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American Women Dominate Olympics



Former Tennessee Volunteer All-American Candace Parker paced the United States women's team to its fifth straight gold medal last week. They routed Spain 86-50, and she had 21 points and 11 rebounds. The American women have won 41 straight Olympic games.

By Ron Wynn

The London Olympics marked the first time in American history that there were more women on the squad than men. But few expected this to become the Olympics where women wouldn't just be important but critical in terms of overall American team success. With American men shut out of previous favorite categories like boxing and the 400 meters, the women saved the day.

A prime example was in Gymnastics, a sport that usually garners big ratings, but doesn't always include topflight American participation. The women only won five gold medals, the fewest at any Olympics since 2000. But one of those was Gabby Douglas' spectacular all-round title. She became the first Black woman to win that award and later talked about its importance.

"There's not a lot of African-Americans in this sport, so I'm glad to bring it up," Douglas told the Associated Press. "I want them to think, 'if Gabby can do



Gabby Douglas made history last week, while also becoming one of the world's premiere gymnasts. The 16-year-old phenom won two gold medals at the Olympics. In the process, she became the first Black gymnast, male or female, to win the all-round.

it so can I. Hundreds of offers have now come rolling in for Douglas, even though she's also been the victim of classic tabloid reporting regarding family troubles. Still, Douglas and the rest of her teammates (dubbed the "Fab Five") captivated audiences throughout the opening week.

Aly Raisman won two medals on the final day of competition, taking the first US gold on floor exercise in history. There are also plans for a 40-city gym-

nastics tour with Douglas and assorted members.

Former UT standout Candace Parker helped the women's basketball team continue an amazing run of Olympic victories. They haven't lost a game since 1992, and their 86-50 win over France was their 41st straight in Olympic competition. Parker chipped in with 21 points and 11 rebounds, thoroughly outplay-

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Fifteenth Avenue Baptist Church Music Director Honored



Brandon A. Boyd

NASHVILLE, TN — Fifteenth Avenue Baptist Church has been known for its variety and commitment to excellence in the area of Black Sacred Music for over 127 years. The history of the church's music ministry has always been lead by incredibly gifted musicians such as Rev. E. W. D. Issacs, Jr, Ms. Birdie Rhea Mosely, Mr. John Woodard, Mr. Floyd Thompson, Prof. James Scandrick, Mrs. Diana K. Poe assisted by Mr. William G. Crimm and Mrs. Nita M. Smith, and currently Mr. Brandon A. Boyd. Under each

of these incredible musicians, they music ministry have preserved the spirituals, anthems, traditional and contemporary gospel music.

He moved to Nashville as a transfer student from Bethune-Cookman University to attend Tennessee State University. He has served the congregation since August 2006. He remembers going directly to Fifteenth Avenue Baptist on the evening for a choir rehearsal at the church in preparation for their annual "Choir Day" celebra-

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Harpist Jeff Majors

Acclaimed Harpist at Les Gemmes Event Saturday

By Janice Malone

NASHVILLE, TN — It's only a few more days before one of summer's most anticipated event — Summer's Last Fling. The upcoming August 18th event (3 - 7pm) will take place at 635 West Nocturne Drive. It will be an evening of fine cuisine, art and jazz, to say bon voyage to those sizzling hot temperatures of summer 2012. The event will not only be an event of fun-filled elegance, but it's also a fundraiser for Lighting the Path for Girls a signature program for Les Gemmes. "A Culinary Taste of Nashville" will feature cuisine from some of the city's top caterers. To further speak of sizzling, the atmosphere for this event will sizzle to the melodious jazz sounds from special pop/jazz

musician Melvin "Maestro" Lightford, along with Lavestria Gaston Miller, former backup singer for Al Green flying in from Memphis and Nashville's popular featured jazz artist Attorney Jonathan Richardson. Guest will view the artwork of award-winning artists Michael McBride, James Threalkill and Michael Mucker for purchase/auction; flying in from Atlanta will be Stacey Diltz, a Wine Educator and President of Staceywines.com, hosting in an elegant setting with best-selling author Alice Randall.

Another VIP attending the event is internationally acclaimed master harpist and jazz/gospel producer Jeff Majors (www.jeffmajors.com).

The melodious harp music of

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Relations Commission Partners With Prominent Graduate School

NASHVILLE, TN — The Metro Human Relations Commission has partnered with the International Institute for Restorative Practices (IIRP), to lead restorative practices initiatives in Nashville and the surrounding region. The two organizations are joining forces to help professionals learn effective ways to reduce unproductive tension and violence and increase mutually-respectful engagement in communities,



Caroline G. Blackwell

groups, schools, and business settings.

