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- EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH UPTOWN'S BLACK DENIRO.
- DJ KOOL CELEBRATES THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE HIT SONG "LET ME CLEAR MY THROAT".
- CONGRESSMAN DWIGHT EVANS ENDORSES CITY CONTROLLER REBECCA RHYNHART.
- COUNCILMEMBERS ISAIAH THOMAS AND KATHERINE GILMORE RICHARDSON ANNOUNCES \$1M IN ARTS AND CULTURE GRANTS.





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### DJ KOOL CELEBRATES THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE HIT SONG "LET ME CLEAR MY THROAT"



DJ Kool's most successful album "Let Me Clear My Throat" recorded live in 1996 at the Bahama Bay club in Philadelphia; celebrates its 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary!

"Let Me Clear My Throat" continues to live on as it was featured in the movie "Office Christmas Party and in other movies, commercials, sporting events and more. He credits his manager; Philadelphia native and my friend/mentor Walt Reeder, Jr. for consistently making moves to ensure that Kool keeps eating. "I've had a record on the billboard chart somewhere in the top 100 every year from 1986, all the way up to 1996 with "Let Me Clear My Throat." Said DJ Kool DJ Kool exemplifies what it means to forge a timeless and successful entertainment career. I had a chance to talk to my friend DJ Kool: I've had way for an in-depth interview. Find out how he continues to keep working, reinventing and creating new shows.

Shelly Shell: What is the formula for remaining relevant today and for so many years?

DJ Kool: You got to stay in love with it; I chose to make it my life!

Shelly Shell: What projects are you working on now?

**DJ Kool**: I currently Broadcast on GoGo Radio Live every Monday Night playing Go Go Music from the 80's & 90's. We have a new project that we should be releasing in May called Cha, Cha, Cha. Uh, this song has a line dance attached to it. The Cha Cha Cha Line Dance has over 400,000 views on Youtube.

Shelly Shell: What is the one thing you still want to achieve in your career?

**DJ Kool**: I want to get into doing voiceover work for cartoons. I have a character SOCKO'S HERE!! I introduce him on MONDAY NIGHT LIVE with THE LEGENDARY DJ KOOL 8-10pm on the @GoGoRadioLIVE App, Facebook page, YouTube, Roku, Android TV, Amazon Fire TV & Apple TV channels. For booking go to Bigbloc.com and to keep up with DJ Kool go to @legendaryDJKoolDC

Shelly Shell: Have you ever struggled?

more wins than loses. Thank God for Walt Reeder, Jr. We had a

strange time while being signed to American Records we lost the ability to record from 1998-2003.

Shelly Shell: Do you ever get tired of doing interviews? Do you ever get tired of it?

**DJ Kool**: No. No. I'm thankful. I'm very, very thankful it lets me know that Shelly Shell: Have you I still have some measure of been financially hurt by the relevance out here. I have a birthday next month (March) That'd be March 20th. I'll be 63 years old. A lot of people see me and don't believe that I've been around as long as I have, but er and I have other situa-I have, and I feel blessed. I'm blessed in the fact that I'm still able to do it. I'm blessed in the fact that I'm still meant to do it. Once

again, I just love what I do. I love the game. So I'm going to do this until God calls me home. And that's just how I feel about it. I feel like this is what I was put here to do, you know, to, make people happy, an inspiration to a lot of young artists, and to educate a lot of young artists.

pandemic?

DJ Kool: Thank God for hit records and whatnot. Um, I get checks every six months through my publishtions that I make money off of. We are about to kick off DJ Kool T- shirts, Hats and other merchandise. My manager, Walt Reeder, Jr.

stays on top of the business. I thank God for him.

#### **History of Let Me Clear** My Throat & Philly

There is so much more to the story. The record received buzz in and Don "Mystic" Mack from Power 99 Philly brought him in for Powerhouse and DJ Ran was playing during the intermission and he drops the "Let Me Clear My Throat" and over 16, 000 heard it and rocked out. Walt Reeder Jr. books DJ Kool for a show in Philly at Bahama Bay.

