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Friday October 15, 2021

NY AG James Delivers \$5.3 Million to Yonkers to Combat Opioid “Epidemic”



Yonkers Mayor Mike Spano and NY Attorney General Letitia James

56% of Overdoses in Westchester County happen in Yonkers

NY Attorney General Letitia James continued her statewide ‘HealNY’ tour of New York last week to announce that Westchester County received \$13.5 Million in funds to combat and treat Opioid abuse, and the City of Yonkers received \$5.3 Million, for a combined total of \$18.8 Million. And, as the other lawsuits and bankruptcies continue, more funds may be coming.

Calling the Opioid crisis “an epidemic,” James said that funds come from different settlements Attorney General James has negotiated following her March 2019 lawsuit against the various manufacturers and distributors responsible for the opioid crisis. “After more than two decades of having lethal opioids spread across every county of the Hudson Valley, today we are helping this community heal by announcing we will be delivering up to \$94 million to invest in opioid prevention, treatment, and recovery,” said Attorney General James. “These funds will help the Hudson Valley turn the tide on the opioid crisis. While no amount of money will ever make up for all the lives lost, these funds will be vital in helping to prevent future deaths.”

Last month, a settlement that secured more than \$4.5 billion — at least \$200 million of which will be earmarked for New York — from the Sackler family and foundations that they control, ends the Sacklers’ ability to manufacture opioids ever again, and will shut down Purdue Pharma was announced.

In June, a settlement that ended Johnson & Johnson’s sale of opioids nationwide and that will deliver \$230 million to New York alone was announced.

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Tim Hodges Looks to Continue Public Service In City Council Run-6th District



Tim Hodges

By Dan Murphy

Tim Hodges, the democratic candidate for City Council in the 6th District, served in the Yonkers Police Department for 34 years. Usually, upon retirement, Police Officers move to Florida or wind down in some other way. Hodges, who has lived in Yonkers all his life, isn’t going anywhere, and wants to continue his public service through elected office.

“I’ve worked in the police department for 34 years. I have always been a public servant, it’s in my family’s blood. My brothers and sisters worked for local government, it’s the way we are built. I believe that I can serve the people of the 6th District, and the city, as a council person.”

Hodges has been actively campaigning by knocking on doors and meeting voters. And he is vaccinated. “I’ve already signed up to get the booster. It would frighten me if I weren’t vaccinated. It’s a great thing that we had it so quickly.”

“I’ve been getting a good vibe going door to door. When we first started in the winter, getting signatures, it was hard to get people to open the door. But now people are coming out more and telling me we need change. Many people in the district haven’t had a knock on their door from our councilmember. I make a point of going to one hundred homes per day.

Hodges opponent is republican City Councilman Anthony Merante. “A lot of people don’t know who represents them. I’m going to want everyone to know who I am and how I can be reached. We need more communications on quality-of-life issues, like potholes, and even wildlife.”

Hodges issued a statement on the need to address the growing number of Coyotes in the 6th District, which was criticized by some animal rights activists. “I have spoken to people in Runyon Heights and Homefield who get up

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Lakisha Collins-Bellamy Brings A Life of Yonkers Experiences to Council President Race



Democratic City Council President Candidate Lakisha Collins Bellamy

By Dan Murphy

On June 22, 2021, Lakisha Collins-Bellamy shocked the political world in Yonkers when she defeated incumbent Council President Mike Khader in the democratic primary. Now as Collins-Bellamy moves on to the general election for Council President, she brings a unique, inspirational message of hard work, living the American Dream, and a desire to help every resident in Yonkers if elected.

“I’m running for Council President to show young boys and girls that they can be lawyers and the next Council President. I came from humble beginnings, so this election is bigger than me. It’s about how, if I can do it, anybody can.”

Lakisha Collins-Bellamy is a lifelong resident of Yonkers. Born to teenage parents, she grew up in the Cottage Place Gardens housing complex. “We moved into Cottage Place Gardens in 1985. I remember having to walk over crack pipes in the hall and the smell of drugs, but it was my home. I was sad to see it come down.”

In 1992, Collins-Bellamy’s mother won a lottery in Yonkers for one of the townhouses built on the east side of Yonkers as part of the desegregation settlement with the Federal Government. Before the family moved in, a bus took them over to Gaffney Place to take a look. At the entrance, a large rock has spray painted on it “go home -N-word.”

“I remember not feeling at home at first, but we had great neighbors and never felt out of place. But some of my experiences are like in the movie Show Me a Hero. I lived that reality.”

Even after moving to the east side, Collins-Bellamy’s still felt like Cottage Place Gardens was home. “I’m still in touch with some friends from Cottage. There was a sense of belonging, and community, and a big family. My mom got me out because she wanted something different and something more for me.”

Lakisha attended catholic schools in Yonkers and then Roosevelt High School. Since her HS graduation, her life has been a non-stop work ethic to gain an education and better herself for her son and to live out her dreams.

She then attended SUNY New Paltz for her undergraduate degree, and

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Yonkers Bank Teller Says “I’m Innocent” in Bank Heist Committed by Ex-Boyfriend

Judge Hears Motion on Case of Virginia Blanco, Serving 10 Years



Wells Fargo on Odell Avenue

By Dan Murphy

Yonkers resident Virginia Blanco has always proclaimed her innocence stemming from a bank robbery that occurred at a Wells Fargo Bank on Odell Avenue in Yonkers in 2013. Blanco was a bank teller and the ring-leader of the bank robbery was her boyfriend at the time.

Despite these damaging pieces of the story, a White Plains Federal Judge who sentenced Blanco to 10 years in 2018 has allowed a motion to vacate Blanco’s sentence to proceed. While Blanco sits in Federal prison in Danbury, the three bank robbers, including her ex-boyfriend, Giovanni Marte, are out of jail after cooperating with the government to put Blanco away.

The motion, filed Pro-Se by Blanco, picks apart the governments case again against her, and also shows that her attorney at the time, Jon Silveri, did such a poor job that she deserves a new trial.

Blanco was accused by Giovanni Marte, of giving him inside information about the bank, the vault, and the branch manager. But according to the new motion, an employee from the bank who was present during the robbery wrote a statement that Marte didn’t know where the vault was or how to access the vault, or who the manager was. All three items are what

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Westchester Black Women's Political Caucus 45th Anniversary



WESTCHESTER BLACK WOMEN'S POLITICAL CAUCUS, INC.
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“Celebrating Women of Character, Courage and Commitment”

The Westchester Black Women Political Caucus will celebrate its 45th Anniversary with an in person event on October 17 at Castle Royal in Yonkers. The keynote speaker will be State Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins.

This year's honorees are:

- Greenburgh-White Plains Chapter- Hon. Eddie Mae Barnes, Hon. Alfreda Williams
- Mt Vernon Chapter- Diane Atkins, Hon. Ruth Hassell Thompson
- New Rochelle Chapter- Jean Anderson, Hon. Pearl Quarles
- Peekskill Chapter- Matilda Gilbert-posthumously, Karlene Virgo-posthumously
- Yonkers Chapter -Joanne Robinson, Roberta Robinson

As we celebrate this milestone, we pause to reflect on the vision led by the late Alice C. Scott and the late Joan Mosley, in 1976. The founding members were determined to expose and fulfill pivotal roles for black women in Westchester County politics. Today, WBWPC is a five-chapter, multi-partisan, political organization with chapters in Greenburgh-White Plains, Mount Vernon, New Rochelle, Greater Peekskill Area and Yonkers.

Our honorees are wonderful, wise, and talented ladies with incredible minds and sound judgment. These courageous and strong women proudly continue to bear the responsibility to advocate for those who cannot advocate for themselves.

