. I was flattered

that of the tens of thousands residents of the district, he turned to us, saying "When they asked me for help to identify qualified candidates, I thought of no one else but the Simamas."

After Nisha's interim term, Young worked hard to get her elected to the school board because he saw how much she contributed to the Board during the short period she served as an interim board member. In a world where politicians risk little, Ivory backed up his support with tangible action. He did not count the cost before acting; he made a decision based on what he thought was right, then he acted upon it. He took his oath of office seriously.

Of course Councilman Young would go out of his way to support a former councilman, but I watched him work in community meetings. Always quiet and more inclined to listen than to talk. But the reason why he has served for such a long tenure is that he got things done for his constituents. All the projects I planned and identified seed funding for, Young brought into fruition and then some: Historic Westside Village, Westside Beltline, the streetscapes on Martin Luther King Drive and Joseph E. Boone Blvd., Rodney Cook, Sr. Park in Vine City, and much

Now, Ivory could be a bit absent-minded at times. I remember sitting on stage at Georgia Piedmont Tech getting ready to give the state-of-college keynote in 2017 when I get a call from Ivory, right before I take

the podium. He said, "Am I supposed to be there now. I'm so sorry I screwed up."

**Continued page 2** 

#### **Building the Beloved Community**

## What Matter Of a Man Ivory Lee Young Jr.?



#### Continued from page 1

I said "Councilman, no problem, we will be together soon." The thing that impressed me about this is even when he "screwed up," he always strove to do the right thing. He did not lie or make up an excuse, he came clean, admitting, he "screwed up."

My last major encounter with Councilman Young was in July of this year. He was aware



Ivory Lee Young Jr. and his Dad Ivory Lee Young Sr.

of the problem I had encountered in trying to purchase a house for my daughter, who is a school teacher, who wanted to return to Atlanta from Brooklyn. I complained to him how every house we attempted to purchase in Washington Park, investors would outbid us, offer cash payments, pay all closing costs, and close within a week. He agonized with me over this problem, how it ultimately

drove up the cost of housing, making it often unaffordable.

Finally, my wife and I found a house for my daughter, four houses down from our home, where my daughter grew-up and where I live, today, and have lived for the past 38 years. Ivory assisted in every way possible.

One thing he did not live to see, the bringing down of the burnt

out house across from my daughter's new home. When it finally comes down, I will think of Ivory.

Councilman Young was a statesman in a world of petty politicians. He was civil, ethical and always military polite. In a political world where the new normal is meanness, insult, and isolation, Ivory brought us together and proved the old adage that you can gain more using honey than hitting your opponent over the head with a hickory stick.

Ivory and I had this habit of calling each other Councilman. Well, goodbye, brother Councilman. I will see you in the morning.



Dr. Jabari Simama has spent his entire professional life advocating for and working in behalf of the "least of these." He has served as both an elected and public official

working in local and state governments. is a resident of Washington Park, educator, author and former District 3 Atlanta City Councilman Article from <u>Jabari Simama Speaks</u> Politics — Culture — Maleness https://jabarisimama.com/

Photos: Cover Councilmen Young around District 3, Forever Young Ball 2017, Top to Bottom Ivory Lee Young Jr with Washington Park residents, His family, Vine City resident and his siblings.









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By Reginald Maisonneuve

"We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."

These words pronounced a nation and remain as relevant and powerful today as they were when first written in 1787. They are concise and clear. In them is the ideal of a harmonious and equitable society in which citizens can thrive.

The U.S. Constitution (our Constitution) provides the political framework to realize it. The Founders entrusted us with it.

We need to debate how best to achieve it, but its goal is clear and the methods we employ can't be fundamentally at odds with it: they can't set out to disadvantage a people, deny them their voice or let them languish. To do so is a betrayal of the Constitution, a betrayal of democracy, a betrayal of principle. If we allow this happen, it is our own undoing. If you are complicit, shame on you. You cannot claim to be a patriot or in defense of the Constitution.

