

## Detroit Seniors Honored for Excelling Despite Hardships

Teyjzhaniqk Parker knows hardship. She was 16 and attending North-western High School, a good student who liked school. But her home life was very difficult.

"The start of my junior year, my mom and I started to have problems," Parker, now 18, says. In particular, she did not get along with her mother's boyfriend.

"It's hard for me to talk about," Parker said. Then she broke down and tears flowed. Standing by her side was school social worker Kathy Hemingway and retired school social worker Curtis Stout.

Acting like the mother Parker was desperately seeking, Hemingway held her, encouraging her to think of her positive future, not her past.

Parker left home on her 17th birthday



**Mildred Ellis Scholarship Co-Chair Kathy Hemingway, Mykal Avery, Teyjzhaniqk Parker, Terrell Edmondson, Ah'Zhane Scadrick, Micah McClinton, and Co-Chair Curtis Stout. Not pictured is scholarship recipient Samuel Braxton.**

and in some ways, life got harder. Being homeless and staying with friends prevented her from doing well at school. Her grades started slipping.

"I was always an A student," she said. Eventually, however, Parker was able to bring up her grades and ACT scores and file her application to get into Eastern Michigan University. She won scholarships and got a loan for room and board.

Parker is one of six Detroit Public

School seniors to receive \$1,000 scholarships from the Mildred Ellis Scholarship Fund. Detroit school social workers interview students who have overcome serious hardships and grant the scholarships, raised with money from their own wallets.

This year they celebrated the 25th anniversary of giving scholarships in honor of

Ellis, the first African American director of the Office of the School Social Work Service. Twenty five years later, the social workers are still holding a dinner and have given 174 students scholarships, totaling \$231,000.

"When we give the scholarships, it's always raining and that's good because you always have tears," Hemingway says. "It puts into perspective what you think your own problems are."

## Update on 3% Lawsuit

The union has two lawsuits in the court system challenging laws that raised your contribution to the pension system. The first law, Public Act 75 of 2010, deducted 3 percent of every paycheck for retirement health benefits, without guaranteeing that you would ever receive those benefits. We won that case and also won the appeal.

The contributions required under this law began in July 2010 and were discontinued in Dec. 2011. The money withheld is held in escrow pending a final ruling from the Michigan State Supreme Court.

The second suit seeks to overturn Public Act 75 of 2012, which replaced the mandatory 3 percent contribution with an optional 3 percent payment. Members who opted out also opted out of receiving health care during retirement. The law also required higher payroll deductions for employee's pensions. We lost this case at the

appeals level.

The Michigan Supreme Court recently announced that they will hear our appeal on the second case which relates to Public Act 300 of 2012. The Michigan Supreme Court will hear arguments this fall.

Meanwhile, the case concerning Public Act 75 of 2010 is being held in abeyance. This means the Michigan Supreme Court will not address the case until the case concerning the 2012 law is resolved.

We will keep you updated on any other developments.

# DPS is a Major Contributor to Detroit's Blight

By Keith Johnson  
President

**S**outhwestern, Pitcher, Gompers, Andrew Jackson, McGregor, Houghten, Luddington, Parker, McFarlane, Joyce, Barbour, Hutchins, Post, Carstens, Stark. What do all of these schools have in common, aside from the fact they are closed? They have all helped to perpetuate blight in neighborhoods that at one time sent 300,000 children to receive their education.

Some schools have been spared the wrath of the "urban miners" who ravage and strip the buildings to their shells, turning them into havens for criminals and vermin.

## President's Report



**Keith Johnson**

COO-LEY, COOLEY, COOLEY, COOLEY HIGH! That chant still resonates in me; hearing the students in the orange brick, majestic and massive facility on Hubbell cheering on their teams, and at graduations. Cooley, so far, remains virtually intact, but it will be only a matter of time before the reverence for this great architectural structure wanes and the strippers come in.

Two of my former schools, Winterhalter and Winship, have been spared the indignity of getting stripped because they were sold and reopened as charter schools, each receiving makeovers in the process. Kettering High School is now fenced in with a plan to develop an urban garden on its massive grounds.

DPS, however, has failed to ade-

quately secure and monitor closed structures to the point where they are virtually impossible to sell or lease. They have made the neighborhoods where they stand less attractive for new residents to come, or for current residents to remain.

It is indisputable that some schools should never have been closed. Southwestern High School was the only DPS high school in far southwest Detroit. With the closing of Chadsey and Southwestern, and with Western International filled to the brim, there is no high school in the area to service students from Mark Twain, Academy of the Americas, Bennett, Roberto Clemente or Phoenix Academy (now an EAA school).