“We stand on the shoulders of those who founded WBWPC in 1976. As we look towards the future, we are ready to face the new challenges it will bring as our organization is guided by our mission of strengthen our communities through volunteerism, sustainable operations, and the advancement of equality.” States WBWPC President Subomi Macaulay.

We are honored to welcome our Political Associates: Yonkers Mayor Mike Spano, Governor Kathy Hochul, Lt. Governor Brian Benjamin, Congressman Mondaire Jones, Attorney General Leticia James, Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams, Brooklyn Deputy Borough President Ingrid Lewis Martin, Westchester County Executive George Latimer, Westchester Deputy County Executive Ken Jenkins.

As we celebrate this momentous occasion, let us recognize not where we have been, but where are going. We look forward to seeing what the next 45 years will bring.

Visit WBWPC.org/contribute to support this event.

Legislator Ruth Walter: I've Delivered for Yonkers Nolan-Walter Race Still The One to Watch



Legislator Ruth Walter and her opponent James Nolan D-15

Walter Calls Nolan's Decision on Vaccination: “A Failure of Leadership”

By Dan Murphy

The County Board race between democratic legislator Ruth Walter and republican challenger James Nolan, in the 15th District, (Bronxville and East Yonkers) remains in the top three races on the county board this year. Nolan has been campaigning actively, with his signs and his campaign van seen all over the district. At a recent debate, Nolan said that he and his campaign team have knocked on 25,000 doors.

Last month Nolan told Yonkers Rising that he was not vaccinated, and since that conversation, and our article from Sept. 9, there has been no public statement from Nolan that he has since been vaccinated.

Legislator Ruth Walter, called Nolan's decision, “A failure of leadership. If you want to be a leader, part of your job is to remind people that the vaccine is safe and effective. You want to support the nurses and health care workers by reducing the number of sick patients. That is the role of the county, in making our vaccination rates high enough to open our schools. We want to people to know it's safe, and he chose the opposite. Being a public figure and being a candidate is not the same as what you chose to do.”

Walter also challenged the claim that as a legislator from Bronxville, she has not delivered for Yonkers. “I have done more for this district in 18 months than my predecessor had over several years, (referencing former Legislator Gordon Burrows a republican, who beat Walter in 2017 but Walter beat Burrows in 2019).

Walter pointed to her ability to secure \$330,000 from the county budget in 2021 for community-based organizations in Yonkers including Groundwork Hudson Valley, The Greyston Foundation, and The Yonkers Public Library. Walter has also proposed and is studying a plan to install noise cameras in the east Yonkers neighborhoods that have been complaining about the drag racing and loud mufflers all through the night along Central Avenue and the Sprain Parkway.

“That's who I am and why I'm here. To help people. That is the most satisfying,” said Walter who underscored her experience as a court clerk as one way she learned how “to get things done working in government.”

But James Nolan keeps on campaigning, and walking, talking and driving around the district. And regardless of his vaccination status, he has a large group of supporters. That is why leaders from both parties we spoke to called this race too close to call and the one to watch.

Low turnout is also expected by both parties, with democrats trying to get out more voters because there are more democrats in every race. One Westchester democrat told us that while campaigning and knocking on doors for a competitive County Board race, most voters who answered, “didn't even know there was an election.”

If turnout is low in democrat heavy parts of the county like Yonkers and Mt. Vernon, then democrats are concerned that their overall numbers might be lower than the landslide that many predict for County Executive George Latimer in his re-election bid.

But in Yonkers, voters have a reason to come out, with a Citywide Council Presidents race, three City Council races, and Walter- Nolan. Plus a race for State Supreme Court with Yonkers City Court Judge Tom Quinones on the ballot. Another Westchester democrat told us the he believed that “The Trump factor is starting to wear off. Many democrats are not as enthusiastic about going out to vote against Trump in an off year election. They did it in 2017, but I'm not so sure about 2021.” Early voting starts on Oct. 23 and ends Oct. 31. Election Day is Nov. 2.

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Democratic Supreme Court Candidates Hyer & Davis Campaigning Hard in Westchester



L-R- Tom Davis, County Executive George Latimer, Jim Hyer

Attorneys James Hyer and Tom Davis have been campaigning all over Westchester, in seeking to earn the votes from residents in their upcoming election for State Supreme Court in the 9th Judicial District by explaining their legal experience and how it will serve all if elected a State Supreme Court Justice.

Attorney James Hyer is currently the President of the Westchester County Bar Association. Hyer has also served as an Administrative Law Judge for the Westchester County Human Rights Commission, Corporate Counsel for the Legal Aid Society of Westchester, and a Hearing Officer for the WCBA Grievance Committee.

Attorney Tom Davis has spent 29 years practicing law in all of the five counties that make up the 9th JD. Davis has focused much of his life and legal career as an advocate for the disabled. He is a former trustee of the Down Syndrome Association of the Hudson Valley and is a member of the Executive Committee of Abilities First, Inc., a large not-for-profit agency providing residential, educational and rehabilitative services to the developmentally and intellectually disabled. Davis is the father of a child with Down Syndrome

Both Hyer and Davis sat down with Ru Ros of the Yonkers Voice to talk about why they want to serve on the State Supreme Court. Davis said, "I've been a practicing supreme court attorney for almost 30 years. I have learned that the power of a supreme court judge is a vitally important position, and the decisions a supreme court judge makes can be life altering to the people who appear before them"

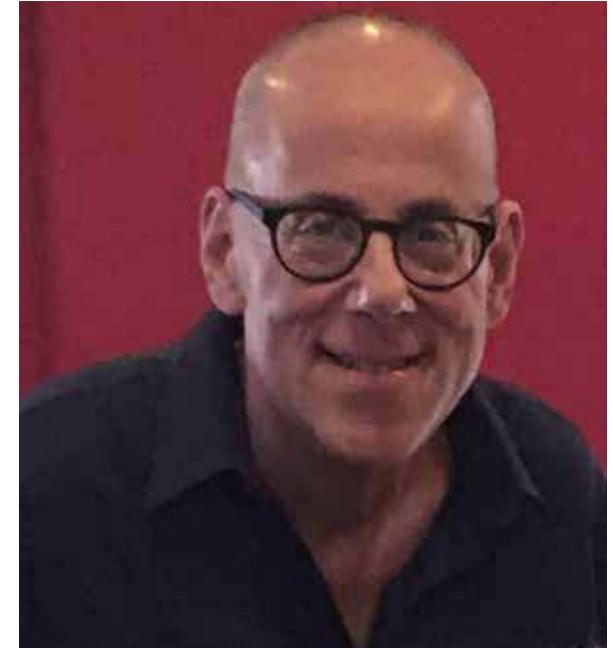
"I have come to the point in my career where I have learned so much through my legal experience that its time in my life and career to give back and serve the people," said Davis.

Hyer said, "I have always wanted to help people and work to fix problems, and I being a Supreme Court Judge is a wonderful opportunity to help people. It is important that all people who appear before the court are treated fairly and equally."

"I bring a fair and unbiased reputation to this election, based on my leadership of the Westchester Bar Association and its 2,000 members. I want people to feel comfortable when they come to court no matter who they are, and have confidence that I can bring honesty, integrity and impartiality to the court. I have always sought to build bridges between the legal system and the community and I'm running with four other amazing candidates for Supreme Court who will also do that," said Hyer.

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The Westchester GOP Isn't Abe Lincoln's GOP



By Eric Schoen

Anyone who knows anything about political debates recognizes the importance of the Lincoln/Douglas debates in American history. Abraham Lincoln was running against Stephen Douglas for Senator from Illinois. The Senate campaign featured seven debates between Lincoln and Douglas.