By Shelly Shell Photo Courtesy of Shelly Shell



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#### IMHOTEP FOOTBALL IS WINNING WITHOUT A SEASON



In a year where a mysterious virus put a halt on life as we know it, the coaches for the Imhotep Football team were able to look in the face of adversity and not were the only opportunities only adapt but achieve.

"It wasn't easy!," says Head athlete. Coach Devon Johnson who saw the weight room and playing field reduced to zoom meeting and virtual learning. Much of traditional recruiting and the allimportant eye test wasn't available for a team full of talented seniors who were looking for a home to play collegiate football.

"Coaches who wanted to see athletes they were interested in had to meet over zoom calls," says Johnson, "We would have to do things like standing the ath-

letes next to doorways to let with no physical season. the coaches see their measurables." These along with a host of interviews to see athletes' personalities that coaches had to decide rather they would recruit an

Coach Cyril Woodland the Associate Head Coach but also handles recruiting says that the first goal was to secure spots for seniors on the team who were already getting recruiting attention. "Once we were able to get attention from the highly recruited athletes we had, we were able to then help the less recruited seniors find opportunities."

With a solid plan in place, the coaches were able to find homes for 9 seniors

Taleeq Robbins, Defensive Tackle- Ole Miss University, Javon McIntyre, Safety-University of Pitt, Saint McLeod, Safety- West Virginia University, Kristen McAdams Wide Receiver-University of Albany, Cameron Jackson, Cornerback-Shippensburg University, Shafeek Smith, Cornerback-Towson University. D'Shaun Seals, Wide Receiver- West Chester University, Kamar Green, Linebacker- Lincoln University, Daniel Ogundipe, Offensive Linemen- Old Dominion University.

These young men worked with their coaches to use the resources they had available to gain an opportunity to continue their playing career in the Fall.

without a single snap in their senior season.

While the success of the year behind has produced success and opportunities, the next season lies among the team. While most of the workouts have been done over Zoom calls with the coaches and team captains, there have been some opportunities to work out in person which has inspired hope for the team.

"Our top priority is having a successful spring season.' As the pandemic starts to turn a corner and allow for the team to start building towards next season's goal of winning.

For the Panthers, winning doesn't only mean being the best on the field but also being great students off the field. Coach Kevin Norris, an assistant head coach who is also in charge of academics, worked with the staff to make sure that all the players were eligible to play this season.

Johnson admits that the virtual learning was difficult for the students but setting a plan and constantly checking the grades of the athletes By Andre Brown allowed the team to excel academically which will allow the Panthers to field a full team ready to compete

The Imhotep Charter Football team has found success in the face of a pandemic the coaches, staff, and student-athletes all able to come together to achieve the goal of excellence. Much like the team's motto: "Best is the standard," each person involved has done their part to strive amid the turmoil.

"We want to solidify ourselves as the top team in the state, gain that respect and eventually become one of the top teams in the nation." The future of the Panthers looks to be full of competing at the highest level imaginable. "We want to finish top 10 in the country, "says Coach Johnson.

While football is the background for the team's achievements the coaches also want to build great brothers, fathers, husbands, and overall great young men. The Imhotep Charter Football team with its strong tradition and support will continue to grow and make headlines not only locally but nationally as well.

Photo Courtesy of Imhotep





"COUNT EVERY VOTE" PROTEST IN PHILADELPHIA. CREDIT: CORY CLARK By Sandy Smith

(Germantown Editor, The Northwest Local)

Deputy Commissioner (and East Falls resident) Seth Bluestein explains the changes that made the 2020 general election so contentious – and why there shouldn't have been such a fuss.

I suspect that most people find counting votes as exciting as watching paint dry. But it's an essential element in making sure our democratic republic functions properly.

