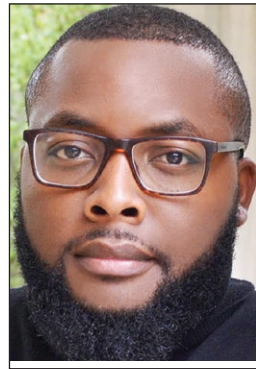




## Head Start classes relocating from Shorter site

See Page 4



## TU appoints J. William Nicholas new band director

See Page 6



# The Tuskegee News

'Tis better to light a candle than to curse the darkness'

Volume 158, Number 16

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75 Cents

## Dr. Michele Wright returns home as TU graduation speaker

By GUY RHODES  
Editor/Publisher

Dr. Michele Wise Wright, Ph.D.'s impressive life journey that began in Tuskegee will add another chapter when she returns to her hometown as one of the graduation speakers for the 2022 Commencement exercises at Tuskegee University.

She will deliver the address for the Tuskegee University Graduate and Professional Schools commencement on Saturday, April 30, at 9:30 a.m. in the Chappie James Arena on the TU campus.

Dr. Wright also served as the keynote speaker for Tuskegee University's 2015 Order of the Engineer Spring commencement ceremony when First Lady Michelle Obama was that year's commencement speaker.

Dr. Wright holds a Bachelor of Science degree in

Electrical Engineering from Tuskegee University, where she was Miss United Negro College Fund, Miss Engineering, President of the Engineering Representative Council, and graduated as Electrical Engineering Student of the Year at TU in 1990.

While at Tuskegee she was also a Martin Marietta Cooperative Education Student and Scholar, a Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges nominee (1989), Outstanding Young Woman of America (1989), and a National Collegiate Engineering Award winner (1990). She is a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority.

**Born at John Andrew Hospital**, the daughter of Frankie Berry Wise and Garland Wise — who still live in Tuskegee — Dr. Wright graduated

(See DR. WRIGHT, P. 9)



Tuskegee native Dr. Michele Wise Wright will speak at one of Tuskegee University's graduation ceremonies.



Photo courtesy Shaka Long

**Macon County Schools Superintendent Dr. Melissa Williams, left, accepts the keys to a Hyundai Santa Fe from Krista Hawkins of Hyundai, which built the Santa Fe at its plant in Hope Hull near Montgomery. The vehicle will be used for study by students at the Career Tech Center.**

## Hyundai donates Santa Fe to Career Tech

On Friday, April 8, Hyundai donated a Santa Fe to the Macon County Schools' Career Tech Center.

The vehicle is disabled for driving and will be used for students to learn the intricacies of the Santa Fe — including how to dismantle and reassemble it.

Representatives of Hyundai and Macon County schools participated in the event.



Photo of Santa Fe donated to Career Tech

## Changes to Macon Commission Districts' after Census announced

By GUY RHODES  
Editor/Publisher

Some Macon County voters will find themselves in new Commission Districts after the 2020 Census was conducted resulting in some shifts.

According to Macon County Commission Chairman Louis Maxwell about 500 total voters will be impacted.

Realignment of the districts was done by the South Central Alabama Development (SCAD) Commission.

**Maxwell said there are no are no changes** involving District 4, which is up for election in 2022. That seat is currently vacant following the death of Commissioner Mike Berry on March 14.

Berry had qualified to run for reelection prior to his death. He had no Democratic opposition for the May 22 Primary and no Republican qualified for the Primary and there won't be a Republican on the General Election ballot in November.

The Macon County Democratic Party Executive Committee is in the process of taking applications to place a nominee for the District 4 Commission seat on the General Election ballot in November.

The changes to the Districts are

as follows:

**District 1 cedes** to District 2: South side of Hunter Street between Notasulga Road and Railroad Avenue; Dudley Street; Geneva Street; and the north side of New York Street.

**District 1 cedes** to District 3: South of Washington Avenue from Adams Street to Franklin Road; South of Franklin Road from Washington Avenue to Green Street; West side of Green Street;

Gregory Street from Green Street intersection to the west; North of Montgomery Road from Clark Avenue to Adams Street; East of Adams Street from Montgomery Road to Washington Avenue;

Streets within these boundaries include: Scott Street, Logan Street, Clark Avenue, Penny Street, Taylor Street, Calloway Street, Logan Street (not all of these streets have changed, just the portion of these streets within the boundary described above).

