

State Of Black Detroit: Where Do We From Here?

Special to the NNPA from The Michigan Citizen

In 1973, a more hopeful time for African Americans, Coleman Young became the city's first black mayor and the outlook for black political and economic empowerment appeared to be sure.

Forty years later, Detroit is in the process of an emergency manager-led bankruptcy - the largest municipal bankruptcy in U.S. history. Under emergency management, democratic values and practices are gone. The mostly black city, has lost any ability to control local dollars for public resources.

* Expect \$3 billion in public/private projects going on in Detroit and no significant minority or black participation, according to the Michigan Black Chamber.

* This month, Detroit City Council approved a \$650 million stadium project built with no Community Benefits Agreement.

* At least 125 Detroit Public Schools have closed since 2008, drastically altering the geography neighborhoods, communities and the cultural and traditions of families. The district has been under state control for 43 of the past 15 years.

* Official Michigan stats put Detroit's unemployment rate at 16 percent. The unemployment figures do not account for people who are no longer looking for work. Some city officials have put unofficial unemployment and underemployment rates at over 50 percent.

* Nearly 60 percent of Detroit children live in poverty. More than one in every three Detroit births are to mothers who did not graduate high school and 20 percent are to teen-age mothers, according to Data Driven Detroit.

* Detroit has an infant mortality rate of many Third World countries and outpaces any other big city across the nation. Infant mortality is the number one killer of children outside of violence in the city.

* The Michigan Chapter of National Action Network has issued a Northland Mall "Travel Advisory." The organization "cannot give anyone a degree of comfort that their children are safe" at the Southfield mall where 24-year-old Mckenzie Coehran died in the custody of security guards. This is not the only case of security guard violence in the area.

* Detroit has the most teens, between ages 16 and 19 years of age, that are neither in school nor working. And the criminal justice system largely views these young people as adults.

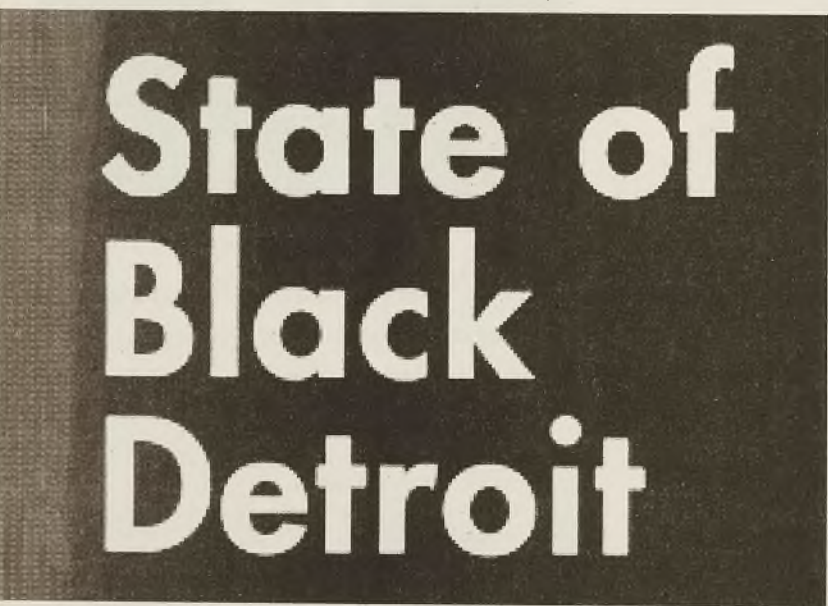
* Detroit's median income fell by 38 percent from 2007 to 2011 and is less than half that of the state's. In 2011, Detroit's median income was \$25,193 which fell from \$30,415, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. In contrast, the state's median income is \$56,068.

* Public sector work, a particularly effective path the to middle class for African Americans, is being decimated by emergency management and financial strain from policy priorities, recession and financial crisis. Detroit city worker's pension average is approximately \$19,000 per year. Police and firefighters average about \$30,000. All groups may be left in poverty after Detroit's bankruptcy.