These were the most famous political debates in American history. They had an atmosphere akin to a prizefight and drew crowds in the thousands. The principals stood in stark contrast both physically and politically.

Four years ago, George Latimer debated Rob Astorino at Iona College in New Rochelle. It was moderated by a guy named Richard French whose father owned one of the networks on our 500 channel television sets. Astorino packed the house with county employees who were given the 'subtle' direction to go. French couldn't control the debate. The Astorino supporters acted like animals.

I felt bad for State Senator George Latimer who ended up winning the County Executive race. The debate was held at Iona College. The President of the college sat in the audience while this debacle went on. In my mind it will always be a stain on Iona College, a school where many friends were educated and with a stellar reputation.

2021. County Executive race. George Latimer running for re-election against Republican Party activist and long time Westchester government employee Christine Sculti. Sculti is a good dancer. I danced with her years ago at a friends wedding.

Sculti has been called upon to participate in debates, forums, candidates events, etc. and has refused. She even refused to appear on the WVOX AM morning show featuring Dennis Nardone and Miss Connie. Two of the nicest, fairest people. I learned about this when I had a forum set up for candidates for Westchester County Legislative District 15 featuring Democrat Ruth Walter and Republican James Nolan last Thursday on the Westchester Rising Radio Show on WVOX.

(By the way when I confirmed the forum as I do the day before with the candidates, Nolan informed me that, 'Sorry due to a scheduling conflict I won't be able to attend, hope it goes well! This after we went out of our way to accommodate him. We continued the forum with Ms Walter who gave an excellent presentation on what she has done as a County Legislator.)

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Join the Conversation

Westchester County Requests Your Participation at the
2021 Westchester County Budget Public Input Sessions

Before the 2022 Westchester County budget is finalized, come and share your priorities for County programs and services. This year's information is as follows:

Monday, October 25

11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
 New Rochelle City Hall
 Council Chambers – 1st Floor
 515 North Avenue
 New Rochelle, New York 10801

Register to join via ZOOM
<https://bit.ly/3G7C89z>

4 to 6 p.m.
 Mount Kisco Public Library
 100 East Main Street
 Mount Kisco, New York 10549

Register to join via ZOOM
<https://bit.ly/3G7C89z>

Those who wish to submit written comments may do so by emailing Communications@Westchester.gov

Yonkers On Hudson Alliance Urges City to Require EIS From Glenwood Power Plant Plan

Hudson River Community Association of Northwest Yonkers



Last month, the Yonkers on Hudson Alliance (YOHA)--a coalition of groups that united to advocate against the garage in JFK Marina and later broadened its mission to preserve, improve, and expand open, public greenspace along the Yonkers waterfront--sent a letter urging the City of Yonkers to reject the EAF (submitted by the owners of the Glenwood Power Plant) as inadequate. The City, YOHA contends, must require the Plant to conduct a far more extensive New York State Department of Environmental

Conservation study known as an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

"The EAF is glaringly insufficient," says Stephen Wagner, vice president of the Yonkers Committee for Smart Development, one of YOHA's core groups. "An EIS is standard operating procedure for a project of this magnitude and environmental sensitivity. We want to know: why should the Plant be given a pass? The City should prioritize its residents, not the interests of developers."

YOHA's letter to the City asserted that proposed development within and adjacent to Yonkers parks and neighborhoods must pass through a far more in-depth, thorough analysis, and must afford the public opportunity to understand the project's effect on the physical environment and upon the health and quality of life of those who live, work, commute, attend school, and visit the areas surrounding the development's owned, leased, and alienated properties. Such an analysis must thoroughly address traffic, air quality, noise, safety, financial and aesthetic impact, among other factors.

The problem is not only that the project is too complex to bypass an EIS, YOHA maintains. The Plant's history of abandoned commitments and its questionable track record on a nearby project also present strong arguments for requiring the EIS. "The developer now states that one of their principal goals for the Plant is to hold outdoor events there," says Barbara Smith, president of the Hudson River Community Association, another of YOHA's anchor organizations.

"Well, they already have an event space up on North Broadway--Alder Manor--and they've done very little with it. Why should we believe a word that they're saying about what they want to do at the Plant?" An EIS builds in a public comment process, providing critical opportunities for the community to ask questions and have a say in the direction of development. The EIS will require the Plant to engage with the community around plans that impact us all so directly," says Smith.

After a careful review of the EAF, YOHA also identified a host of unfounded assumptions and blurred facts, concluding that the proposal skates over major areas of potential concern. "The proposal is not only too thin for a project of this size, but it's riddled with inconsistencies," says Dominique Surh, co-founder of the Friends of Trevor Park, another core YOHA group. "The EAF leaves us with more questions than answers."

Mike Hertz, of the River Communities Coalition of Yonkers and the fourth core YOHA organization, agrees. "It's hard to pick just one example of the report's many insufficiencies and errors," Hertz says. But one issue that strikes closest to the heart of YOHA's mission is the plan for a new street in JFK Marina leading from JFK Boulevard and across the Marina's south lawn to the north entrance of the Plant. The plan briefly presented in the EAF includes a looped turnaround and a paved area with 17 private parking spaces.

"From what we can see, public space is reduced to a sliver of green in an area dominated by concrete roadway, traffic, and parking," continues Hertz. "Giving up all of this green deprives the Yonkers public of its most needed open space at the Marina."

YOHA is clear-eyed that the Plant, if the owner moves forward with its development, is going to require some kind of a road and driveway through the Marina. "What we are asking is: what is the absolute minimum that the developer would need for basic access to the Plant?" says Terry Joshi, president of the Yonkers Committee for Smart Development. "Why does the developer's proposal take up so much area? Why 17 parking spaces? These and so many details go unexplored and unexplained in the EAF. This is exactly why we need the EIS. We're saying to the City: don't give the developer what they want without asking them to explain what they want to do and why they need to do it in a particular way. Hold them accountable. And above all, do this work with a mind to protecting scarce public space on the Yonkers waterfront. Anything else is overreach."

"If you thought that the parking garage being moved meant public space in Yonkers was protected, think again," adds Wagner. "The story hasn't actually played out yet. The Plant developers may hope that we look away, but we will not be looking away."

Yonkers Man Arraigned on Murder Charge in Shooting Death of Yonkers Resident

Westchester County District Attorney Miriam E. Rocah announced that Yonkers resident Jonathan Planas was arraigned on October 5, 2021, for the shooting death of a Yonkers man.

The charges in the indictment include Murder in the Second Degree and four counts of Criminal Possession of a Weapon in the Second Degree, both felonies. Planas, 32, faces a sentence range of 15 years to life to 25 years to life in a state prison.

As set forth in the indictment, on October 10, 2020, at approximately 1:30 a.m., Planas and another individual were driving when they stopped, exited their vehicle and shot 20-year-old Yonkers resident Alvaro Viguera Medina as he was walking on Lawrence Street in Yonkers. Planas fled the scene. Medina ran to the lobby of a nearby building, collapsed and was taken to Saint Joseph's Medical Center in Yonkers where he was pronounced dead.

Yonkers Police arrested Planas on October 4, 2021, after interviewing witnesses, reviewing surveillance video, and examining forensic and ballistic evidence. The FBI's Westchester Safe Streets Task Force assisted in the investigation.

The case is before Judge David Zuckerman in Westchester County Court and is being prosecuted by Senior Trial Counsel Craig Ascher and Assistant District Attorney Marissa Morra-Wynn.

Third Precinct Police Community Council

The Third Precinct Police Community Council will meet on Wednesday, October 20, 2021 at 7:30 PM at the Chema Community Center, 435 Riverdale Avenue Yonkers. Merchants and residents of the southwest Yonkers area are urged to attend this important community meeting. Usual quality of life concerns will be discussed. Captain Mike Mulvey will preside. For further information contact either Bob Stauff, President at 914 476-2284 or Captain Mulvey at 914 377-7427.