**District 1 cedes** to District 2: South of Old Montgomery Road from Fonville Street to Main Street; West of Main Street from Old Montgomery Road to Church Street; North

(See DISTRICTS, P. 6)

## Tuskegee's 'Lady K' advances on American Idol

Praise was flowing Sunday night on a three-hour episode of "American Idol," as the Top 20 singers were revealed.

Three contestants from Alabama — Tristen Gressett, Cadence Baker and Kezia "Lady K" Istonia of Tuskegee — made the cut as the list of hopefuls was trimmed from the Top 24. All of the Alabama singers received an abundant share of kudos, thrilling the judges with their performances on the ABC reality series.

Here's the breakdown.

### KEZIA "LADY K" ISTONIA

Where's she from: Grew up in Montgomery, lives in Tuskegee.

What she sang: "Love on the Brain" by Rihanna. Lionel Richie said: "You have shown us all what faith is, what compassion is, what spirit is. Thank you so much for your lesson, Lady K."

Katy Perry said: "I looked over there, and I was like: Why is Rihanna here? What? Holy crap, that's Lady K. And then I heard you sing that



"Lady K"

here, you sang the song like you sing it. That's what we try to tell people to do all the time, and you're doing it from your heart, and you're doing it naturally and it's working. Congrats on being in the Top 20."

(See AMERICAN IDOL, P. 6)

song, and I was like: Oh, my God, she got access to the treasure chest. You were just building, building and you are beautiful inside and out. And now you get to play and shine like the goddess that you always have been."

Luke Bryan said: "What I was really most impressed with is, you didn't get over-singy on that. You just came out

## Commission establishes fees for use of recreation centers

By GUY RHODES  
Editor/Publisher

Fees have been established for use of Community Centers operated by the Macon County Commission. The fees will be effective May 1, 2022.

The fees were approved by the Commission during its April 11 regular monthly meeting. The Commission also approved some hires for the Sheriff Department, an Alcohol Beverage

(See FEES, P. 6)



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## Dr. Wright (From Page 1)

from Tuskegee Institute High School in 1984 before entering TU.

As for returning as the first Black female commencement speaker who was raised in Tuskegee, Dr. Wright is thrilled with the opportunity.

"There is no place like home, because home is where the heart resides. My birthplace of Tuskegee, Alabama is an irreplaceable piece of my humble roots and DNA," Dr. Wright stated.

"As a native Tuskegeean, I am always grateful for the gift of returning to Mother Tuskegee to spend treasured time with my parents and loved ones. As a Tuskegee Alumna, I am ecstatic and most honored for the opportunity to once again come back to my beloved alma mater as a 2022 commencement speaker.

"Tuskegee has and will forever remain an integral part of not only who I once was and am, but the best of who I still dare to be. Because, the BEST is still yet to come!!!"

Professor Marshall Cabiness-Washington Abuwi, the great grandson of Booker T. Washington, said the following about Dr. Wright's speaking for the commencement.

"Booker T. Washington did not found the Tuskegee Normal School. Lewis Adams and the other community builders founded the Tuskegee Normal School. Booker T. Washington founded the Tuskegee Normal School and Industrial Institute with a vision to make former slaves and their descendants captains of industry," Abuwi pointed out.

"That is the vision that will forever establish Tuskegee as the pre-eminent industrial training center for people of color. Dr. Michele Wise Wright is the embodiment of that vision alongside President Dr. Charlotte Morris and Trustee Norma Clayton."

**Dr. Wright's professional credentials** range across the spectrum, including being the 2022 USA Today's Woman of the Year for the State of Arkansas where she and her husband, Terry Wright, reside in North Little Rock.

The annual USA Today Women of the Year program is a continuation of Women of the Century, a 2020 project that commemorated the 100th anniversary of women gaining the right to vote.

The following comes from information published about Dr. Wright being a speaker at TU and from USA Today.

Dr. Wright is the recipient of the Nations of Women Change Makers 2021 Global Leadership Award and a nominee of the EveryLife Foundation of Rare Diseases' RareVoice 2021 Award for Diversity Empowerment.