The Commission will host the IIRP, an accredited graduate school, in conducting Basic Restorative Practices. The four-day training event takes place September 18-21, at the Martin Professional Development Center, 2400 Fairfax Avenue, in Nashville, TN. This workshop imparts practical knowledge

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Benjamin Todd Jealous

NAACP Concerned Over Lack of Full Diversity in Presidential Debate Moderators

LOS ANGELES, CA — The NAACP released the following statement regarding the Commission on Presidential Debates' announcement that no persons of color would be moderating this year's presidential debates:

From NAACP President and CEO Benjamin Todd Jealous:

"The lack of diversity among this year's debate moderators is representative of the overall lack of diversity in news media," stated Benjamin

Todd Jealous, President and CEO of the NAACP. "Whether it's as primetime news anchors, debate moderators, or commentators on the influential Sunday morning political talk shows, people of color - and African

Americans specifically - are strikingly underrepresented."





Oak Hill School's new head chef, Ishmael Simmons

Oak Hill School Hires New Head Chef

NASHVILLE, TN — Oak Hill has hired Ishmael Simmons as the school's new head chef. Simmons, who worked in the food prep industry for the Nashville Predators, Bridgestone Arena, and Gaylord Opryland Hotel and Convention Center, brings an array of experience and knowledge that aligns with Oak Hill's healthy eating plan for students.

"Serving as Oak Hill's new head chef is so exciting for me," Simmons said. "I'm given the freedom to explore healthy options for the students, and getting their input on what choices they prefer will be interesting and fun."

The addition of Simmons comes just in time for the 2012-2013 school year, as well as the opening of the new dining hall facilities. Simmons will have the opportunity to work with fresh produce grown on the Oak Hill campus, another project started by the community that focuses on educating students of the importance of healthy eating and physical fitness.

"Ishmael is going to offer a whole new level of creativity for our students at mealtimes," dining services coordinator Kim Rogers said. "Children aren't always willing to try

new things, and Ishmael's imagination inspires picky eaters to explore healthier food options."

Simmons received his bachelor's degree in mass communication from Alcorn State University, and studied baking and pastry creation at The Art Institute of Tennessee in Nashville. Simmons has spent time as a prep chef, kitchen supervisor, and bakery and pastry creator for all outlets within Bridgestone Arena.

"The dynamic at Oak Hill School is unlike any other place I've been," Simmons said. "Staff members are dedicated to creating a spiritually, mentally and physically healthy child. I'm happy to be a part of the Oak Hill family, and happy to do my part in nurturing bright, healthy children."

About Oak Hill School

Oak Hill School is a coeducational, nondenominational Christian, independent school serving approximately 515 students in pre-kindergarten through sixth grade. The school's mission is to build character and integrity in a Christian environment for a lifetime of learning and service.

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this Washington, D.C. native reaches over 40 million viewers through his hit show "The Gospel of Music with Jeff Majors," one of the flagship programs on the TV One Network.

Jeff's mom, Annie P. Fitzgerald, was a talented jazz trumpeter in her own right, with a circle of friends which included legendary actress and singer Pearl Bailey. Even though the harp makes beautiful angelic music, it's not exactly a popular among African Americans. And that was certainly the case in Jeff Majors' life when he was a youngster. "When I was a kid I was mostly interested in playing basketball," recalls Jeff with a laugh. But one night all of that changed when 15-year-old Jeff had a dream one night, in which he saw himself playing the harp; an instrument he had never played before. "Back then I was studying music but I had never even seen a harp instrument until the night I had that dream. . . Even though I was introduced to music at an early age, I looked at music as something that my mom did back then." Inspired, he used the dream to fuel his passion for music and literally change the course of his life. With the harp hand-made for him by a local music store owner, Jeff began to pursue mastery of the instrument. He spent the next several years in Los Angeles studying under the wings of jazz pianist and harpist

Alice Coltrane, wife of jazz legend John Coltrane. He later teamed up with legendary jazz harpist Dorothy Ashby. Jeff says it was the influences of his mom, Mrs. Coltrane and Mrs. Ashby, that really inspired and helps shape his career as an internationally acclaimed harpist. But Jeff's career isn't just about performing in front of the rich and famous. He does an annual series of national concerts, the Jeff Majors Blankets for the Homeless and most recently the "Hip Hop for the Homeless" concert. Through these concerts he has collaborated with some of today's emerging artists and youth in the inner cities to bring awareness and help to the homeless communities around the country. These concerts provide clothing, blankets and other basic necessary items for surviving for homeless individuals.

Today Jeff says he still often thinks about the "harp dream" that's been such an integral part of his life. "I feel the dream was a road map to show me things that were to come in my adult life," says Jeff. "And to this day I am still walking in that dream."

Tickets can be purchased online at www.lastsummerfling-efbevent.com or at the Tennessee Tribune Office, 1501 Jefferson St., phone 615-321-3268 or from Les Gemmes members.

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and skills that can be used immediately in personal and professional life—by those in education, criminal justice, counseling, business leadership, social and government services, the pastoral field, volunteer organizing, or other organizational settings.

The Metro Human Relations Commission has offered community multicultural education, policy advocacy, and compliance services and enforcement since 1965. The Commission's core services include culturally-responsive training and research that promotes effective intergroup relations, dialogue circles and other group engagement practices, com-

munity forums, and conflict services. Through this new partnership with the IIRP, the Commission now brings the world leader in the field of restorative practices and its knowledge to Nashville Davidson County and the surrounding region.