DPS should receive the same level of castigation as the former owners of the old Packard Plant because they both did the same thing. They used the facilities until they were deemed useless, then left them to the mercy of predators. As the decision was made to close schools, DPS should have exercised a proactive approach; putting out feelers for potential bids before they were stripped bare.

As Detroit now looks to revitalize barren neighborhoods, a tremendous inhibitor will be these vacant school buildings. They impede potential investors from building new subdivisions or revitalizing vacant homes and businesses.

DPS recently announced that its deficit elimination plan includes the option of closing an additional 26 schools. This certainly has speculators rethinking whether they wish to invest in a city whose school district has been a primary culprit in creating the blight we are fighting to turn around.



**DFT President Keith Johnson and DFT Vice President Nadonya Muslim at the 2014 DFT Bldg. Rep Dinner.**

Memo to DPS: before looking at closing any more schools, first look at incentives that will make parents want to send their children to our district to receive a quality education. If we must close a school, let's make sure we have secured funding to demolish it, or have a buyer lined up, even if it is a competing school.

Don't just leave the buildings to die a long, tragic death, and kill the neighborhood simultaneously. Don't imitate Packard. You're better than that, or at least you should be.

## THE DETROIT teacher

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# DPS Spending Boggles the Mind

By Edna Reaves, Executive Vice President

**I**t boggles my mind how DPS can go through nine years of state control, have three emergency managers, and still not get its budget in shape. DPS recently announced that its deficit is over \$100 million. That is in addition to the restructured debt of over \$300 million. They seem to think that closing or giving away schools will solve the problem.



Edna Reaves

They told us if we took concessions, the district would be on the path to fiscal solvency. We took a 10 percent pay cut. We pay 20 percent of our health insurance with higher co-pays and deductibles. We have fewer preps for elementary teachers. I could go on and on. Yet the deficit just keeps growing.

Some things are hard to fathom. Why would the district give away 15 schools to the EAA (some brand new), reduce its enrollment and income source, and yet expect to balance its budget? Why is it that we can loan the EAA money, share services, and still report a deficit? Who does business this way?

## Updates . . .

### Edna Reaves Elected

At the May 17 AFT Michigan Convention, several members of the DFT leadership were re-elected AFT Michigan vice presidents. They are Keith Johnson, Ivy Bailey, Steve Portnoy, Mike Schenk and LaShawn Sims. Wendy Newberry was elected vice president from the DFT Retiree Chapter. David Hecker was re-elected as president of AFT Michigan.

Edna Reaves, DFT executive vice president, was elected secretary-treasurer of AFT Michigan. All of these leaders continue in their DFT leadership roles. The DFT is proud to have its leaders in these state level positions.

### Members Donate to COPE

The following DFT members gave at least \$10 to the COPE campaign: **Michelle Broughton, Patricia Monet Conner, Vanessa Rasheed and Terry Tate**. If you haven't donated to COPE, there's still time to give. The COPE committee is urging every DFT member to give \$10. The campaign is to raise money for candidates in the fall elections who support public education and teachers' rights to belong to a union. Send your check made out to AFT Michigan COPE and mail it to AFT Michigan, 2661 E. Jefferson, Detroit MI 48207 or drop it off at the DFT office, 7700 Second Avenue, Suite 427.

Mind you, each one of these emergency managers was appointed because they were business men with financial expertise, not educators.

Even under an EM, the district continually makes decisions that just don't make "cents." What sense did it make to privatize custodial service to Sodexo only to double the financial burden and provide inferior work? A recent newspaper article cites DPS owing Sodexo \$18 million for three months. According to the district's approved 2011 budget, prior to privatization, the district's custodial services were under \$18 million annually with more schools than today. DPS is paying more, yet classrooms are not clean. If we received quality service, there would be no need to have a "broom" in the classroom. Teachers and students are continually cleaning their rooms. Many of our members have gotten into arguments with the custodial staff over the lousy conditions of classrooms. By the way, did I mention that Sodexo has a 10-year contract?

Still harder to understand are smaller and symbolic expenses. Five years after state receivership, DPS still employs two body guards and two chauffeurs for its emergency manager and its superintendent of academics. While the district's financial problems have not been solved, the top brass received bonuses.

How can Robert Bobb, Roy Roberts and Jack Martin cut teacher pay and benefits, then walk out of their offices into a new SUV with chauffeurs and body guards? If reducing the deficit is a priority, why haven't those perks been cut? Many teachers have taken second jobs and cut household expenses just to make ends meet. But the EM hasn't found this financial emergency too great to cut chauffeurs, body guards and bonuses?