Funding to combat Opioids continued from pg 1-

"I want to thank Attorney General Tish James for fighting to secure these funds. This year, the State Senate and State Assembly, working in partnership with the attorney general, passed legislation to guarantee that these funds from opioid settlements are used for the development of new services and support," said State Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins. "We can't bring back the tragic losses experienced by too many families in Westchester and across New York state, but we can and will seek justice."

"The impact of opioid abuse on individuals and families is devastating," said State Senator Shelley Mayer. "I applaud Attorney General James for holding manufacturers and distributors accountable, and I am pleased the money from these settlements will soon begin to heal communities across New York state, including right here at St. Vincent's Hospital."

"Westchester County knows far too well the devastating impacts of the opioid epidemic — the lives cut short and the families torn apart," said Westchester County Executive George Latimer. "Thank you to New York Attorney General Letitia James for her leadership and for helping Westchester County fight back against opioid addiction. Westchester County is set to receive a minimum of \$10.6 million and a maximum of \$18.8 million under the settlement — this is a significant amount of money that will help countless victims rebuild their lives."

"Attorney General Letitia James has led the fight to hold those responsible for the horrors of the opioid epidemic accountable, and we are now seeing the results of this effort," said Ardsley resident Stephanie Marquesano, founder of The Harris Project. "This is very personal to my family and me, as my 19-year-old son Harris misused opioids and died by accidental overdose in 2013. Our repeated attempts to get the appropriate treatment for his addiction and mental health challenges — co-occurring disorders — failed because the system was not designed to meet his needs. We founded The Harris Project with a mission of improving outcomes for the millions with co-occurring disorders. We thank Attorney General James and the New York State Legislature for putting safeguards in place, so these dollars do not simply go to the state general fund, but will be used to build a better system of care across the continuum — enhancing prevention, intervention, treatment, and housing opportunities to ensure long-term sustainable recovery."

"The opioid crisis has destroyed many of our communities and these settlements will provide the much-needed recognition that Big Pharma played a significant role in the ruin of millions of lives," said Yonkers Mayor Mike Spano. "I applaud Attorney General James for fighting for our families and providing local municipalities, like Yonkers, the valuable resources to invest in abatement programs to prevent further devastation."

Spano also pointed out that -56% of the overdoses that happened in Westchester County happened in Yonkers. "This is a tremendous burden and tragic that we are losing so many young people,"

State Supreme Court, continued from pg 3-

County Executive George Latimer recently endorsed Hyer, Davis, Greenburgh Judge Christie D'Alessio and Yonkers Judge Tom Quinones.

"I've done my homework and that's why I'm endorsing, Tom Davis, Jim Hyer, Judge Tom Quinones and Judge Christie D'Alessio. They are four candidates that possess the experience, integrity and compassion to serve the citizens of our community. Let your voice be heard on Nov. 2," said Latimer.

Hyer and Davis have also been endorsed by the Westchester County Corrections Officer Benevolent Association, The Hispanic Law Enforcement Officers Association, Teamster Local 456, Westchester-Putnam AFL-CIO, Yonkers Firefighters Local 628-State Senator Shelley Mayer, Mayor Mike Spano, and the Westchester-Putnam Building Trades Council."

Several Bar Associations have found the candidates "Well Qualified" to serve as a Supreme Court Justice.

Tom Davis and Jim Hyer have been campaigning all over Westchester County because they want the people to know that there is an important election on Nov. 2, but also that early voting starts on Oct. 23. You can also vote by absentee ballot.

Voter turnout will be one of the determining factors in this year's election. Don't sleep on election 2021, and who your Supreme Court Judges will be for the next 14 years.

Visit Votesupremejudges.com for more information.

YoFi Fest Returns in Hybrid Form 9th Year for Yonkers Film Festival



This year's festival kicks off on November 5th and offers 183 independent films, many viewable in-person and all of them live-streamed online, plus live filmmaker Q&A's, educational workshops led by entertainment industry-professionals, networking events, receptions and parties.

Last year, as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic, YoFi Fest was forced to become virtual. However, this year things are different and the ninth annual film festival is back as a hybrid event, with many movie screenings happening in person, and all the films and filmmaker Q&A's being offered online.

Nine years ago YoFiFest started with a mission to showcase the work of independent filmmakers and to provide educational and cultural opportunities that otherwise would not exist in the area. This year, it is more committed than ever to continuing that mission, so from November 5th through November 21st, YoFiFest will present 183 films from 25 countries and right here in our own backyard. The films include features, documentaries, shorts, animation, music videos, web series, and student work.

The festival provides an amazing opportunity for audiences to watch films that they might not see anywhere else. FilmFreeway named YoFiFest one of the "Top 100 Best Reviewed Festivals" nine times. It's also been named "Best of Westchester" twice by Westchester Magazine, and it was named as one of the top ten reasons Yonkers was voted the "Hippest Town in the Lower Hudson Valley" by The Journal News/LoHud.

Like many other organizations, YoFiFest is taking measures to protect their visitors and our staff. After much thoughtful consideration and discussion with City, County and State officials over concerns about the spread of COVID variants, this year's YoFiFest will include special safety precautions for all in-person screenings, workshops and events happening at the festival. "This decision was not made lightly, but the safety of our audience and filmmakers is a top priority," said Dave Steck, YoFi's Executive Director and co-founder, "We made the decision to present this year's festival as a hybrid experience, so everyone has access to every movie and can choose to watch them wherever they are most comfortable."

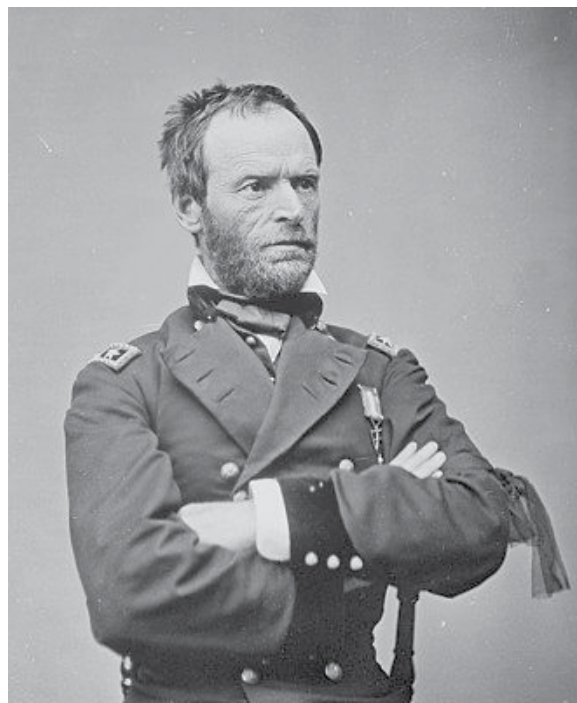
With this year's hybrid festival, audiences have the flexibility of viewing a film in person at the Yonkers Riverfront Library theater or online as a simultaneous livestream. Both the online and in-person audiences will also get to view the filmmaker talkbacks that follow each screening.

"One of the great things about having the films streaming this year is that we're able to reach nearly every corner of the planet," said Patty Schumann, the festival's co-founder and programmer, "The filmmaker talkbacks are one of the best parts of the film festival and this year almost every one of our filmmakers plan to attend their film's Q&A!"

"When we started the film festival nine years ago, Yonkers wasn't known as a film-friendly city," added Steck, "But with an increasing number of movies and television shows shooting here, and LionsGate building a new \$100 million studio complex right outside the YoFi Digital Media Art Center, it's beginning to feel like people are realizing what we've know for awhile—Yonkers is Hollywood on the Hudson!"