And, says Deputy City Commissioner Seth Bluestein, the process can be interesting to follow. It certainly was for the supporters of ex-President Donald Trump who claimed massive fraud as well as for the supporters of President Joe Biden who dismissed those claims.

Another person who dismissed those claims was City Commissioner Al Schmidt. The lone Republican on the three-member city elections board, Schmidt appointed East Falls resident Bluestein to a deputy commissioner slot shortly after taking office in 2012. (Each of the three commissioners gets to appoint one or more deputies to assist with their work.) When Schmidt's chief deputy moved out of the city five years later, Bluestein was promoted to chief deputhings combined made it a

"Every election has aspects of it that are interesting," says Bluestein. "It's not as boring as some would think. But this election in particular was a different experience."

What made it different began in 2018. "For the first six years I worked in the commissioner's office, elections were pretty well established with their procedures; we had the Danaher voting machines that the city had been using since 2002."

In 2018, however, "Gov. [Tom] Wolf put out a mandate." The mandate required every one of the state's 67 counties to purchase voting machines that produced a paper record of each vote cast. That, in turn, required the city to obtain new certification of the machines from the state. It took a little primary election gave the more than a year for the machines to be purchased and certified; they were first used in the November 2019 city general election.

The other development that year that made this year's elections interesting was Act 77, a major revision of the state election code passed by the General Assembly. One of its biggest changes was the adoption of no-excuse absentee voting by mail.

"We had to implement a brand-new method of voting with no clear expectation of how many people would be interested in voting by mail," says Bluestein. "And then the pandemic hit. So you take brand-new voting machines and an election law and environment that no one had run an election in in rules on processing mail the last 100 years. Those challenging and interesting 2020."

something the General Assembly didn't change: when the mail-in ballots could be opened and counted, a process known as "canvassing." Many states



### NORTHWEST LOCAL FOR THE COUNT

that now make wide use of mail-in ballots allow election officials to open and even count mail ballots prior to Election Day.

#### Pennsylvania did not.

And the large number of mail ballots meant the preparation took longer. In previous elections, the city would receive no more than a few thousand absentee ballots — "maybe 10,000 in a presidential primary," says Bluestein. As the total was usually not enough to alter the outcome of a statewide election, mail ballots would not be opened for counting until the Friday after Election Day, by which time the machine counts had been certified.

Bluestein said that the May commissioners an idea of how many voters would choose the mail option. "We saw that about half the voters in the city voted by mail, and our expectation was that this would be the same" in November, he says. "But who those voters were not evenly distributed between supporters of President Trump and supporters of Vice President Biden." Like most outside observers, Bluestein attributes the discrepancy to Trump's actively discouraging his supporters from voting by mail, while by contrast, the Biden campaign encouraged it.

Thus, where in years past, 95 percent of the ballots were cast in person, less than a quarter of the total were cast in person this past November. That plus the ballots ensured it would take days for final tallies to be issued.

And the city had people Adding to the challenge was working full tilt to count the ballots. "We had a major operation at the Convention Center," says Bluestein. "We had staff working around the clock, 24/7, in three shifts, nearly 150 peo-

ple per shift. We worked from Tuesday morning until Friday night, nonstop." (The city did pause the count for a few hours on Wednesday while it appealed a state judge's ruling requiring canvass observers to stand closer to the counters.)

Because of the way the city processed the mail ballots, updated counts were released in batches. And after reporting the machine counts late Tuesday night, the next batch results were not released until 5:30 the next morning, leading Trump supporters to allege fraud.

Or worse. Schmidt told reporters he had received telephoned death threats while the count proceeded. "I did too," says Bluestein.

"Our job is to make sure that every validly cast vote from registered voters is counted, and that's what we were doing," Bluestein says of the post-election canvass. "It was unexpected, to say the least," he says of the death threats.