Democracy, certainly a well-functioning one, isn't assured. It is high-maintenance. It has to be protected and nurtured. Democracies fail when we're disengaged,

# **Economic Wellness**

when we're divided, when one group works to undermine the legitimate interests of another. The degree of economic inequality (lack of economic wellness) is a clear sign of a democracy under threat.

A thriving democracy has to offer its citizens the realistic hope and means to achieve their promise. Its people have to be enabled, engaged and active. They require the educational and financial footing, the physical and mental health, as well as the motivation and opportunity to be so. They also require trust in our institutions – public and private.

We cannot reach the potential of our nation when we leave people behind. The lack of economic wellness makes us less competitive, less productive and less stable. It erodes trust and weakens us as a people and nation. It is not exceptional.

As industry invests in its workforce and infrastructure to improve its capabilities, competitiveness and profitability, so should a nation invest in its people and expect a meaningful social return on that investment. Ensuring access to quality healthcare, basic and higher education; establishing thoughtful and sound consumer, employee and employer protections liberate our economy and entrepreneurship, not limit it. Properly implemented, they aren't in conflict. They are mutually supportive.

It isn't about promoting a welfare state or regulation run amok. Think of it as social capitalism. It's about establishing smart policies and regulations that allow both business, citizens and residents to thrive. As citizens and residents, we must also invest in ourselves, our communities, our businesses

and government and be responsible actors. The returns aren't all economic. They must also be in the quality of lives we collectively experience.

By almost any measure, we are falling increasingly short of the more perfect union the Constitution inspires us to: promoting the general welfare (economic wellness) and insuring domestic tranquility (civic wellness). GDP and the stock indices are not those measures. Wealth distribution, employment and poverty levels are a start. The human development index (HDI) and Gross National Happiness (GNH) are examples of broader measures of wellness. They are important because they consider human potential and the overall health of a society.

If we're serious about advancing economic wellness (the general welfare), our policies and regulations, investments and priorities, and business practices should be revisited. Improving HDI and GNH would be national priorities, regularly reported and assessed, and a basis for policy and practice. Aren't these more in keeping with the Constitution's intent?

Economic wellness isn't a zero-sum game. Impoverishing or exploiting one citizen should not enrich another. Protecting against this should be a basis of policy and practice for any institution. The very active policy today is to do just the opposite. The right priorities and indicators would make this clear to all so that we can "secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity."

Reginald Maisonneuve is a US Army veteran and Haitian-American. He is the Founder of eDea LLC, an Atlanta social enterprise financial technology company whose mission is to advance the financial health of individuals and communities and the effectiveness of economic development initiatives.

## Good Samaritan Full Circle of Health



By Veronica Squires

The Good Samaritan Health Center (Good Sam) was founded 20 years ago by Atlanta pediatrician Dr. Bill Warren with the mission of "spreading Christ's love through quality healthcare to those in need."

In 2007 the Board of Directors made a strategic decision to move from our first location in downtown Atlanta to 1015

Donald Lee Hollowell Parkway in order to be a medical home for Westside neighborhoods. There is a shocking life expectancy gap of at least 13 years between Westside ZIP codes and wealthier parts of

our city, and much of this is due to lack of access to health care and supportive services. Good Sam exists to change that – to bring health to our local residents.