DPS just released a statement that it may have to close or consolidate 26 schools at the end of next year and potentially impose a 5 percent pay cut it is trying to avoid. Why is it that we have to constantly battle over our wages when the district does not manage its finances effectively?

Why is it no one believes, nor trusts this district? Could it be because the more we sacrifice the more they believe we should? The evidence is clear, members are retiring or resigning to work with other districts. Parents are taking their children to schools that offer music, art, physical education, and other electives that DPS promised but did not deliver.

The district is trying to change its image with an expensive PR campaign that is being financed by our pay cuts. You can try to change your image a thousand times, but until you address the true problems and spending practices of the district, it will not matter.

How about putting precious resources where quality and image count the most – in the classrooms. Give the teachers prep periods, supplies and health care. Then let's worry about whether the district can afford bonuses for the top brass and a chauffeur or two.

# THE DETROIT teacher NEWSMAKERS



Teachers Maria Jones-Foster and Tom Barnes hold the Green School Award.

## Davison Wins Green School Award

This year Davison School was awarded another Michigan Green School Certificate — this time winning "Emerald," which is a higher level. To qualify, Davison needed to fulfill certain criteria in a variety of categories such as recycling, environmental activities, and energy conservation.

The award ceremony was held May 14 at Wayne County RESA. This adds to the list of awards Davison won this year, including Academic Games, Archery, Bookstock, DPS and DIA art exhibit, and Best of Show at the Michigan Student Film Festival.

"I suppose that's why it's hard to get away from this school," said retired art teacher Tony Shopinski, who visits Davison several days a week to work with students in art, gardening, and video animation.

## *Cinco de Mayo Celebration at Carver*



Carver STEM Academy celebrated Cinco de Mayo in May with programs and a sampling of Mexican dishes such as tamales, beans and rice, pozole and carnitas. Carver gives a special thanks to Rosa Valdez for coordinating the event. Pictured above are Autism Spectrum Disorders teachers Jeannie Jones and Raquel Huckaby.





# Donna Woods Day at Turning Point

Like a celebrity, Donna Woods had special privileges when she strode into Turning Point Academy on May 7. Outfitted in makeup and her Sunday best, Woods was scheduled to do book signings. But the day turned out to be something else.



(From left) Debbie Thomas, Principal Gary Taylor, Donna Woods, Tamara Jackson, Donald Woods, Johnnie McCray and Kathy Hemingway.

School social worker Kathy Hemingway had the idea to declare it "Donna Woods Day" and host a reception and speeches. It was time to celebrate the real-world accomplishment of a Turning Point student.

"Staff, it's Donna Woods Day so no suspensions today," Principal Gary Taylor said with a smile. The school on Detroit's east side is a day treatment program for severely emotionally impaired students.

Teacher Debbie Thomas noticed the deep and emotional writings by Woods and was compelled to enter "Terrible World, Terrible People" in the contest. When the acceptance letter came, Thomas determined to host a book signing. She set up a table, decorated the library with huge pastel paper flowers and made a banner. Assistant Principal Tamara Jackson ordered a cake. Her published poem was copied for the signing.

Woods' next goal is getting her GED. But the celebratory day gave Woods what she really likes — lots of praise and attention.

Woods' father was a surprise guest.

"I didn't know it was going to be this grand," Donald Woods said. "I'm proud of her."



Woods, a senior, wrote a poem that won a Gold Medal and was published in "The Kaleidoscope," a Michigan Reading Association anthology of the best 2014 student work. Her style is patterned after Maya Angelou.

"I've been reading a lot by Maya Angelou," Woods said, "and she inspired me to write more."

## THE DETROIT NEWSMAKERS

### Terrible World, Terrible People

By Donna Woods

Hurt on the inside bleed-  
ing on the out

Making mistakes is what  
life is all about

Young ladies out here  
struggling trying to get  
money

Young men out here trying to  
make young girls their honey

Decisions we make can  
cause us to get into a lot of  
dangerous situation

When our young folks  
should be in school trying  
to succeed and get an ed-  
ucation

Life is dangerous, vio-  
lent, and cruel

Cause all people worry  
about is diamonds,  
cars, money and  
pearls

Today our young  
people is stuck on  
money and weed

While others worry-  
ing about how they  
are going to suc-  
ceed

Many young peo-  
ple have been abused on the inside and out

You hear them scream, you hear them yell, you hear them shout

But what you don't hear is good things coming out of their mouth

That's because most parents are young and stuck on drugs,  
money, sex and expensive Things

Everything bad will stop when the world ends and when god  
sends the angels down to Sing



# Pershing Teacher Needed a Union

If we learned anything from the Pershing High School teacher who got fired from the EAA for trying to break up a fight — and we learned a lot — it's that teachers need a union.