Information and tickets are available at YoFiFest.com.

On This Day in Yonkers History...



*Civil War General
William Tecumseh
Sherman was honored
in Yonkers in 1890*

By Mary Hoar, President Emerita, Yonkers Historical Society, recipient of the 2004 Key to History and President Untermyer Performing Arts Council

Monday, October 18th

October 18, 1941: Because only 58,120 people registered to vote, the City Council was limited to five members. If more than 60,000 people had registered, Yonkers would have been able to increase the number of Council members to seven.

October 18, 1945: The two-thousand Yonkers Boys Scouts not only aided our local war agencies and committees, they sold 4,798 War Bonds totaling \$2,907,167.71!

Tuesday, October 19th

October 19, 1942: School Trustee John Class reported at a meeting of the Yonkers Board of Education he had "read something good had come out of Yonkers, something connected with the Board of Education." A piece in the New York Sun reported on the training of aircraft workers at the Yonkers School of Aeronautical Manufacturing, describing it as "an impressive experiment in the working out of practical democracy." The article reported that since the school had opened about two years earlier, had training 1,500 aircraft mechanics who worked all over the country, some as far as California. The article also reported 75 women attended the school.

Wednesday, October 20th

October 20, 1906: Part of the private road from Yonkers Avenue to the Dunwoodie Golf Club washed out due to the heavy downpour of rain. The soil rushed down the hill and covered the tracks of the Yonkers Railroad Company, making them impassable. Passengers were stuck between Mount Vernon and Yonkers until a crew removed the earth and reopened the line. A high wind accompanied the storm, stripping trees of their leaves, covering the streets and sidewalks in a carpet of brilliant fall color.

October 20, 1943: Norah Maher of St. Joseph Avenue received a letter from New York Senator James Mead, telling her he met her son Howard, who was happy and in good health. Private Maher was on duty with a Military Police unit in North Africa when a car of visiting officials pulled up. After a few moments of polite conversation, Mead asked Maher where he was from; hearing Yonkers, the Senator asked if he knew Eddie Murray (City and County Democratic Chairman Edward J. Murray) and Bill Cronin (Postmaster William Cronin). At the end of the conversation, Maher asked the senator to contact his mom to let her know he was fine.

Thursday, October 21st

October 21, 1922: Hundreds of Yonkers HS students engaged in three separate fights with Mount Vernon football fans during and after the teams played in Mount Vernon. The first took place between the second and third periods of the game when MV was in the lead; YHS students dressed in the school's blue and orange colors began a snake dance on the field. Immediately swarmed by MV students, the dance degenerated in a fight that police had to break up the fight. Although Mount Vernon was the two to one favorite, YHS won 19-6, making MV fans very unhappy. Two other clashes broke out before Yonkers fans left, both of which needed police intervention. Cars loaded with Yonkers students drove through Mount Vernon, taunting everyone. After gathering in Getty Square to celebrate, the students formed a huge snake dance. The dance broke into two sections, one headed north and the other south. Not finished, cars filled with students heading back to Mount Vernon to continue celebrating. At 1 am, students still were not home. Cars adorned with orange and blue parked in Mount Vernon, cheering and jeering until MVPD chased them home.

Friday, October 22nd

October 22, 1936: County Judge Gerald Nolan heard arguments appealing the conviction of Rose O'Gorman and William Matthias in their conviction for violation of Yonkers' "anti-shorts" laws. O'Gorman and Matthias were New York newspaper reporters.

October 22, 1943: In a letter home, North Broadway resident, composer, and band leader "Little Jack Little" sent to his family, he dispelled the glamour of the South Sea Islands, especially the intensity of the heat. Little partnered with Ray Bolger and traveled the Southwest Pacific entertaining servicemen in hospital wards, field theaters and combat areas; according to the Army captain responsible for bringing the two men around, the duo were the best entertainers visiting the boys, and never complained about the simple living conditions. Among Little's better known hits were I'm in the Mood for Love, You Oughta Be in Pictures, and Where Am I? (Am I in Heaven?)

Saturday, October 23rd

October 23, 1890: General Thomas Ewing, Jr., held a reception in his home at 80 High Street to honor war hero, renowned Civil War military hero and Ewing's brother-in-law William Tecumseh Sherman. After the death of her husband in 1829, Widow Sherman was left without funds to raise her 11 children; the Sherman family was broken up. Senator Thomas Ewing, Sr., of Ohio took Sherman in and raised him. Ewing, the first Secretary of the Interior, stood up as godfather when 10-year old Sherman converted to Catholicism at a ceremony held in the Ewing family home. Ewing Sr. later obtained a commission to the United States Military Academy for 16-year-old Sherman. Sherman married foster sister Eleanor "Ellen" Ewing in 1850 in Washington DC; President Zachary Taylor and Vice President Millard Fillmore attended the ceremony.

Sunday, October 24th

October 24, 1942: When the War Salvage Committee asked Dr. William Crocker, Director of the Boyce Thompson Institute for Plant Research and President of the Yonkers Board of Education, for scrap a few months earlier, BTI turned in a large amount of unused metal. Crocker promised to have another inspection be made to see if anything else would turn up... and it did! They found an additional 5,000 pounds of scrap, immediately donated to the war effort.

October 24, 1975: 16-year old Bobby Hackett slashed 40 seconds off the 1,500-meter men's free style record at the Pan-American Games and wins the gold medal.

Questions or comments? Email YonkersHistory1646@gmail.com. For information on the Yonkers Historical Society, Sherwood House and upcoming events, please visit our website www.yonkershistoricalsociety.org, call 914-961-8940 or email yhsociety@aol.com.

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THE CITY OF YONKERS/YONKERS PUBLIC SCHOOLS, BUREAU OF PURCHASING, One Larkin Center, 3RD Floor, Yonkers, New York 10701 (Located in the Yonkers Riverfront Library Building across from the Metro-North train station) will receive sealed Bids for the following projects until 2:00 PM, on the dates below.

However, due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and in line with the directives issued by the Mayor of Yonkers regarding public safety, there is limited access to One Larkin Center. The building is open from 8:30 AM to 4:00 PM for receiving packages via courier services and in person. If delivering bids in person, individuals must wear face coverings and see the Public Safety Officer in the library atrium, who will clock in the bid and then contact Purchasing to pick up the bid. Sealed Bids will continue to be opened and read on the dates below, however, there will not be a public opening of bids. Those interested in listening to the bid opening and the reading of bids can dial Conference Call number 1-701-802-5221 and enter Access Code 1354203 when prompted.

Solicitation documents are available for downloading from the Empire State Purchasing Group website at <http://www.empirestatebidsystem.com/>. The City welcomes and encourages participation by local and minority and women owned business enterprises.

1. Bid 6701 - Opening date: 11/12/2021: School 25 (579 Warburton Avenue, Yonkers NY 10701) boiler repairs (AC).

2. Bid 6702 – Opening date 11/5/2021: Purchase of Ennis Flint PreMark, or equal, thermoplastic pavement markings (AC).

3. Bid 6703 – Opening date 11/12/2021: Twelve-month contract, with option to renew for up to four 12-month periods, to provide fence installation and repair services as needed for the Yonkers Public School District (FB).

4. Bid 6704 – Opening date 11/12/2021: Twelve-month contract, with option to renew for up to four 12-month periods, to provide truck repair services as needed for the Yonkers Public School District (FB).

5. Bid 6705 – Opening date 11/12/2021: Twelve-month contract, with option to renew for up to four 12-month periods, to provide maintenance and repairs of playgrounds as needed for the Yonkers Public School District (KS).