We want to be the health care destination for the Westside. We want to be your doctor! Our services are top quality and holistic, and the entire family can receive quality care in an atmosphere of dignity and respect. Patients receive primary care, specialty care, dental, mental health services, spiritual care,



nutritional counseling, health education resources through the onsite Urban Farm & Farmers Market, cooking classes, group exercise classes in our on-site fitness center, and access to medications at the onsite dispensary. We call

this the Full Circle of Health approach to medicine. Good Sam's model is designed to surround patients with support and promote health rather than simply diagnose illness. If God cares about the entire person, so do we. Often a sympathetic, nonjudgmental listening ear is as therapeutic as medication. Patients can receive blood work and x-rays, but they can also ask for prayer, pick up fresh pro-

duce, attend a chef-led cooking demonstration, or take a Zumba class. The model works best when patients take advantage of some or all of the circle components. We make a bigger impact in health outcomes when we think of health care extending beyond the exam room.. So next time you walk or drive by Good Sam, remember that we're not a storage unit, a preparatory school, or a hotel! We're you're neighbor, and we want to be your doctor. Come on in and check us out! Your health is important and you deserve the best care we can offer.



Veronica Squires is The Author of How Neighborhoods Make Us Sick and the Chief Administrative Officer of The Good Samaritan Health Center

## Beloved Community Benefit -Bring Atlanta to The Table



By Shan Cooper

When I heard about the Beloved Benefit, I couldn't pass up the chance to be part of such a pivotal moment in the life of this incredible city. The philosophy of the event spoke to every part of me, my civic calling, my gratitude to Atlanta and my core values. Celebrating the idea of the Beloved Community made famous by Dr. King, the Beloved Benefit nurtures every Atlantean's responsibility to love, respect and trust each other. The event in March 2019 will bring benefactors and beneficiaries to the table for the opportunity to not only learn about each other, but also build a foundation for future work together. The Beitself, with musical acts, food and performances that highlight our city's vibrancy and diversity. Atlanta has always been a city at the forefront of inclusivity and collaboration, and those ideals form the foundation of the Beloved Benefit.

When I drive through the Westside, it takes me back home. My father is a pastor in Anniston, AL., and he is committed to staying there to make a difference. He is dedicated to being a beacon for his flock and fellow residents. I've met so many people on Atlanta's Westside who remind me of my father in their commitment and dreams for their own communities.

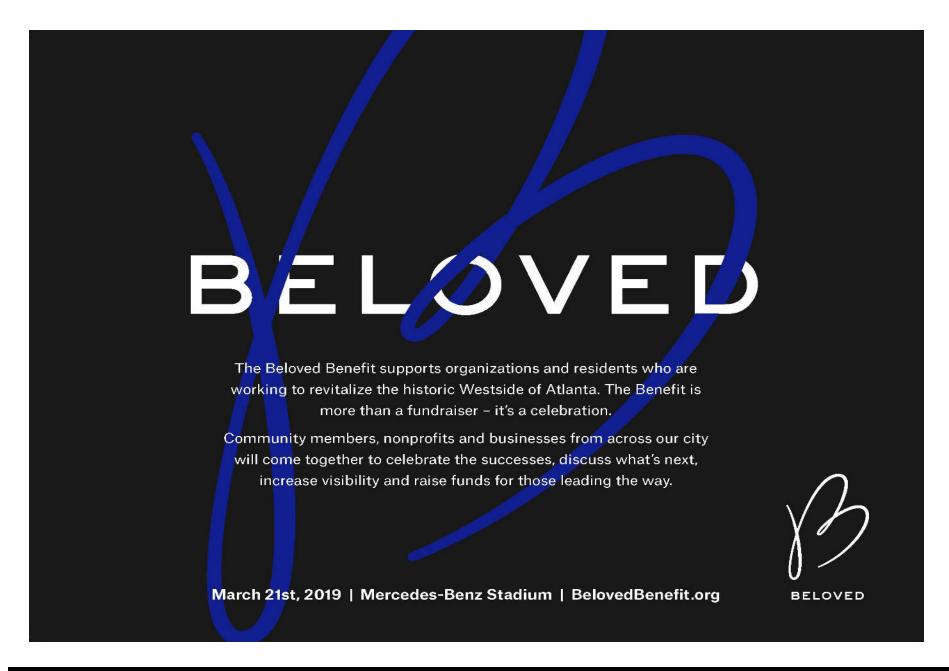
The Beloved Benefit is not just another dinner; it's a celebration of community and compassion, to recognize all who've made progress possible. The Beloved Benefit will bring donors and beneficiaries together in a meaningful way, an inclusive way that sends a message about Atlanta that will resonate across the country. We'll celebrate the courageous, dedicated and resilient individuals and organizations working to revitalize the historic Westside neighborhoods. We're rallying a committed chorus of supporters to bring the dream of the Beloved Community to life through investments of time, opportunity and funding.