"This four-day training event is a unique opportunity for building capacity and thought leadership about engaging and resolving conflict in ways that develop community where the very idea of connection seems impossible," said Caroline Blackwell, MHRC Executive Director. "This is about mutual service at the very core: working together with

Opening Celebration for Simon Youth Academy

NASHVILLE, TN — The Simon Youth Academy at Opry Mills will reopen in its Opry Mills mall home for the first time on Thursday, Aug. 16, 2012 10 a.m. since the May 2010 flood that closed the mall for nearly two years. The school initially opened in Opry Mills in August 2009 with the support of the Simon Youth Foundation (SYF). It is one of a growing network of schools established by SYF across the country, with most located in malls owned by the Simon Property Group. Following the flood, the school relocated to Hickory Hollow.

The Academy's reopening expands the number of these non-traditional high school programs to three, all serving students at risk of dropping out for multiple reasons. Along with the Academy at Old Cockrill and the Academy at Hickory Hollow, these three schools have graduated more than 1,040 students who might not otherwise have received



Dr. Michael Durnil

a high school diploma.

Participating in the ceremony will be Dr. Michael Durnil from the Simon Youth Foundation; Dr. Jesse Register, Director of Metro Nashville Public Schools; and Nashville Mayor Karl Dean. They will be joined by Opry Mills Principal Car-

mon Brown and Academy at Old Cockrill Principal Elaine Fahrner for the ribbon cutting.

Thursday, Aug. 16, 2012 10 a.m.

The Simon Youth Academy at Opry Mills located near the Mall Offices at Opry Mills.

MTSU to Combine Robotics Studies With Unmanned Aircraft Search

MURFREESBORO, TN — Middle Tennessee State University has entered into a historic educational partnership with the U.S. Army and U.S. Marine Corps that will study ways robots on the ground can be used in concert with unmanned vehicles in the air.

The pact between the MTSU Unmanned Aircraft Systems program and the two military branches is the first of its kind. It comes one year after MTSU and the Army entered another unique partnership to support MTSU's educational and research efforts into the Army's remote-controlled Raven aircraft.

MTSU President Sidney A. McPhee and Lt. Col. Nick Kioutas signed documents August 13, 2012 that confirmed the three-year cooperative effort with the Robotic Systems Joint Project Office, headquartered in Warren, Mich., with a satellite office at the Redstone Arsenal near Huntsville, Ala. The office jointly is operated by the Army and Marines.

"The rapidly advancing work of our aerospace department is exploring the cutting edge of unmanned technology and operations," McPhee said. "This unique partnership will encourage and enhance our studies of this developing technology."

Military officials at the ceremony displayed examples of its Raven aircraft and its ground robots, best known for its use by soldiers to remotely disarm explo-



Lt. Colonel Nick Kioutas, left, and MTSU President Sidney A. McPhee agreed to a three-year cooperative effort to combine robotic studies and unmanned aircraft.

sive devices.

Kioutas said the University's partnership with the Army's Unmanned Aircraft Systems, or UAS, program, also based at Redstone, "makes MTSU a natural choice."

Lt. Col. Robb Walker of the Army's Unmanned Aircraft Systems program echoed Kioutas' comments.

"The UAS Project Office enjoys a great relationship with MTSU and we're excited about this new opportunity for them," he said.

The new partnership will explore how to add low-cost hardware and software to existing small robots so that Raven aircraft could be used as an eye-in-the-sky relay. Such advances would increase the range and utility of the robots.

Mark Blanks, interim director of MTSU's UAS program, said the partnership will explore ways for air-

and ground-based robotic systems to communicate and work with each other.

"Imagine a small unmanned aircraft directing a ground robot where to spot-spray agricultural fields for weeds in real time," Blanks said. "Or imagine an unmanned ground vehicle providing a closer look at an object identified by an aircraft."

The agreement allows the Robotic Systems Joint Project Office "to loan and transfer research equipment to MTSU." Additionally, it allows the Army and Marines to assist in the development of courses and materials for MTSU, and involve faculty and students in defense laboratory research projects.

"Our partnership provides us the opportunity to enhance the capabilities of today's soldier and tomorrow's commercial markets," Blanks said.

regard for everyone involved."

"Restorative practices is a new field of study that has the potential to positively influence human behavior and strengthen civil society," explains IIRP president Ted Wachtel. "The fundamental premise is so simple. People are happier, more cooperative and productive, and more likely to make positive changes when those in positions of authority do things with them, rather than to them or for them."

The International Institute for Restorative Practices works with partners around the world to present restorative practices programs that are affordable

and sustainable within the framework of local needs and resources, and in a culturally appropriate manner. The Metro Human Relations Commission is pleased to become IIRP's Southeast regional partner in this expanding program.

For more information about the event, call (615) 880-3370, or email hrc@nashville.gov. Online registration for the full four-day program is available through IIRP. Per diem registration is available, and academic credit for the training is also offered through IIRP's Graduate School. To access these options, email the Registrar or call 610-807-9221.