6. Bid 6706 – Opening date 11/12/2021: Twelve-month contract, with option to renew for up to four 12-month periods, to provide maintenance and repairs of intercoms and public address systems as needed for the Yonkers Public School District (FB).

7. Bid 6707 – Opening date 11/5/2021: Twenty-four month contract, with option to renew for 12-months, to provide land surveying services as needed for the City of Yonkers (AS).

Notice of formation of Sosa Cleaning Services LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with the SSNY on 08/10/2021. Office location: Westchester County. SSNY designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail copy of process to the LLC, 40 Post Street, Yonkers, NY 10705. Purpose: any lawful purpose.

Notice of formation of Tint Skincare, LLC filed with the SSNY on 8/23/2021. Office: Westchester County. SSNY designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail copy of process to the LLC, 137 Alexander Street, #2269, Yonkers, NY 10701. Purpose: Any lawful purpose.

SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK – COUNTY OF WESTCHESTER INDEX # 65171/2020 FILED: 8/11/2021 SUPPLEMENTAL SUMMONS

Plaintiff designates WESTCHESTER County as the place of trial. The basis of venue is: The location of the real property being foreclosed. BANK OF AMERICA, NA, Plaintiff, against UNKNOWN HEIRS OF THE ESTATE OF MARY A. DAVIS A/K/A MARY DAVIS A/K/A MARY A PICKNEY A/K/A MARY PICKNEY A/K/A MARY PICKNEY DAVIS A/K/A MARY TEMPLE DAVIS, if they be living and if they be dead, the respective heirs-at-law, next-of-kin, distributees, executors, administrators, trustees, devisees, legatees, assignees, lienors, creditors and successors in interest and generally all persons having or claiming under, by or through said defendant(s) who may be deceased, by purchase, inheritance, lien or inheritance, any right, title or interest in or to the real property described in the Complaint, NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF TAXATION AND FINANCE, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA – INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE, Defendant(s). To the above named Defendant(s): YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED to Answer the Complaint in this action and to serve a copy of your Answer, or, if the Complaint is not served with this Summons, to serve a Notice of Appearance on the Plaintiff's attorney(s) within twenty (20) days after the service of this Summons, exclusive of the day of service (or within thirty (30) days after service is complete if this Summons is not personally delivered to you within the State of New York); and in case of your failure to appear or answer, judgment will be taken against you by default for the relief demanded in the complaint.

The foregoing summons is served upon you by publication pursuant to an order of the Honorable David F. Everett, a Justice of the Supreme Court of the State of New York, Westchester County, granted on the 3rd day of August, 2021, and filed with the Verified Complaint and other papers in the office of the County Clerk of Westchester County. The object of this action is to bar and forever foreclose of and from all right, title, interest, claim, lien and equity of redemption in and to real property situated in the County of Westchester being known as and by 12 RISLEY PLACE, NEW ROCHELLE, NY 10801, bearing tax map designation Section: 4 Block: 1320 Lot: 0038, which is more fully described in the Schedule "A" attached to the Verified Complaint. Aldridge Pite, LLP. Attorneys for the Plaintiff, 40 Marcus Drive, Suite 200, Melville, NY 11747 Our File 1395-241B

Eric Schoen continued from pg 3-

I then heard that Republican candidates in Westchester were not participating in debates, forums or even making radio show appearances. There's this distrust of the media probably inherited from the former President. Sculti is a personable candidate. And Latimer is not one to load an audience up with rowdy supporters. Nor go nuts after his opponent as Astorino did four years ago.

I tried to make sense of what was going on here. I made it my goal to try to get Sculti to appear on WVOX in a discussion of the issues with Latimer. I think of myself as a fair person. Since I started voting in 1978 I have never voted a straight Democratic ticket. How could I have voted against Republican State Senator John 'Chippy' Flynn. I would have been tarred and feather in Yonkers if I did.

My Cousin was State Assemblyman Republican Alvin Suchin, well respected by his colleagues in Albany. His mom who was my mom's first cousin, Evelyn Suchin was Vice Chairperson of the Westchester Republican Party. So I have bipartisan blood in my body.

I wrote to Ms. Sculti requesting her to appear on the radio. I wrote to the person who apparently runs the Republican campaigns in Westchester. I have gotten a response from neither.

Made me think of my cousin Assemblyman Suchin. For some reason I was upset with his fellow Republican, Yonkers Mayor Angelo Martinelli and penned a letter to him. He always responded whether or not he agreed with you. As did Senator Flynn. My, have times changed when people don't have the decency to respond to an invitation!

So there we are. Sculti's war chest is small compared to Latimer's. She should take advantage of any and every opportunity to be heard. Abraham Lincoln agreed to 7 debates. I guess she's no Abraham Lincoln.

Voters have the right to see and hear candidates discuss the issues. I had a successful discussion of all things Yonkers with City Council President Candidates Lakesha Collins Bellamy and Ron Matten. Both Democrat Tim Hodges and Republican Anthony Merante will discuss issues in their Yonkers district October 21 10 a.m. on WVOX. I vowed I would never participate in the type of candidates forum that took place at Iona 4 years ago. Candidates have always brought their posse's to cheer them on at open debates. Cheering on is simply not acting like animals.

The invitation is still open. With all due respect, County Executive George Latimer has never met a microphone he didn't like. I know he will participate. If only the Republican candidate would participate in a forum as did her predecessors who built this great nation!

NYC Congestion Pricing-The Next Gimmick to Take Money out of Your Pocket

I remotely addressed the New York City Congestion Pricing Task Force recently. There are proposals that would put a toll on vehicles that go south of 60th Street in Manhattan. The stated goal is to reduce traffic congestion in New York City. The real goal is to raise money to 'improve' mass transit. How many more taxes, tolls, etc. are they going to put on consumers including those from Westchester to pay for mass transit?

There are limited details on how much the tolls will cost. \$9-\$15 is the range you hear. Think people who are working from home in Westchester and the suburbs now due to Covid? Watch the increase if they put these exorbitant tolls in place. Minimal information and a way for you to weigh in on this insanity is available at <http://new.mta.info/project/CBDTP>

Speakers were given a measly 2 minutes to provide testimony remotely. I spoke at the hearing for the Hudson Valley and was #3 after 2 upstate legislators so I don't think many folks from Westchester spoke. I share with you my testimony:

You should be ashamed in the middle of a pandemic to be talking about congestion pricing. People where I live in Yonkers have no convenient 24 hour a day public transit options into New York City. People are afraid due to Covid to ride public transit. Many like me go into New York City for cultural experiences at night and weekends. No congestion then there should be no congestion pricing. No details on pricing disgraceful. Concentrate on using toll money we pay to fix the potholes that destroy our cars. Think fix, not tax. 2 minutes to comment. Who are you kidding. Opening up New York. Have live public hearings!

Tips of the Day: You can get your flu shot at the same time as your Covid vaccination. You should be able to wash your hands before you eat. Complain, even tweet the company if a restaurant or fast food joint has closed their bathroom as the Manager at the Dunkin Donuts at 269 South Central Avenue in Hartsdale said to me because of 'Covid.' Some folks just suffer from terminal dumbness!

Reach Eric Schoen at thistooisyonkers@aol.com. Follow him on Twitter @eric-nyonkers. Listen to Eric Schoen on the Westchester Rising Radio Show Thursday's from 10-11 a.m. On WVOX 1460 AM, or WVOX.com .