Bluestein had good things to say about the canvass observers. These are people chosen by each party to observe the counting of the votes; the parties submit lists of names in advance for approval by the commisvass observers from both sides were all very, very well behaved and very friendly," he says. A few observers forgot the rules against taking pictures or talking to the staff, but "overall, the rapport was pretty good and everyone was generally well behaved. Most of the complaints about the process for the observers came from individuals on the outside who weren't even present."

Even without a candidate agitating to have a legitimate count of ballots stopped, Bluestein says that changes need to be made in

the state's election code in order for widespread mail balloting to work properly. "A lot of the controversy surrounding the votecounting probably would have been mitigated with the ability to count, or even just open the envelopes, in advance of Election Day.

"Certainly the status quo is not going to be sustainable for large elections like the presidential election, or potentially the upcoming midterm election," he continues. "And whether it's three days of pre-canvassing or three weeks of precanvassing, the legislature certainly needs to consider alternatives to how it's currently structured."

Both Bluestein and his boss will no doubt have something to say about the changes. Schmidt announced that he would not seek re-election in 2023, and he made it clear that the threats he received from Trump supporters played no role in his decision. As for Bluestein, "I've been focused on preparing for the upcoming May primary and haven't begun to think about my plans for when his term ends in 2024."

Sandy Smith is the Germantown editor of The NW Local (nwlocalpaper.com). His interest in journalism sioners. "Generally, the can-stretches all the way back to high school, and he's been scribbling away ever since then, either in the field or in its hired-gun cousin, media relations. He currently runs the Real Estate & Home channel at Philadelphia magazine's website, phillymag.com. (You'll find his column on trends in real estate and design in the print edition.) He also writes a weekly column on transportation for Next City.

> Follow Sandy on <u>nwlocalpaper.com</u> and social media: Twitter: @MarketStEl Facebook: Writer-SandySmith

### MONTSERRAT: HOME OF THE BLACK IRISH OF THE CARIBBEAN



When you think of St. Patrick's Day what do you think of? You think of shamrocks, leprechauns, rainbows with pots 'o gold at the end, green beer, and of course the IRISH. Deep in the Caribbean sits a little gem. Montserrat, the other "Emerald Island" as it were called, has a rich history, and gives true meaning to "Black Irish." This gem sits about 25 miles southwest of Antigua. in the British West Indies. Part of the Leeward Islands is mostly unknown to the world.

Even the coastline resembles Ireland. Tall cliffs rising from the picturesque clear ocean may be compared to the famous Cliffs of Moher.

Montserrat got its moniker from none other than Christopher Columbus in 1497 A.D. Columbus named the island after a monastery in Spain.

The volcanic island, with a circumference of about 39.5 miles. It remained mostly uninhabited until the late 1600s when prominent businessmen came to the island to harvest sugar cane. And of course, slaves were an integral part of the cultivation and production process.

The Transatlantic slave trade did not discriminate. Nor did it deal in color. It dealt in slaves. And all creeds were a commodity.

Along with the African slaves that were brought to the island, others were being forced into servitude as well. In a day of religious prosecution, Oliver Cromwell's religious ethnic cleansing of the Roman Catholics in Ireland imprisoned and enslaved over 100,000 people. Indentured servants from the neighboring Island of St. Kitt. and fugitives from the new colonies in North American were amongst the "enslaved" workforce. Both Irish and African slaves labored side by side. Exchanging myths, cultures, religion, and respect between their people. As a result of their servitude, they formed such a bond, such a strong community that interracial marriage was not frowned upon but encouraged. Producing a beautiful, blended people who even speak Gaelic (Irish language).

If you were to look at the census of the island today, you will see more than half of the population's surnames are of Irish lineage. Names like O'Haloran, Doyle, McLaughlin. Today Montserrat remains a hidden Caribbean prize at the end of a rainbow, rich in both land and people. Simple goat farmers and local merchants who are fast to welcome vou to their home like your family. With green, orange, and white as their banner colors and love in their hearts, they

celebrate their beloved her-

itage.

