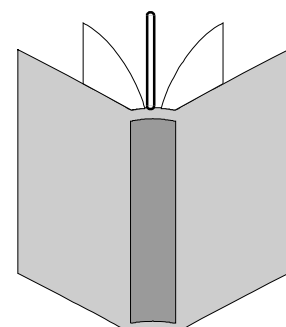




Editorial / Opinion



The Fayetteville Press Newspaper welcomes letters from its readers. All letters must be signed and must include a home address and a daytime phone number. All letters are subject to editing. We will not publish **unsigned** or **pseudonymous** letters.
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Scott Sisters, Free at Last



By Ben Wrobel

Jaime and Gladys Scott walked out of prison 16 years after they first entered. Their double-life sentences were criticized as indicative of the egregious sentencing in our criminal justice system, and their release by Governor Haley Barbour was hailed as a long-overdue victory for justice, as well as an example of a governor using his commutation powers to right a wrong.

"I have no doubt that the reason the governor let them out is that this is a grave injustice," said NAACP President and CEO Benjamin Todd Jealous, who advocated strongly on the sisters' behalf. "We need more days like this in Mississippi. We need more days like this in this country."

The sisters' release marks the end of a grassroots campaign led by a coalition of concerned individuals and groups, including the sisters' family Evelyn Rasco and Nancy Lockhart, their attorney Chokwe Lumumba, the national NAACP, the Mississippi NAACP State Conference and other organizations. Supporters from around the country brought attention to the sisters' imprisonment and petitioned Mississippi Governor Haley Barbour for their freedom.

"This is a result of all of the individuals across this state and across the country who saw injustice in what was taking place and gave voice to it," stated Mississippi NAACP State Conference President Derrick Johnson. "This is a great day to let us know that if we stick

together, work together, we can make mighty things happen."

Jamie and Gladys were each condemned as teenagers for a first-time offense in which no one was hurt and court records maintain that little more than \$10 was stolen. The sisters were convicted of luring two men to be robbed by three teenage boys. The boys each received eight years and served less than three.

The sisters' case has become increasingly tragic and urgent over the years. While in prison, Jamie lost use of both her kidneys. "They have served more time than they should have served," Lumumba said.

After leaving prison, the sisters returned to Pensacola, Florida, where their mother and children live. Jamie has three children, ages 23, 20 and 17, and two grandchildren, ages five and three. Gladys has two children, ages 22 and 15 and two grandchildren, ages seven and four.

Jealous said that the NAACP will continue to ensure that the sisters receive the best medical care available, and Lumumba said that he would help the sisters seek a full pardon.

"Our next step is to ensure that the sisters get the health care that they need, and ultimately, the full pardon they deserve," stated Jealous.

According to Jealous, the sisters' release speaks to the urgent need for the work the NAACP and their allies are doing to encourage governors to use their clemency powers to advance justice. He says that for more than a century the NAACP has pushed governors and presidents publicly and privately to use their clemency powers to advance justice.

"The case of the Scott sisters gives hope to others who are unjustly imprisoned," stated Jealous. "During the past few weeks, two governors released black Americans who had been railroaded by our nation's criminal justice system. One week before the Scott sisters were released, New York Governor David Paterson commuted the sentence of John White, a man who was defending his family. We hope that this trend continues in other cases, such as the case of John McNeil, a Georgia man who was given a life sentence for defending his home."

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(910) 323-3120 - Office
 *323-1113 Fax
www.fayettevillepress.com

*Publisher - JJ Jones

*General Manager
 Chrystal M. Thomas

*Operations Manager
 Chris Miller

*Editor - Jae McKrae

*Staff Writer - Val Jones

*Office Assistant
 James Thomas

*Account Executives
 Dwight Brown

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*Distribution
 Michael Dykes
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E-mail -
fayepress@aol.com

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Bring Black History Month Home With A Click

(NAPSM)-With the rich history of contributions to science and technology by African Americans including such notables as mathematician Benjamin Banneker, agricultural chemist George Washington Carver, who revolutionized Southern agriculture, and, more recently, Dr. Patricia Bath, the first African-American female doctor to patent a medical invention-it seems only fitting that opportunities to celebrate Black History Month in February are taking a decidedly 21st century turn.

For example, to see more about African-American history, you can check out an online version of the Underground Railroad; explore interactive time lines of important milestones; or click a remote control to gain access to on-demand cable programming on a wealth of important topics. Top picks include:

- Milestones in Black History: Gain new perspective with historical documentaries that explore Lincoln's journey from the early years to his fight to abolish slavery during the Civil War; current perspectives on how ambitious plans to reinvent New Orleans are unfolding; and topical concerns such as finance and debt in Black America. Kids can get in on the learning with docu-briefs examining the legacy of slavery and the reasons for Black History Month.

