

Formerly African American Family

# B.L.A.C.

Black Life, Arts & Culture

DETROIT

**BLACK  
CIVIL WAR  
SOLDIERS  
BURIED IN  
DETROIT**

B.L.A.C. EXCLUSIVE

**PEARL CLEAGE**  
REFLECTS ON  
FAMILY LOVE

# THE LIFE OF **JOHN LEGEND**

(DON'T MISS **LEGEND LIVE**  
FEB. 25—SEE PAGE 3)

**HAKI MADHUBUTI**  
ON **BOOKS,**  
**BLACK**  
**POWER**  
AND HIS  
BRILLIANT WIFE

**PLOWSHARES  
THEATRE  
COMPANY**  
CELEBRATES  
20 YEARS  
OF DRAMA

**ALBERT CLEAGE'S  
REVOLUTIONARY  
LEGACY**  
A DECADE AFTER  
HIS DEATH





## Honoring Smokey

By Craig Emonds

For more than 50 years, Smokey Robinson has entertained the world. This month, a one-hour documentary, "An Evening with Smokey Robinson," will explore the life of the Motown legend.

"Every year, The HistoryMakers, a Chicago-based archive, stages a fundraising evening with a prominent African-American achiever," says PBS-TV veteran journalist Gwen Ifill, who conducted the documentary's one-on-one interview. "We talked about his career, his hit songs, and the journey from Detroit to international renown—basically his

role as the man who has written the soundtrack for so many of our lives."

Musical tributes are performed by Howard Hewett, Teena Marie and Musiq Soulchild. Former Motown executive Suzanne de Passe serves as mistress of ceremonies.

The HistoryMakers, the nation's largest African-American history archive, produced the program. It airs locally on Feb. 20 at 11 p.m. on WTVS.

[TheHistoryMakers.com](http://TheHistoryMakers.com)

## Buried History

By Ilissa Gilmore

Cemeteries are usually thought of as places to grieve, but this Black History Month, one Detroit cemetery is also a site for education and celebration.

Established in 1846, the 86-acre Elmwood Historic Cemetery serves as the final resting place for Detroit history makers of all races. According to Executive Director Joan Capuano, unlike the tours offered year round, the Black history tour specifically highlights African Americans, such as State Sen. Cora Brown, museum founder Charles H. Wright and Mayor Coleman Young. "It's our pleasure to share their stories," she

says.

What makes the cemetery's tours unique, says Capuano, is that they are unscripted, allowing for dialogue between guides and visitors.

Particularly significant is the memorial to members of the Civil War's 102nd Michigan Colored Infantry. Twenty-six generals and 16 soldiers, including the 10-year-old drummer who led them into battle, are entombed in land purchased by the state. Elmwood honors the soldiers and their families frequently with re-enactments and dedications.

Tour guide Allen Barksdale says one little-known fact about

the soldiers is that they were all illiterate. They had enlisted to learn to read and write.

Barksdale says that due to cold weather conditions and the length of the tour—one and a half miles—he suggested a bus tour would be best for patrons. Visitors can get off at stops to get a closer look at sites, if they wish.

The tour takes place Feb. 10 at 10 a.m. Reservations are required.

1200 Elmwood Ave.,  
Detroit, 313-567-3453,  
[ElmwoodHistoricCemetery.org](http://ElmwoodHistoricCemetery.org)

## Sexy's Back

By James Herriott

Danielle Green, a 25-year-old Detroit native, wanted to get in shape after the birth of her first child. She started pole dancing and, after taking classes, soon began instructing women herself.

Due to demand, she launched Vixen Fitness Studio in Detroit in 2007, and she launched a second studio in Ypsilanti in 2009. The grand opening of her new, bigger Detroit studio takes place Feb. 1.

"When women feel good about themselves, it helps their relationships," says Green. The greatest satisfaction for Green is the boost in self-esteem her classes give, and she is achieving her goal of helping women get fit.

Vixen Fitness offers other classes like yoga and zumba. Clients can also schedule instructional parties in their homes, and 10 couples can sign up for a special Valentine's Day class—a lap dance workshop—at the Detroit location.

866-900-9797,  
[VixenFitness.net](http://VixenFitness.net), Detroit:  
3434 Russell St., Suite 308.  
Ypsilanti: 1795 Washtenaw Rd.