* This represents a partial list of the context in which African Americans live in the city of Detroit. The list does not address the public policy rollbacks that have impacted the city in the last 15 years: cuts in revenue sharing, the end of affirmative action and drastic cuts in welfare and other social programs.

* Increasing poverty, disenfranchisement and overall lack of accountability in local and state government contribute to the crisis of our time.

Considering the current state of affairs, the goal is to find the opportunities. The Michigan Citizen will hold its first in a series of monthly forums - a gathering of voices with the common goal of taking a defining stand - where grassroots, faith and labor communities come together to create an agenda that will help us control the dollars in our community, rebuild our institutions and regain our political power.



Benjamin Tood Jealous To Join Kapor Center For Social Impact

Former NAACP president & CEO will focus on social impact investments in tech startups and community organizations that narrow gaps

(Oakland, CA)- Benjamin Tood Jealous, who served as President and CEO of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) until last December, will join the Kapor Center for Social Impact as a partner, the Center announced today.

"The startups and non-profit organizations the Kapor Center invests in have tremendous potential to expand opportunity for all Americans, particularly for communities that have been historically left behind," said Jealous. "The Kapor team is an exceptionally diverse band of geniuses working to close gaps in access, opportunity, wealth and participation and I am proud to continue working on those issues with them."

The mission of the Kapor Center for Social Impact is to provide educational access for all Americans, diversify the tech industry, and support startup companies that have a positive social impact. The Center works in two ways: Kapor Capital makes seed-stage investments in tech companies that close gaps in education, healthcare, economic inclusion and access to opportunity for Americans affected by growing inequality; and the Foundation invests in community organizations that focus on closing the same gaps.

"As an entrepreneur and an investor, I've built my career on seeing the possibilities of good ideas and the right team, and then bringing that vision to life," said Mitchell Kapor, co-founder and co-chair of the Center. "By bringing Ben to the Kapor team, we are making a bet that someone who has succeeded in changing the broader world in so many ways will do the same in our world."

"Ben has spent his career working to end racial

and economic gaps in society, from the criminal justice system to education to health care," said Freada Kapor Klein, co-founder and co-Chair of the Center. "We are tremendously pleased that he will bring his vast experience, strategy and energy to the tech sector as the next frontier in his life's work for justice and inclusion."

Jealous will also join the board of directors of the Kapor Center-funded Level Playing Field Institute, a non-profit organization dedicated to eliminating barriers faced by people of color in science, technology, engineering and math.

"I welcome Ben to the Kapor team," Nicole Sanchez, Kapor Center, Co-Managing Partner said. "His energy, commitment and intellect will be invaluable as we continue our work to create more opportunities for more Americans from all walks of life."

The Kapor Center for Social Impact was one of ten foundations that joined the White House last week to pledge participation in the groundbreaking My Brother's Keeper initiative to support young men of color in academic achievement. Kapor Center Co-Managing Partner Cedric Brown represented the Kapor Center at the White House.

At the NAACP, Jealous was recognized as a leader of successful state and local movements to ban the death penalty, outlaw racial profiling, defend voting rights, secure marriage equality, and free multiple wrongfully incarcerated people from prison. Jealous said that his first order of business will be to initiate a learning tour of Silicon Valley to learn from the entrepreneurs and innovators who are shaping this sector.

Register to Vote



ANNOUNCEMENT

The Durham Board of County Commissioners solicits applicants to fill positions on the following citizen boards and commissions:

- Environmental Affairs Board (1 Position - Air Resources)
- Nursing Home Community Advisory Committee (1 At-Large Position)
- Open Space and Trails Commission (3 Positions - 1 At-Large, 1 Triangle Township, 1 Carr/Oak Grove)
- Public Health Board (1 Position - Engineer)

Property tax listing must be current. County and City taxes must not reflect any delinquencies before an application is considered.

*Please note that appointment schedules may change without notice.

Appointments will be considered by the County Commissioners on Monday, April 28, 2014 at 7:00 p.m. in the Commissioners' Meeting Room, second floor, Durham County Government Administrative Complex, 200 East Main Street

For applications or additional information, please contact the Clerk to the Board's Office at 560-0025. Website: www.dconc.gov

Deadline for receipt of applications--5:00 p.m. March 28, 2014

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