- Profiles in Courage: The biographies of influential African Americans come to life with dramatic profiles, including that of living legend Dr. Ben Carson, who overcame a troubled early life to become a renowned neurosurgeon. Laurence Fishburne inspires in a one-man show portraying Justice Thurgood Marshall, the first African American on the Supreme Court, and Jamie Foxx amazes as the legendary Ray Charles.

- Powerful Portrayals: Storytelling has always been an important part of African-American culture. Drama fans can enjoy Black cinema offerings, including movies based on beloved literature such as Alice Walker's Pulitzer Prize-winning book "The Color Purple" and Cormac McCarthy's "The Sunset Limited," which chronicle the challenges of African-American protagonists. Movie fans can catch up on favorites such as "Action Jackson," "Blood Diamond" and "Clara's Heart."

- That's Entertainment: Want to lighten up winter's dreary days? You can get your laughs with comedy specials such as "Mike Epps Presents: Live from Club Nokia." Urban romantic comedies such as "Let's Stay Together" can warm the heart. And if music is your thing, tune in to the biography series "Unsung" as it examines the lives of some of the most influential, talented and yet somehow forgotten artists of the last 30 years.

For more Black History Month programming, check out www.thisiscable.com.

blackhistory4ever.com 2011 QUIZ BOWL COMPETITION

Attention: Parents, Educators & Youth Leaders

It's here, the 8th Annual BlackHistory4ever.com Quiz Bowl hosted by GOTDAD, Inc. This year's competition is open to North & South Carolina students ages 8 - 18, making it the Carolinas "BIGGEST" Black History Quiz Bowl. Last years Quiz Bowl had over 130 registered students and a crowd over 400 cheered on. Last years winners took home \$500 per age category, who will it be this year? Registration deadline is 02/28/11

For more information, registration, and Official Study Guide go to:
www.blackhistory4ever.com

- WHAT:** 8th Annual blackhistory4ever Quiz Bowl
- WHEN:** March 12th, 2011
- WHERE:** John D Fuller Rec Center - Fayetteville, NC
- FOR:** Students 8 - 18 years old
- PRIZES:** up to \$2,000 in cash & prizes
- ENTRY FEE:** No entry or registration fees (It's FREE)
- How to Enter:** go to www.blackhistory4ever.com & register

R U ready for the challenge?



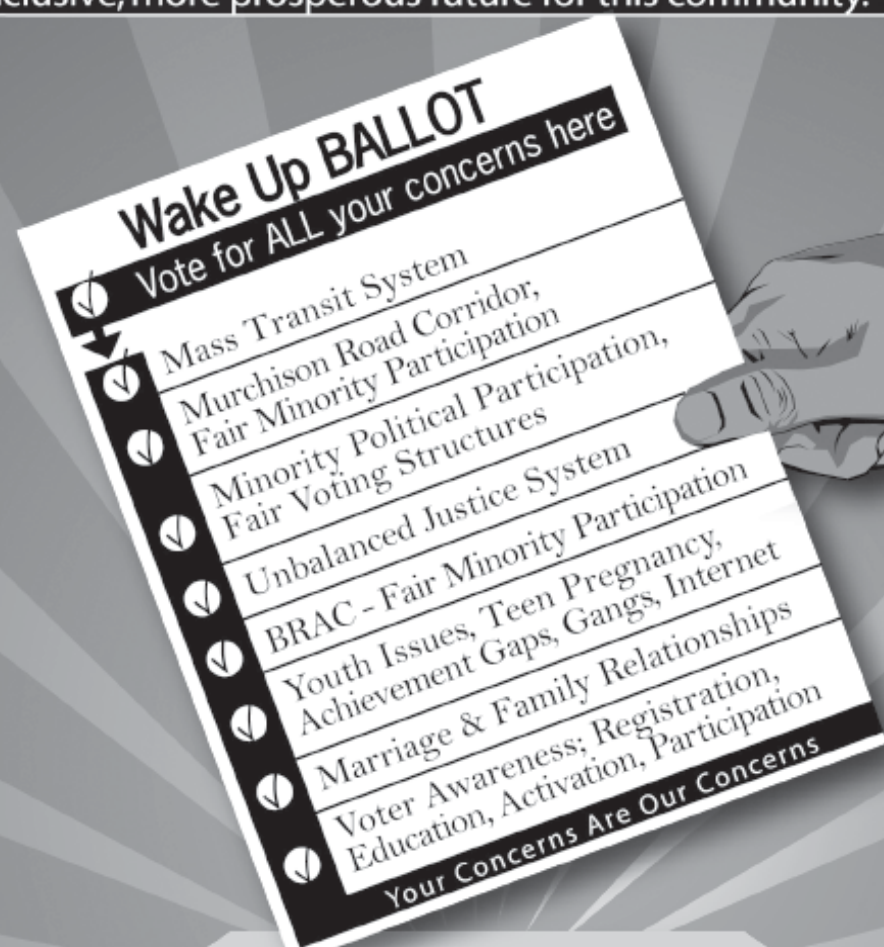
"For when you truly know your past you know you have a place in the Future"



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