This event could not come together on its own—it takes a Beloved Community of lead-

loved Benefit will be representative of Atlanta ers. I'm grateful to Ambassador Andrew Young, Arthur Blank and Dan Cathy for serving as honorary chairs for this incredible event. The Chickfil-A Foundation and Mercedes-Benz Stadium are generously underwriting all administrative, fundraising and event costs, so that 100 percent of the money raised will go directly to non-profit organizations working on Atlanta's **Westside.** My thankfulness extends beyond these sponsors, as Karen and Paul Bowers, Patrice and Ernest Greer, Raphael Bostic and Jeffrey Taylor have also stepped up to lead the Beloved Benefit. Many more leaders will join this group as we march forward, united and committed, toward a better Atlanta.

> The Beloved Benefit will give Westside residents and leaders seats at the table to continue building plans for a better future. We are all responsible for creating the Beloved Community; it's not just a dream. It exists within all of us. It's our hope the Beloved Benefit will continue to shape Atlanta's legacy as a city at the forefront of creating a community free of poverty, hunger and homelessness where racism and prejudice are replaced with love and brotherhood. Join us March 21, 2019, as the curtain goes up on a new event that will become an annual celebration of the best of Atlanta and of the best that lies in each of us.

This Op-ed appeared in the Atlanta Business Chronicle on Oct. 30, 2018 by Shan Cooper of the Atlanta Committee for Progress is the lead volunteer for the 2019 Beloved Benefit.



## Legacy Keepers: When Race & Politics Collide

By Kyidah Jones

Georgia's Republican Secretary of State Brian Kemp has been sued for suppressing minority votes after an Associated Press investigation revealed a month before November's midterm election that his office has not approved 53,000 voter registrations – most of them filed by African-Americans. In response, his office announced an investigation into the Democratic Party of Georgia. over an alleged hacking attempt into the voter registration system.

According to Fredrick Knight, a scholar of African -American history, this is an old story in this new electoral controversy. Georgia, like many southern states, has suppressed black voters ever since the 15th Amendment gave African-American men the right to vote in 1870.

Following the Civil War, Henry W. Grady, the editor of the Atlanta Constitution, spearheaded a crusade to build a prosperous "New South" centered around Atlanta. Using his considerable journalistic and oratorical skills, Grady championed a reborn Atlanta, which rose phoenix-like from the ashes of war to become the capital of a dynamic and progressive New South in 1968. But his vision did not reflect the reality of Atlanta or the state at large, by the turn of the century.



In reality, Georgia remained largely rural most of its citizens were struggling farmers. In addition to the loss of the slave labor, cotton production was in decline. Neglected by a government focused on industrial and business opportunities, farmers chose to reinstitute slavery by way of the tenant and crop lien systems (commonly referred to as sharecropping). This new system imposed an exploitative and stifling credit system. By 1880, 45 percent of Georgia's farmers, black and white, had been driven into tenancy, and by 1920 two-thirds of farmers worked on land they did not own, most often as sharecroppers.

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Formally organized in 1892, the Populist Party, under the leadership of Thomas E. Watson, offered a platform of banking and railroad reform, as well as cooperative farm exchange. For many elite white and politically entrenched Georgians, the true danger of Populism lay not in its economic policies but in its racial inclusiveness, as black farmers were encouraged to participate in the new third-party movement. They were joined by the Farmers' Alliance, a fraternal organization of white farmers and other rural southerners, including teachers, ministers, and physicians. Together both groups sought to protest the sharecropping system.