On March 17, 1768 A.D., as the plantation owners were "drowning their shamrocks" with rum, getting proper drunk as they celebrated St. Patrick's Day, a band of renegade slaves planned a revolt.

Unfortunately, they were betrayed, and the masters were told of their plan. Their failed uprising was not a failure at all. For they were to gain freedom from their captors.

They honor their ancestors on St. Patrick's Day with celebration. Locals dress up

sewn together MacGuyver style, are proudly worn. Masks cover their faces, homage to their ancestors who covered their faces when mimicking their master's drunken shenanigans. The day starts with a freedom run to honor the brave souls who died for their truths and ends with a street fair serving beer, potatoes, and all Irish and island traditional dishes. Many have fallen in love with this oasis over the years. The manager for the Beatles, George Martin, had a quaint recording studio on the island. Inviting artists such and Sting, The Police, Eric Clapton, Phil Collins, and the Rolling Stones to record their albums.

in traditional costumes,

In 1997, the continually active volcano, Soufriere Hills erupted. The devastation was so fierce some even compared it to the Mount Saint Helen eruption of 1980. The pyroclastic flow and plumes of ash devastated the inhabitants. Taking out the Capitol, Plymouth, and most of the north side of the island.

Many recording artists came together and performed a benefit concert to send mon-

ey and aid to the hard-hit island.

The people of Montserrat were and still are Freedomloving people willing to fight for said freedom. Ignoring the color of each other's skin they embrace their past and honor their ancestors and their heritage. A local was quoted as saying "Here it is impossible to be racist when you know that somewhere in your background you have relatives that are white and Irish. There'd be less racial tension worldwide if people could relate to each other the way we do in Montserrat."

This small island will welcome you like you were family and even stamp your passport with a shamrock. Crystal blue waters, private beaches, and many nature trails to explore is a perfect "reality check" from today's turbulent times.

By Alana Lukens, Editor Photo Courtesy of Montserrat Dept of Tourism



### UPTOWN'S BLACK DENIRO ACTOR, WRITER, DIRECTOR, AND ARTIST



We were lucky enough in front of his mind. the midst of yet another movie to catch up with Philly's own Black Deniro, to talk music, movies, and even the importance of being a father.

"It was always music," Philly native and overall creator Black Deniro says he was fascinated much like everyone at the time with the culture of hip-hop. Run DMC and Big Daddy Kane were his biggest influencers at the time. "My mom made sure I had every Adidas Sweatsuit and Shelltops."

His mom also gifted him with his first rap name "JFP" to comfort a young Black Deniro who knew that he wanted to rap very early in life.

3 years later the crack epidemic hit hard. Black Deniro was now in foster care and separated from his family. While going through the system the dream of being a rapper was still alive but surviv-

High School is where his love for music was once again back on full display. He met Doc Holiday as well as started to get nods from artists such as Beanie Sigel and Gillie the Kid who saw his talent.

"I still wasn't taking it seriously." Admits Deniro who wasn't officially given his name until 1999.

In 2005 the grind and lyrics of Black Deniro would wow all those who After the success of the heard him. "Gillie and Sigel would take me to the side and tell me I had talent."

At that time in Philly lyrics reign supreme and the chypers that Black Deniro would go to showed how his wordplay had evolved to become a threat in the rap game and set him apart.

In 2005 Black Deniro also released his hit sining was more at the fore- gle "Superman" right be- car at restaurants and

fore Soulja Boy. That is what made him an instant hit and helped him build a home at Power 99. From 05-to 2010 Black Deniro wasn't fully focused on music despite all the success he had during that time. Many of these things will be addressed and more in his upcoming documentary titled "Philly's Most Underrated."

In 2010 was when he found love for another passion that he would pursue directing.