She is the President and Board Chair of the Milton Pitts Crenshaw Aviation Training Academy (MPCATA), an organization — named in honor of late Tuskegee Airman Milton Pitts Crenshaw — with a mission to provide young people opportunities to pursue careers in aviation and the aerospace industry.

In addition, she is also the writer, director, and producer of the 2022 Black Reels Awards and multiple global award-winning docudrama, "54 Years Late."

Dr. Wright is a multi-dimensional senior executive with experience providing dynamic leadership in diverse roles, including pharmaceutical/biotechnology sales, healthcare administration, and business development to Fortune 100 companies and an international non-profit organiza-

tion.

She is the CEO and Founder of My Water Buddy® and My Learning Buddy® corporations. She is the author and creator of THE WATER TALES: Ten Life Lessons from My Water Buddy and Family children's book and podcast and has authored Social-Emotional and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) edutainment curriculums.

With advanced degrees in engineering and public policy, she is fully committed to diversity and inclusion, emphasizing health equity. She has championed a diverse range of health equity initiatives as the Co-Founder, Board Chair, and Senior Executive Director of the National Organization of African Americans with Cystic Fibrosis (NOAACF).

**Through widespread involvement,** partnerships, engagement, and outreach, under her leadership, NOAACF has strategically helped to ensure that communities of people who are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) are well informed of cystic fibrosis' (CF) existence, prevalence, and impact on underrepresented communities.

Dr. Wright co-founded and co-chairs the annual Blacks, Indigenous, and Other Minority Ethnicities with Rare and Genetic Diseases (BIOMERGD) Conference.

A yearly event hosted by NOAACF, BIOMERGD coincides with Rare Disease Day and Black History Month, with a mission to help increase awareness of rare diseases in BIPOC communities by focusing on one genetic illness and one rare disease each year.

She also created and led the national development of The Wright Cystic Fibrosis Screening Tool© — in both patient and provider versions and English and Spanish translations — to help people self-identify symptoms that could be related to CF, as well as help medical providers identify people who may have CF, especially those who are BIPOC.

Simultaneously, Dr. Wright developed and launched the Advocating for Health Equity and Addressing Disparities© (AHEAD) Initiative with a mission to increase awareness of health disparities in minority and underserved communities and to introduce a successful roadmap and advancement strategies toward achieving health equity in healthcare, clinical treatment, medical diagnosis, and clinical trials across a multitude of disadvantaged populations.

She has worked with several top-ranked corporations, including Genentech Biotechnology Company, Novartis Pharmaceuticals, Pfizer Pharmaceuticals, and The Procter & Gamble Company.

Dr. Wright has also served with the American Red Cross as Chief Executive Officer of the Greater Ozarks-Arkansas Region (GOAR).

**In addition to her undergraduate** degree from Tuskegee, Dr. Wright holds a Ph.D. in Public Policy from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville, with a double specialization in Health and Leadership Policy; and a Master of Science degree from the University of Tennessee Space Institute (UTSI), where she chartered the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE) and was UTSI's first African American full-time

student to earn a Master's degree in Engineering Management/Industrial Engineering.

Wise initiated the publication of UTSI's first yearbook, SYNERGY, of which she was the editor-in-chief and in 1990-91 and was a finalist in the "Miss Black Tennessee Pageant."

Much of Dr. Wright's career revolves around the story of her husband and their years of unknowingly struggling with cystic fibrosis which is the subject of her film, "54 Years Late." The film was one of five nominees for outstanding short film at the 2022 Black Reel Awards and has received more than 50 accolades from various film festivals and competitions.

"His story is so important," Wright says.

She met Terry Wright on a blind date on Nov. 1, 1999.

Doctors had not suspected Terry Wright had cystic fibrosis. The disease is relatively rare among African American people. She describes living through 17 years of "medical hell" that would include trips to emergency rooms, days, weeks, and nights in hospitals.

With his diagnosis, she has become an advocate for diagnosing and living with rare diseases, particularly in diverse communities.

She is the co-founder and chair of the non-profit National Organization of African Americans with Cystic Fibrosis.