Watson was a strong proponent of a biracial alliance, and he achieved national status as a Populist leader, gaining the party's nomination for vice president in 1896. He became the first Georgian to run on a national ticket post Civil War. Ultimately, the election was lost to the Republican candidate William McKinley.

Populism failed to end the established racial hierarchy. Instead, a 1908 amendment was made to the Georgia state constitution that established literacy and property requirements to supplement the poll tax, essentially barring voting by blacks, and many poor whites. Accompanied with legislatively mandated racial segregation of public facilities, this defined the Jim Crow era in Georgia and the South. Jim Crow remained in place for 50 years until it was defeated during the Civil Rights Movement. Unfortunately, the suppression of blacks took a far more violent turn. More lynchings took place in Georgia between 1889 and 1918 than anywhere else in the United States, and Atlanta cringed in the aftermath of a brutal, three-day race riot in September 1906.

The county unit system was established in 1917 when the Georgia legislature, dominated by the Democratic Party, passed the Neill Primary Act. This act formalized what had operated as an informal system, instituted in Georgia in 1898, of allotting votes by county in party primary elections. (A primary election is held before a general election in order to determine each political party's candidates for the general election.) The county unit system continued to be used in Democratic primaries for statewide office and selected U.S. House districts until the early 1960s.

The state's county unit system favored rural counties. For example, the system gave three rural counties with a combined population of 7,000 just as much clout in statewide elections as Fulton County, with its 550,000

inhabitants. As a result, the more racially moderate and economically progressive candidates favored by Atlanteans had to fight an uphill battle against race-baiters like Eugene Talmadge, who won the governorship four times in the 1930s and 1940s without, as he bragged, ever campaigning in a county with streetcars.

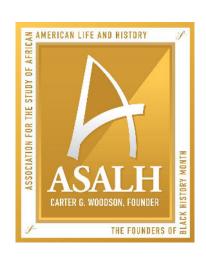
In 1962 the federal district court struck down the county unit system. This decision unleashed Atlanta's massive political influence on Georgia, a state that was accustomed to



what one observer called "the rule of the rustics."

As a result, Atlanta avoided the ugly confrontations of fellow southern cities like Little Rock, Arkansas, and Montgomery and Birmingham, Alabama. Instead Atlanta became a crucial center for the civil rights movement, and served as the base for Martin Luther King Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the Albany Movement of 1961-62.

Kyidah Jones is a resident of V ine City and an at Senior at Shiloh Highschool.





## On The Rise Financial Center



#### By Henry Howard

What happens when life happens to you? The unexpected should always be expected right? What do you do when you are suddenly faced with a financial emergency? Loss of a job, divorce, significant health problems for you or a family member or car breaks down. Events like these happen every day, so how do you weather the storm? By being prepared.

Norman stopped by the On the Rise Financial Center in Vine City this week with a letter he wanted to share with me. I was so moved by his words, I asked if I could share his story with you.

Hi, my name is Norman Howard. This letter is a testimony to how my life has improved after a little assistance and a lot of faith.

I started 2018 unemployed, my employer merger with another

#### BUILDING FINANCIAL PROSPERITY NOW AND IN THE FUTURE

company. I was devastated and caught totally off guard. I looked for work but no job offers came. It put a strain on my family and made it stressful at home. I stopped going to church and cut off communication with outside family and friends. It was hard for me. I was losing hope.

Before being laid off I passed a billboard for Westside Work. I called them and my life started to change for the better.

I did placement testing thru Integrity and was paired with a counselor at Westside Works. For the first time I felt like someone cared about my situation and needs. I soon was selected to interview with Per Scholas, a computer IT training school located downtown. I enrolled in the A+ computer training program.