Lakisha Collins-Bellamy, continued from pg 1-

then received her master’s degree in Public Administration from Marist College. We had a sorority sister from Vassar College, that I got to know while I was at New Paltz. We both wanted to be paralegals, but the Vassar graduate got a job while I was told I needed experience. That taught a lesson that I tell everyone. How well you do in high school will determine the college you attend, and the college you attend will determine the rest of your life. I have emphasized this lesson to my son.”

Collins -Bellamy returned to Yonkers after college and has never left. Her first job in Yonkers was for YCAP helping students get their GED degree. She then worked for the Board of Elections before moving to the Municipal Housing Authority, where she still works as an attorney after graduating from New York Law School, part-time at night school, with a young son at home.

“I am showing my son by example that you will see a reward from working hard and doing well in school. I’m so proud of him.” The Collins-Bellamy family consists of Justin, fifteen who attends Stepinac High School and is in the honors program, and her husband Damian, who is a corrections officer in Valhalla, and her parents.

Lakisha has dabbled in Yonkers politics over the years but said that everything fell into place for her City Council run. “Watching the last four years of politics in our country, like all of us, I saw how Stacy Abrams put the State of Georgia on her back to flip that state blue. I saw George Floyd happen. I saw the first Black female Vice-President get elected. I saw all of this and said, Why Not Today?”

The Democratic Primary campaign against Khader, “prepared me for war. That was the toughest battle because I was up against the incumbent who had name recognition. I was the underdog, but we won, and now going into the general election, people know who I am when I knock on their door and ask for their vote. I know that if I put in the same work and effort that I did in the primary we will win.”

Collins-Bellamy brings a rags to riches story and an American Dream message to her city council president’s race. “It’s kind of a rags to riches story, without me being rich. I’m hoping to be able to buy a home someday here in Yonkers. I will never leave this city.

“But I want the voters to know that I’ve come a long way from a family that received public assistance to being able to provide for my son to go to private school. “My campaign is about someone who comes from humble beginnings and then gains the world. I’m a testament about what can happen when you work hard and believe in yourself. Even when the deck is stacked against you, you can succeed.”

On the campaign trail, what issues are voters talking about? “The need for more affordable housing has been the one big issue that I hear repeatedly, and the uptick in violence in our city. I’m also hearing about problems with water meter readings from east side homeowners.” Education, public safety, quality of life issues, and affordable housing are Collins-Bellamy’s four key campaign issues.

Lakisha criticized her opponent for trying to discredit her candidacy instead of focusing on the issues. At issue was whether she was violating federal law by running for office while still working for the housing authority. An opinion from the Federal Office of Special Counsel found no violation.

Ron Matten is her republican opponent for Council President. “He (Matten) is digging around for something and feeling desperate as he should. I’m confident that he won’t get more than 35% of the vote. It’s been a while since a republican has won a citywide race in Yonkers. Astorino didn’t get 50% in Yonkers, and Trump didn’t get 50% in Yonkers. “

Collins-Bellamy added that she is vaccinated, for the safety of her family and those she meets during the campaign. “I have to protect my family, myself and my community. I’ve been vaccinated since February.”

“I would like the voters to know that I’m a lifelong resident of Yonkers. I am ready to roll up my sleeves and do the job of Council President, to pass legislation and better the lives of all of the people. I believe that I am the best and most qualified candidate, but I take nothing for granted. I ask for your vote and want everyone to help make history with me on election day. If elected, I will use my position to serve all the people of Yonkers and not to serve myself. And to give a light of hope that you can come from humble beginnings and become everything.”

Hodges City Council continued from pg 1-

in the morning at 4 in the morning and there are three coyotes in their back yard. We need to tranquilize them and relocate them.”

If elected Hodges would be the first retired police officer on the City Council ever. “I worked closely with the council when I was police Chief and had to testify on our departments budget. I know the intricacies of the police department because I have held every rank. I’ve also seen how government works and have worked with other departments like DPM and Parks. I have the experience already.

Hodges was born in the Bronx, but his family moved to Carrol Avenue in Yonkers. He has lived on Warburton Avenue and now off Palmer Avenue with his wife. xx

“I love Yonkers. I have always lived four miles from work. Some cops drive 80 miles a day to work, I don’t drive 80 miles a week, and I love the opportunity to be in NYC in 30 minutes by train. It’s my hometown and I will be here forever. I have also seen great positive change in our city. I can remember a time as a police officer downtown when there were car break ins and prostitution. Now the new development and restaurants are amazing. It’s nice to be able to go out to the waterfront. The transformation has been incredible.”

One issue that Hodges wants to work on is the excessive speeding, and noise, from cars late at night on the Sprain Parkway and Central Avenue. “We need to push for speed cameras and for a way to control the noise, which is out of control and leading to deaths. I have responded to hundreds of accidents. We have to tackle this.”

Hodges says that he is “more personable” than his opponent. “I’m going to listen and hear everyone out. I’m more plugged into the community and will be much more approachable.

Hodges said that he doesn’t dislike Merante and isn’t about negative campaign. “I don’t think it benefits the voters. They should know more about you and what you are about. I don’t read the negative pieces I get in the mail. I prefer to know the positive things that our officials are doing.”

Some people have commented that the City of Yonkers needs political balance, and that Merante, a republican is one of two remaining republicans in Yonkers government. “I will be a different democrat. I’m a conservative democrat and I’m also running on the conservative line. And on the council, I plan to be a conservative voice,” said Hodges, who asked for the vote on the people of the 6th District.

“I will be there for the people and help Yonkers do the right thing. It’s the way I was raised and its’ the way we do it in Yonkers. We help others and I want to continue to serve.”

Hodges recently got the endorsements from the Yonkers PBA. “Being a police officer has been such a large part of my life, and when elected I will continue to fight and stand with our brave law enforcement officers. Yonkers has one of the best police departments in the country, and having their support means so much to me. The residents of District 6 need someone who has the backing of our wonderful police force to ensure public safety, and these endorsements speak for themselves.”

Bank teller, I’m Innocent, continued from pg 1-

Blanco was accused of providing to Marte to rob the bank, which let to her guilty conviction.

In addition to the fact that Blanco and Marte were together, another damning piece of evidence at the trial showed that the two took a trip to Arbua after the robbery. Marte testified that he paid for the vacation with cash that he stole during the bank heist, but according to the motion the trip was paid for online, where its impossible to pay for anything with cash.

Blanco provided her attorney Silveri with an online receipt but it wasn’t introduced as evidence.

The motion shows that Marte and the other bank robbers perjured themselves during the trial, when their testimony is compared to what they told the FBI during interviews.

Other inconsistencies include:

Giovanni Marte testified that at the trial that Blanco told him not to take money from the teller draws, or the ATM machine. But during his interview for a reduced sentence in exchange for a lenient sentence, called a proffer meeting, Marte said “I thought best not to take from drawers.”

Another one of the bank robbers, Jeffrey Martinez, who had 10 prior arrests, also agreed to testify against Blanco in exchange for a reduced sentence. Martinez claimed that he knew Blanco “from the neighborhood” but could not identify her from a photo lineup.

Marte fired two shots in the bank during the robbery. Blanco was accused of participating in the bank robbery even though she was not there during the time that it happened. And because shots were fired, she was given 10 years on the gun charge for the shots fired by her ex-boyfriend.

Andres Cruz the getaway driver, in a video recorded statement said that he was informed by Marte and Martinez that they had been casing the bank twelve months (Marte) and six months (Martinez). This supported Ms. Blanco’s claim of innocence as she had only started working in the bank three months before the robbery.

In another conversation recorded by a confidential informant, Martinez stated that there was no insider.

It has been established Marte has a propensity to lie. This has been pointed out by the government in their arguments multiple times. The only witness who identified Ms. Blanco as the insider was Marte.