"I look at myself as a writer, not a rapper, an actor, or anything else. I am a hustler. I always wanted to be the best."

as an extension of an album he released, the DVD was entitled "More 2 Da Story." He instantly started getting calls from Philly's elite about how amazing the film was.

This was way before the time of social media or any mainstream outlets that would allow for the production to be seen by a wider audience. Without the major networks "More 2 Da Story" which can be found on Youtube gained 11 million views.

first video, it was on to "Brush" the first fulllength movie. Black Deniro was able to hustle and grind to make his movie something that would earn him not only a profit but a name as a director as well.

"My grind was impeccable, I remember driving around different parts (of the country) promoting the movie." He remembers jumping out of the

neighborhoods to tell people about his film. After a year he with his hard work and hustle was able to earn well over \$7,000,

Next came "Backfire," which was picked up by Netflix, "Once I got that type of check it was a wrap."

Next, up is the new film that will be coming out soon is "Jennie," inspired by a conversation that was overheard at a birthday party. About a young college girl who despites her looks is more than what meets the eye.

"This concept has never been done before," ensures Dinero who is ex-His first production came cited about the upcoming project.

> Black Deniro indeed has a ton of roles to fill but his most important role is a father.

> "I salute the fathers that are out here doing their thing." Black Deniro makes sure among all the success that he is a vital part of his children's lives; they have been with him on interviews, on set and can also be seen in every film that he has done.

We appreciate Black Deniro for taking time out to talk to Black Philadelphia as he continues to represent the culture of hip-hop and shows the importance of the grind.

By Andre Brown Photo Courtesy of Black Dniro

#### COOKING W/EATIBLE'S DAVID SIMMS CHICKEN MARSALA WITH PORTOBELLO MUSHROOMS

#### **INGREDIENTS:**

- 30 Boneless Chicken Breast
- Thawed, cleaned, sliced length wise in half.
- Eatible Delights Seasoning
- 4 oz Dried Parsley
- 2 lbs of butter
- ½ gallon of Marsala Wine
- 1 guart of half and half
- 4 whole Portobello Mushrooms
- 2 tbsp of chicken base
- 1 tbsp of beef base
- 1 red onion (large) (Julianne
- ½ cup of crushed garlic
- 1 cup of flour 1 cup of oil

#### PREPARATION:

Preheat oil in pan.

Season generously both sides of chicken with EDC seasoning. Dust chicken lightly with flour and fry to a light golden (not completely done). Place on paper towels to soak oil.

In saucepan melt butter add onion, garlic and Marsala wine bring to a simmer. Then add chicken and beef base and return to a simmer. Then whisk in the half and half cream bring to a boil turn down to a simmer for ten (10) minutes. Then add in parsley and mushrooms simmer for two (2) minutes.

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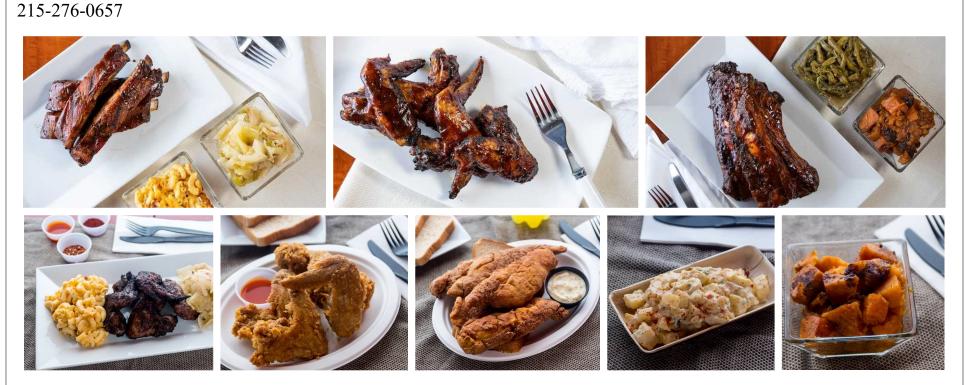
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### CITY COUNCIL ANNOUNCES \$1M IN ARTS AND CULTURE GRANTS





As per the New Normal Budget, City Council has given a \$1M grant to be distributed to individual artists, mid-size nonprofits, and small businesses. The "Illuminate the Arts' grant will be administered through the Office of the Arts, Culture, and the Creative Economy.