Dr. Wright does not fit the mold of the highly intelligent person. She is very outgoing. She is not shy and has no interest in being the type of engineer or innovator that is locked in a think-tank. She wants to be with people and to interact with them as much as possible.

**Dr. Wright told USA Today** that she credits her parents for their impact on her life.

"They were there for me from the very beginning and have never left my side," she noted.

"I would never forget my mother, Frankie Berry Wise, grabbing my hand at the age of sixteen to take me to Burger King in Tuskegee to encourage me to begin my career at the earliest time possible, nor her jumping on a neighbor's bike to help me turn in a mandatory engineering school assignment with minutes to spare."

"Likewise, I will forever be appreciative of my father, Garland Wise, for filling out my engineering scholarship application so that I could become an electrical engineer in lieu of a solid gold dancer. I will also deeply treasure him driving me 6 to 7 hours to and from Oak Ridge, Tennessee every other semester so that I could co-op with Martin Marietta as part of the same engineering cooperative education scholarship that my dad helped me to secure," she continues.

"Three decades ago, my dad wisely told me, 'If I have seen at all and done any actions worthwhile or made any contributions, it was because I appreciated, respected, and emulated the legacies of my forebears, and was motivated enough to stand on their shoulders.'

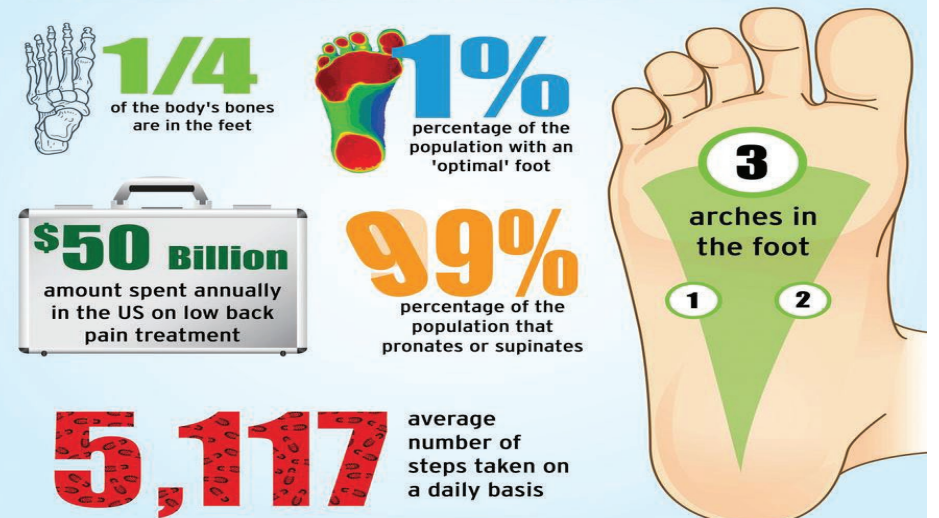
"How honored, grateful, and humbled am I to still have my parents and to stand on both of their shoulders as well as the shoulders of the many trailblazers who helped to pave the road I traveled as I continue to prepare for others to stand on my own shoulders."

Dr. Wright's life mantra is "The Best Is Yet to Come." She plans to expand towards helping and positively impacting children, women, and underrepresented populations worldwide.

### REVENUE COMMISSION MACON COUNTY CORRECTION TO TAX LIEN SALE NAME CORRECTION OR DELETION FROM LIST

08 07 25 4 001 061.000	HARRISON ERNEST (INCORRECT NAME) GLENN GERALD AND FALONA (CORRECT NAME)	527.24
13 01 12 0 000 002.001	GRICE JONGIELENE (REMOVED FROM LIST)	1035.39
10 08 33 0 000 010.000	MACON COUNTY GREYHOUND PARK (REMOVED FROM LIST)	3445.22
13 02 04 0 000 001.000	MACON COUNTY GREYHOUND PARK (REMOVED FROM LIST)	5896.30
13 06 13 0 000 004.000	MACON COUNTY GREYHOUND PARK (REMOVED FROM LIST)	108.56
10 08 34 0 000 006.000	MACON COUNTY GREYHOUND PARK (REMOVED FROM LIST)	173968.53
10 08 34 0 000 002.001	HOWARD DESIEV & HENRIETTA N (REMOVED FROM LIST)	584.85

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