Tiffany Eaton, a 31-year-old teacher at Pershing, said she loved being a teacher. She probably wouldn't have imagined she'd be in the situation she is today. At one time Pershing was a Detroit Public School. Now it is part of the state-run Education Achievement Authority. EAA teachers do not have the protection of a union.

The parent of one of the boys in the fight said she will sue Eaton. Eaton has hired an attorney. If she were in the Detroit Federation of Teachers, she would be represented and covered by occupational liability insurance. In the event of a civil suit, she would notify the DFT, and be covered by this policy.

"It's unfortunate what this lady was subjected to," said DFT President Keith Johnson. "But it's encouraging the level of support she has received nationally.

"If anyone wants to question why should I belong to a union, look at Ms. Eaton," Johnson said. "That's the reason. She's the poster child as to why. This should be a message to everyone about the value of a union."

## Teacher Partnership Builds Hope

When Kimberly Morrison and Jelane Richardson met at a teacher workshop at the Detroit Institute of Arts last summer, they started a year-long venture. They collaborated on a project to think of ways to build bridges between suburban and urban districts and break down stereotypes.

Soon enough, Richardson, an art teacher at Allan Park High School, visited Morrison's second-grade classroom at Clark Elementary School on Detroit's far east side. The venture got Richardson making clay luminaries and auctioning them off. The proceeds went to Covenant House to support a family at Clark and a family at Allan Park.

Next they asked Jeff Goulasarian, industrial arts teacher at Allen Park High, to design a playhouse and build it with students.

"Children learn that having a good home and a good environment will make you a better person," said Morrison. "That's why we started a home." The teachers ended the year with students from each school painting the playhouse together.

"Kim and I share the same vision for how we see education," Richardson said.

"We knew it started with the kids and it's about hope." Project Hope is what they named their project-based learning experience to improve the quality of life in Detroit. For Richardson's older students, they



learned how to contribute to society and mentor a youngster.

"Working together as a community is important because we need each other as we grow up," Richardson said. "Socioeconomics might be different but we're all together. Look at them and you see no difference in how they treat each other."



**Kimberly Morrison and Jelane Richardson**

### Keidan Hits the Runway

Keidan Special Education Center put on a fashion show this spring with students and staff members on the catwalk. The fashion extravaganza topped off a year of activities at the school. Rochelle Massingill and her student, Aniyah, wore matching outfits at the fashion show.





# Broughton Runs for Wayne County Commissioner



My name is Michelle Broughton and I'm a candidate for Wayne County Commissioner, District 5. I have been an active DFT member for 22 years and held many positions, including Building Rep, Delegate to the National AFT convention 2008, COPE Director, COPE Coordinator, and Union Organizer (Metro-Detroit AFL-CIO) under the direction of then President Sandra Williams. Currently I am serving as DFT Treasurer.

I was PTA President of Renaissance High School from 2006 to 2010 to advocate for all students. I was elected Precinct Delegate and served for 18 years to advocate for my community. Now, Wayne County deserves a County Commissioner in District 5 who understands what integrity demands; a servant of the people, to serve and bring back resources and programs for all citizens, especially our youth and seniors citizens. I want to be an advocate for all citizens in Wayne County and not the selected few.

I am asking for your support on Aug. 5 because I have the VISION and road map to take the county where we need to go. I have the required COMPETENCY, skills and knowledge to make things happen and get things done correctly. And I have the moral COURAGE to do the right thing, to stand up and fight for what's right and to make the tough decisions. I want to serve you!

Thank you for your support, donations and help. You can contact me at 313-587-4125 or at unionstrong231@gmail.com.

In Solidarity,  
**Michelle Broughton**



# Mammas, Don't Let Your Babies Grow up to be Teachers

By Mark O'Keefe, DFT Controller

Waylon Jennings and Willie Nelson popularized the song, "Mammas, Don't Let Your Babies Grow up to be Cowboys." These days, mammas should not let their babies be teachers.



There was a time when a career in teaching was a good fit for someone with a family. The pay was low, but the benefits were good. You were respected by employers, parents, and students. Job security was high, and stress was relatively low.

The only thing that hasn't changed is the low pay. Good benefits are a fading memory. School days and school years have been lengthened. Teachers are blamed for everything and seemingly respected by nobody. Seniority and job security are long gone, and stress is at an all time high.

With apologies to Ed and Patsy Bruce who wrote the original lyrics, the updated version might look something like this:

Teachers are easy to love and their hearts are pure gold.  
But they'll probably get fired before they get old.  
If you don't compensate her, an' she don't die young,  
She'll prob'ly just walk away.