"The Illuminate the Arts Grants make a necessary investment to Philadelphia's to the arts community." arts, culture, and nightlife sectors," said Councilmem-

ber Isaiah Thomas. "When the city fully opens up, arts and culture will drive people to the city. We can't keep saving the arts, we have to start illuminating the arts as the economic drivers and job creators that they've always been. With a focus on individual artists, mid-size nonprofits and small businesses - the Illuminate the Arts grants seek to send an overdue lifeline

On Thursday, February 25,

hind this grant, Councilmembers Isaiah Thomas and Katherine Gilmore Richardson introduced a transfer ordinance of \$1.3 to be allocated with input from the Arts and Culture Task Force as well as the art and culture community.

Requirements, along with an application process, is said to meet the needs of the arts community and efficiently provide relief during the pandemic as we all transition to a 'new normal." "City Council has worked diligently, under the leadership of Council President Clarke, to respond directly to community needs throughout the Covid-19 pandemic," said Councilmember Katherine Gilmore Richardson. "Through the Disadvantaged Communities Task Force, Councilmember Thomas and I were able to hear from community members about the

2021, The creative team be-challenges that were most severe and work collaboratively to find solutions. Today, with funding from the New Normal Budget Act, we are excited to be able to invest directly in arts and culture, a sector that has been deeply impacted as a result of the pandemic." Grants are expected to officially open mid-March. Announcements concerning the grant application process will be posted on the OOACCE website. All are encouraged to visit the site for further information at www.creativephl.org

> By Alana Lukens, Editor Photo Courtesy of PHLCouncil.com



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### CONGRESSMAN DWIGHT EVANS ENDORSES CONTROLLER REBECCA RHYNHART



The Philadelphia Primary elections are closely approaching (Tuesday, May 18th, 2021) and On February 24, Congressman Dwight Evens enthusiastically endorsed the current Controller of Philadelphia, Rebecca Rhynhart, for reelection to the office. "In her first term as Controller. Rebecca Rhynhart has shown bold leadership in her approach to being the Chief Financial Watchdog for the City of Philadelphia. She has not shied away



from the issues facing Philadelphians and has used her office to contribute to solutions to our city's most pressing problems, most notably gun violence," Said Congressman Evans. "In a time of uncertainty, she has used transparency and data as tools to re-enforce the public's trust in government and identify ways that the city can work more efficiently and effectively to serve all Philadelphians. I look forward to continuing to work with Controller

Rhynhart and enthusiastical- delphia's neighborhoods ly endorse her for a second term."

Rhynhart is the current Con- to move Philadelphia fortroller of the City of Philadelphia. Throughout her term, Rhynhart has utilized her time wisely and effectively.

Controller Rhynhart has been committed to being the financial watchdog for the Philadelphia tax-payer. Standing on a proven platform of transparency, Rhynhart's approach held accountability.

Controller Rebecca Rhynhart is hoping for re-election Her emphasis on conducting and Congressman Dwight Evens' endorsement is a boost to her hopes.

"I am grateful to Congressman Evans for his endorsement, particularly because of his commitment to strengthening all of Philaand communities," said Controller Rebecca Rhynhart. "I believe the best way ward is to have our elected officials come together and work with community leaders to ensure Philadelphians' needs are met. Philadelphians want to see a positive change in how their government operates and officials like Congressman Evans work every day to create that change. I am honored to have his support and to partner with him to develop solutions for Philadelphia's most pressing issues."

financial and performance audits has ensured the taxpayer's money is being allocated to where it could be most effective.