I graduated with my CompTIA A+ certification in August 2018, and recently received a fulltime job offer. I am also working with On the Rise Financial. My financial coach reviewed my total debt verse my total income and helped me create a viable household budget that I can manage on a monthly basis. He also pulled my credit and I discovered my credit was not as bad as I thought. Together, we created action steps for me to clear up discrepancies on the reports open a savings account with one of OTRFC partner credit unions. Now with budgeting and credit on track, I can look to the future of buying a house.

Thank you On the Rise Financial for all of your help and support.



On the Rise Grand Opening

By D. Makeda Johnson

On the Rise Financial Center held it's grand opening on April 2017. The center is operated by Atlanta based National Federation of Community Development Credit Union in partnership with local credit unions, 1st Choice CU, BOND Community FCU, Credit Union of Atlanta, and Peach State FCU.

The center aligns with the Stadium Community Benefit Plan objective to revitalize Vine City, English Avenue, and Castleberry communities while simultaneously assisting legacy residents to obtain economic / social mobility and sustainability.

On the Rise Center is a reflection of Councilmen Ivory Lee Young Jr visionary and innovative leadership and is funded through the support of Invest Atlanta Community Improvement Fund, Equifax, as well as the Arthur M. Blank Foundation.

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## Rodney Cook Sr. Park in Historic Vine City



Ivory Lee Young Jr, Rodney Cook Jr NMF and George Dusenbury TPL

By HWN Team

The Rodney Cook Sr. Park in Historic Vine City is now underway. The project represents the communities' desire to address the flooding issues that created the 2002 flood that forced many residents to relocate and to build monuments that would preserved its rich legacy for future generations. The park became a reality through an collaborative effort between the City of Atlanta Department of Parks and Recreation, Department of Watershed Management, City of Atlanta Mayor's Office, The National

Monuments Foundation and The Trust for Public Land (TPL), to preserve our historical legacy as well as honor the resident stated desired use of the park area whom were forced to relocate due to the 2002 sewer overflowing and flooding.

The National Monument Foundation has been constructed with the charge to ensure the preservation of Historic Vine City history with the building of 16-18 monuments in honor of those whom have lived, worked and served humanity through the promotion of PEACE. Among those to be honored are Alonzo Herndon, Andrew Young, Booker T. Washington, Chief Tomochichi, Coretta Scott King, Dorothy Bolden, Grace Town Hamilton, Herman J Russell, Hosea L. Williams, James Orange, John Lewis, Joseph E. Boone, Joseph E. Lowery, Julian Bond, Maynard H. Jackson, Ralph David Abernathy, Rodney Mims Cook, Sr., and WEB DuBois. Additionally NMF has secured and will house

located in the Peace Column. (See HWN former editions online for more details on the CT Vivian African American Library).

During the councilman's funeral service on December 1, 2018, Rodney Cool Jr read a letter written by Councilmen Ivory Lee Young Jr. to Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms, following his surgery at Emory confirming his commitment and desire for the completion of the Rodney Cook Sr. Park in Historic Vine City and the importance of the preservation of our legacy for future generations.

We will continue to update the community on the ongoing development of the legacy preservation component of The Rodney Sr. Park in Historic Vine City in each edition. Thanks to the support of The National Monument Foundation







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Arthur Hines Garden Angel

## Historic Westside Gardens Offers Two (2) Garden Angels positions Are you a Fit?

#### What a Garden Angel do?

- Establish trust with his gardeners and the community
- · Peer to Peer Education. Experience with gardening, a must.
- Creates local capacity by being resourceful and problem solver. See and identify other residents as assets
- Garden Angels are part of the community and have an interest in common with the community to improve life and well-being. Garden Angel advocates for the community
- Understand community desires and get informed to be able to refer people to existing services

Positions are Part-Time with growth opportunity. Must reside in Vine City or English Avenue. Information available with Home Food Gardening Community Organizer:404-277-7340 Application: A brief 1 page letter, relating to the 5 items above. Please type your letter. Fitting candidates will be reached for a conversation. Send application letter

to:Execdir@historicwestsidegardens.org