Mammas, don't let your babies grow up to be teachers.  
Don't let them work cheap and drive them old trucks.  
Let 'em be doctors and lawyers and such.  
Mammas, don't let your babies grow up to be teachers.  
'Cos they'll work while at home and you'll feel you're alone.  
There's no time for the ones that they love.

Teachers like old classrooms & hearing, "Good morning,"  
Little warm-hearted children and going home every night.  
Them that don't know her don't like her, and them that do,  
Sometimes will still try to blame her.  
She ain't wrong, she's no different and her pride won't let her  
Say she's doing wrong when she knows she is right.

Mammas, don't let your babies grow up to be teachers.  
Don't let them work cheap and drive them old trucks.  
Let 'em be doctors and lawyers and such.

Mammas, don't let your babies grow up to be teachers.  
'Cos they'll work while at home and you'll feel you're alone.  
There's no time for the ones that they love.

# THE STARS CAME OUT AT DFT BUILDING REP DINNER

## *Your Work is Appreciated!*

For the 30th year, the DFT honored its union building representatives at a dinner June 6 at the Doubletree Hotel in Detroit. While leaders lamented the tumultuous times, the DFT counted many accomplishments.

Edna Re/aves, DFT executive vice president, honored the DFT volunteers who brought 46,000 free books to Detroit children this year, working with the First Book organization and our sister unions.

After months of negotiations, the 130 teachers at Cesar Chavez Academy got their first union contract. The DFT also won a large arbitration to collect the TIP monies for DFT members who resigned or were terminated.

The building reps kept members in the schools informed on these and other major union issues. At the dinner they received cash and prizes, and each received a portable camping chair.

"The real strength of this union is you," said DFT President Keith Johnson. "The strength of the union lies with the people out there in the trenches every day."



**(Seated) Terrence Martin, Ben Dirden, Glenda Booker, Terrence Butler, (standing) Mershira Oliver, Kimberly Mitchell, Vanessa Rasheed, Beverly Wilkerson and Melaine Tillman.**



**(Seated) LaShawn Sims, Maria Davis, Anthony Collins, Catherine Collins, (standing) Vanessa Parnell, Nicole Davis and Johnny Mickles.**



# THE STARS CAME OUT AT DFT BUILDING REP DINNER



**(Seated) Lois Lofton-Doniver, DFT President Emeritus John Elliott, Liz Duhn, Charlene Smith, (standing) Rose Kirtz, Donna Jackson, Amy Bachelder and Jewel Gines.**



**(Seated) William Gardner, Lisa Scott, Wendy Newberry, Patricia Keyes, Patricia Norris, (standing) Wanda Lundy Colquitt, Julie Jablonski, Cathy Schrock, and Patrick Falcusan.**



**(Seated) Cristal Bonner, James Mallett, Crystal White, Robin Partmon, (standing) Binta Justice, Leslie Hubbard, Robin Williams-McDaniel, Robin Jennings and Wanda Hogg.**



# THE STARS CAME OUT AT DFT BUILDING REP DINNER



**(Seated) Marcus Walton, Lenore Ellery, Dar-nise Woods, Brigid Odocha, Anissa Bolden, (standing) Crystal Lee, Melzitta Davis, Lokia Wilson, Eva Dawson.**



**On the dais is Edna Reaves, Keith Johnson, David Hecker, Marshall Widdick, Michelle Broughton and Mike Schenk.**



**(Seated) Dominic Bailey, Ivy Bailey, Mark Davis, Kevin Smith, (standing) Ethelle King, Jeanette King, Cynthia Matthews and Lisa McMurtry.**



**(Seated) Michael Weiszbrod, Vida Bonacci, Deanna Vanderbilt, Kerrie Yax, (standing) Jeff Wasilewski, Dorian Evans, Tracy Arneau and Ingrid Stemmerich.**



# THE STARS CAME OUT AT DFT BUILDING REP DINNER



**George Barnes, president of Heritage Optical, conducts a famous quotes game.**



**Jason Posey and Johnny Mickles**



**Kevin Smith, Mark Davis and Jeff Wasilewski practice their lines.**



**Dominic Bailey does an impersonation of Robert DeNiro in Taxi Driver.**

# THE STARS CAME OUT AT DFT BUILDING REP DINNER



**DFT Executive Vice President Edna Reaves and Cody building rep Binta Justice.**



**Everyone gets a DFT lawn chair!**



**DFT executive board member Glenda Booker.**



**Hostesses (from left) Cynthia Matthews, Wanda Hogg and Lisa McMurtry.**