Other issues that Controller Rhynhart stands behind include racial equity and di-

versity and help shed light on the impact gun violence has on the city's residence as well as its financial asnect.

If re-elected, she and the Controller's office will continue to use digital mapping and other digital tools to inform the community. These tools have helped keep the public more accurately informed, making all findings easily accessible.

By Alana Lukens, Editor Photo Courtesy of Phila.Gov and Congress.Gov

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### COUNCILMEMBER CURTIS JONES POLICE OVERSIGHT COMMISSION IS FINALLY A REALITY



Being part of the solution requires men and women of action. No one said this would be easy. Nor a road without trial and error. But how do you make progress without taking initiative? Many have stood up against injustice. Many have paid with their freedom and unfortunately, their lives. It is incredibly uplifting so many have found their voices and choose to make a stand, no matter what that stand is or

issue which has been swept under the radar for far too long. From the dark comes light. And we must embrace our voices and say no more excuses...we NEED solutions.

Councilmember Curtis Jones, Jr., is on the solution fast track. On Thursday, February 16, 2021, Councilmember Jones introduced legislation to let the community to represent a more active role in enforcing accountability and policing procedures.

As of now there is a Police Advisory Board. This board operates only on an advisory basis with the Philadelphia Police Department. And only advising on policies and procedures.

for. Civil unrest is indeed an Councilmember Jones' legislation introduced a Citizen Police Oversight Commission to replace the existing Police Advisory Board. The Commission will be allowed a more "hands On" approach.

> "the purpose of the Citizens Police Oversight Commission legislation is three-fold - to restore public confidence, to provide a fair and equitable process of citizens' complaints, and to create better police community interactions." Jones said.

Jones, Council's Majority Whip, introduced this legislation as a bold answer to the unrest and call for change. Not only will the new commission receive and investigate public complaints against the police but the public to view. it may suggest disciplinary

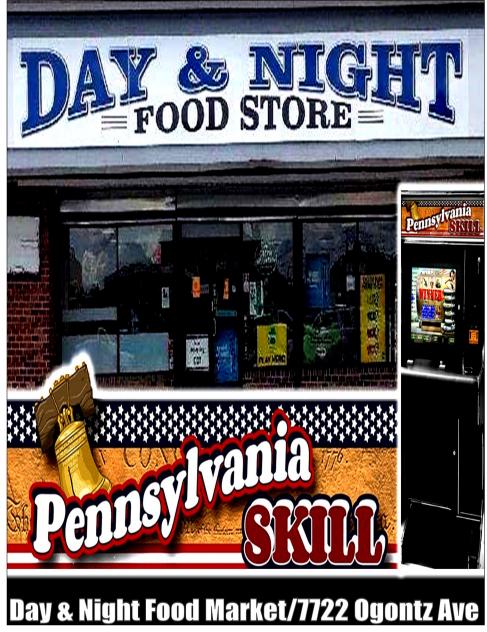
and policy recommendations to the department. The legislation purposed the forward to working with to allow the commission the authority to review and oversee incidences where an mission with real teeth to officer discharges a weapon, conduct appropriate oversomeone dies or is seriously injured while police are present along with allowance to review limited interdepartmental complaints against fellow police employees. Allowing direct access to all pertinent documents, interviews, and crime scene evidence as applicable.

Not only will it be allowed to issue witness subpoenas but hold the authority to enforce strict disciplinary actions to departments who provide false information or PHLCouncil;.com refuse to cooperate in an investigation. All will findings and reviews are to be posted on the website for

"The legislation is a good starting point, and I look Councilmember Jones to create a vigorous, fair comsight of the police department," said Council President Darrell L. Clarke (5th District).

For those of the public who wish to be a part of this proposed commission, applications would be reviewed by a selection panel. How that panel will be selected is to be determined.

By Alana Lukens, Editor Photo Courtesy of





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