Marte and Cruz committed bad acts prior to the bank robbery together. These acts consist of drug smuggling as Marte was involved in the distribution of narcotics from the Dominican Republic, according to the motion.

According to the motion, Cruz also told the FBI that he (Marte) had been scouting the place for about a year or so and he knew like where the guard was and what not and it had been robbed before because the highway is right there, so it makes it an easy target. So he had told me he scouted the place all around and he knew where all the cameras were and I just had to pop this U turn up the hill and wait for him in front of the bank.

FBI: Did G, Did G, say why he picked that bank?

Cruz: Just cause it had been robbed before, the highway was right there so all we had to do is get on the highway and soon as we get out of Yonkers it’s no longer their jurisdiction.

FBI: How did he know when the guard was working and all that stuff?

Cruz: He said he was scouting, ah, scouting it for a year.

FBI: Did he know somebody who worked there?

Cruz: I don’t know

According to the motion, Marte and Martinez had robbed another bank on Lockwood Avenue prior to the Odell robbery. Blanco’s attorney, Mr. Siveri, did not interview Cruz and ask about the contradictions in their story to Marte’s story.

Marte testified that Blanco, “drew me a blueprint of how the bank looks like in the inside and in the outside,” but other testimony found that Marte had to ask another bank employee, Mr. Khalil, to take him to the vault.

Khalil explained to Marte that he did not have access to the vault. A key and a combination is needed to access the vault. A coworker of Khalil’s told Marte he needed the combination to open the vault and the combination is kept by a manager. Actually, Marte had no idea how to open the vault, according to the motion.

Marte also did not know who the manager was of the bank. Marte’s proffer notes and testimony allege Ms. Blanco made him aware of the physical description of the manager, but during the robbery, he asked Mr. Khalil to get a manager.

It was determined after the robbery that \$300,000 was missing. After the robbery, Martinez was interviewed by the Yonkers Police Department, where he testified that he knew Blanco “I have seen her around my neighborhood.” But Martinez was shown 35 photos and could not ID Blanco. This fact was not brought out during the trial by Blanco’s attorney.

The fact that Marte was the main witness in the trial that put Virginia Blanco in prison for 10 years is suspect, when Marte’s wrap sheet, which has a history of guns, drugs and robberies, is reviewed. “The Government cannot establish a solid time frame that the allegations took place nor can the Government provide any evidence that this actually took place. Ms. Blanco has proven that her defense counsel was deficient by not interviewing Raposo and others as well Ms. Blanco proves there was in fact materiel that could have been used effectively to discredit Marte,” states the motion.

Federal Court Judge Cathy Seibel, who sentenced Blanco to 10 years in prison, is the same judge that allowed the motion to continue to move forward.

“It’s a big deal. I don’t know what else you’ve got beside Mr. Marte on any of this and, you know, that’s also part of the problem, you know if they don’t believe Mr. Marte on the robbery, they’re not going to believe him on the drugs. And if they believe him on the one, they’re going to believe him on the other.

“The prejudicial effect of this drug evidence, denied by Ms. Blanco, having no relevance to the charges in the indictment cannot be underplayed. It portrayed Ms. Blanco, without a criminal record, who was working going to school, as a drug dealer affiliated with Marte as well as other drug dealers including Raposo the father of her son, and Pena, her cousin.

A hearing should be held on how the district court ruled on the 404(b) evidence and what research (Assistant US Attorney) Mr. Adelsberg was referring to and why it wasn’t turned over,” said Judge Seibel.

While we acknowledge that Virginia Blanco put herself, and her son, in a BAD situation by entering into a relationship with a person that was dealing drugs, using guns and robbing banks, that fact alone does not deserve her spending 10 years in jail.

When I read this motion, I thought about what I would do if I were on the jury and were presented with this evidence. My answer is, I would not have convicted Virginia Blanco of anything.

The government now has to respond to the motion by November 19. And the Judge will have to grant or deny a hearing and a new attorney for Virginia Blanco.

Another reason we write this story is because we printed a release from the US Attorney’s office back in 2019, detailing the charges against Blanco and her guilty conviction.

We write this follow up story, more than two years later, because we now have serious doubts about Virginia Blanco’s guilty.

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AT&T, The STEM Alliance and 914United Partner to Create Digital Literacy Program for Formerly Incarcerated and Justice Involved



Participants in the Digital Literacy Program, with Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Assemblymember Steve Otis, Amy Kramer, President, AT&T New, Margaret Käufer, President, The STEM Alliance and Jonathan Alvarez, Co-Founder and Executive Director, 914United

AT&T, The STEM Alliance and 914United have teamed up to provide an innovative technology and digital literacy education program for formerly incarcerated and justice involved Westchester County citizens. The program is part of The STEM Alliance's Digital Equity Now initiative and AT&T's commitment to working with organizations across the country to address the digital divide impacting Black, Brown and underserved communities that have faced long-standing social inequities and higher unemployment. In celebration of National Digital Inclusion Week that kicked off on October 4th and the graduation of the inaugural cohort of the innovative program, Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins and Assemblyman Steve Otis, both champions of social justice and advocates for digital equity, joined Amy Kramer, President, AT&T New, Margaret Käufer, President, The STEM Alliance and Jonathan Alvarez, Co-Founder and Executive Director, 914United on Thursday October 7th to tour the program, address the clients on the importance of digital literacy and digital inclusion issues and to discuss what they had learned and what they hope to achieve now the program is over.

AT&T's support of The STEM Alliance's Digital Equity Now initiative is a part of the company's recently announced \$2 billion nationwide commitment to help bridge the digital divide and homework gap. As part of this support, AT&T and The STEM Alliance based in Westchester are collaborating on other digital literacy programming for underserved students across the county. Digital Equity Now focuses on "digital rehabilitation and resilience" and providing vital tech skills that help to maximize the potential for underrepresented young adults to succeed as they reenter their communities.

"Equipping formerly incarcerated people with the skills to better navigate our increasingly digital world is but one way we can help them overcome barriers to employment and break the cycle of recidivism. Thank you to AT&T, The STEM Alliance and 914United for coming together to support these New Yorkers as they reintegrate into society and make positive change. Congratulations to those who have completed the inaugural training course, I wish them success going forward," said Sen. Stewart-Cousins.

Read more on this story at [YonkersTimes.com](https://www.yonkertimes.com)

Yonkers Force and Brave Playing Hard



By Phil Foley

It was another tough week for our Yonkers football teams! Last Saturday The Yonkers Brave gave a great team effort when they lost to Port Chester HS 21-12 at Port Chester HS. Scarsdale HS defeated our Yonkers Force team 35-6 at Roosevelt HS.

For the Brave two players stood out. They were Dujour Holmes and Manny Romero who both had a rushing TD to make the contest so close. After the game Coach Vic Chiappa said "The kids played hard....just came up little short"! This Saturday the Brave takes on Scarsdale HS at Saunders HS Field. Kickoff is 1:30 PM.

The Force ran into a very good Scarsdale HS team last Saturday! Coach Anthony Fava told me "Scarsdale was a very tough, well coached team. We will look to bounce back and play better this week"! For the Force Magic Soriano scored their lone TD on a running play. This Saturday the Force will host New Rochelle HS at Roosevelt HS Field. Kickoff is at 1:30 PM. Best of luck to both teams.

Lincoln High School Girls Soccer Team



The Lincoln High School Girls Soccer team, from Yonkers, has competed in 10 games, and a 4-6 record with three games left. Best of Luck the rest of the way.

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NOT SHOWN: Evan Gaines, MD; Vishal A. Mehta, MD; Patrick Murray, MD; Paul S. Rogusa, MD; Daniel Shein, MD; David Shein, MD; Eric Spencer, MD; Mario Voloshin, DPM, FACFAS

