



Photo by Arthur Mack/Call News

Local activist Chris “Champ” Napier, right, signs a copy of his latest book, “Servant of the People,” for Dr. Demetrius Semien during a book signing on April 21 at the Mobile Arts Council.

NOT A STATISTIC

Champ Napier wants to be ‘noble example’ that former inmates can overcome the odds

BY ARTHUR L. MACK
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Local activist Chris “Champ” Napier said he hopes his book about serving a nearly 15-year prison sentence for first-degree murder will encourage people to make the right choices and steer away from gun violence.

Napier, who hosted a book signing at the Mobile Arts Council on April 21, said his book, “Servant of the People,” tells his story on the other side of redemption.

“I have fought with all my passion, my might and my anger and frustration to change the narrative,” he said. “Not only am I fighting against becoming a statistic of the Alabama Department of Corrections, I’m fighting for the change and using all my expertise and past experiences to fight using non-violence and reduce gun violence in my community and decrease the recidivism rate.

“People who have served a long time in prison, they don’t get out and be successful. I want to be a shining and noble example that we can overcome the statistics facing us.”

Napier also wrote a book entitled

“Poverty and Prison” about his life while growing up in poverty in Prichard and his involvement with selling drugs. He is currently a client advocate for the Mobile County Public Defender’s Office, a board member for the Mobile Area Interfaith Committee and a member of the leadership team for Faith in Action Alabama (Mobile).

Napier said he wrote “Servant of the People” in one year and described it as a short, fast read that provided him therapy.

“When I’m angry, I write,” he said. “When I’m lonely, or going through something depressing, I write. ... I’ve gotten so many positive vibes and people have been telling me this is a must read. ... If society doesn’t embrace the ideas I have in this book, it’s our community’s loss, not mine. My vision has been bigger than crowd participation. As the Scriptures say, ‘Without a vision, the people will perish,’ so I’m sticking wholly and firmly to my vision to change the conditions in our community.”

Mobile Metro Jail chaplain Allen Singleton said all prisoners need a good example and should see some-

one overcome their trials, tribulations and history.

“I think (Napier) will be able to give these guys a positive mindset about their future,” Singleton said. “Chris has been a volunteer at the jail and he has had a positive impact on some of the guys who are there. I hope to get the book to some of the guys at Metro and let them read it so they can get inspired and motivated from a guy who has been through what they’ve been through, how he got transformed and got his life back on track, so to give them motivation, grace and inspiration so they can do the same thing.

“I always tell them just because you’re in jail, you don’t have to have a jailhouse mentality. I tell them to come up with a plan while you’re here so when you get out, you have something to do. This book is an example of a guy who has been incarcerated and made some bad decisions but didn’t let the consequences of those choices dictate his future. He let that motivate him to get his life back on track and now he has the opportunity to show where he was at and help them get their life back on track.”

Citronelle seniors host spring dance

STAFF REPORT
www.thecallnews.com

Citronelle seniors will host a spring dance April 30 to help raise funds for senior center programs.

The event at the city’s senior center on Mobile Street will begin at 6 p.m. and doors will open at 5:45 p.m., center officials said.

Kenny Reid and the Working Man

Band will provide entertainment. Admission is \$5 and attendees can also purchase a hot dog, chips, drink and dessert for \$5.

For information, call 251-866-5047.

Mount Vernon police plan checkpoint

STAFF REPORT
www.thecallnews.com

Mount Vernon police will conduct a public safety checkpoint Friday on Military Road, police chief Duncan Herrington said.

“There may be additional locations selected during the day,” Herrington said. “This is a program that we are conducting in an effort to make our streets safer and better for our citizens.”

Mount Vernon Police officers will check motorists for a current driver’s license, vehicle insurance, prior use of seat belts and other safety issues, according to Herrington.

Driver License Offices are again open for business

STAFF REPORT
www.thecallnews.com

MONTGOMERY — Tuesday, April 26, marks the grand reopening of The Alabama Law Enforcement Agency’s (ALEA) Driver License Offices. The reopening signifies and represents the successful migration of the previous decades old system into the new Alabama Law Enforcement Agency Driver License System, simply known as LEADS.

“What an amazing accomplishment,” ALEA Secretary Hal Taylor said. “This is only the beginning of ALEA’s overall initiative to utilize technology to advance and provide enhanced quality service for the citizens of our great state. However, I would be remised, if I did not showcase the hard work and dedication of all the employees within the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency, especially those within the Driver License and Information Technology Divisions, who turned this vision into a reality. I would also like to highlight the innovation and commitment of both Colonel Jimmy Helms and Driver License Division Chief Jonathan Archer, if not for their steadfast leadership this endeavor would never have been made possible.”

Driver License Division Chief Jonathan Archer stated, “Now that the system transfer is complete a host of new options are live and active within LEADS. Citizens will have the ability to access a variety of new options and enhanced services such as allowing individuals the ability to pre-apply for the Alabama Driver License and enter all necessary information pri-

or to visiting a local office. This is a new feature that we feel if used by citizens will make a tremendous difference for our Driver License Examiners’ capability to provide improved quality service.”

“We must share this achievement with Governor Ivey and all members of the Legislature for their continued support of this project as well as our Agency. If not for them providing ALEA with the necessary resources we would have never been able to complete this monumental and historic project for the state of Alabama,” Secretary Taylor added.

Director of ALEA’s Department of Public Safety (DPS) Colonel Jimmy Helms said, “The modernization of our Driver License System was one of the first tasks given to me by Secretary Taylor. From the very beginning I knew we had the right team in place, and I would like to take this opportunity to echo the sentiments of Secretary Taylor and thank each and every one of the employees that played a role in this colossal task which will have a positive impact on both our employees as well as citizens for years to come. I would also like to remind everyone this is a brand-new system that our employees will be given their first opportunity to use in the coming days. We would like to ask that the citizens of our great state continue to use the same level of patience and understanding which were utilized over the course of the previous week.”

For further information on LEADS and project updates, please visit: alea.gov.

Crime reports from Mobile Police Dept.

STAFF REPORT
www.thecallnews.com

■ Daphne Hendry, 41, was arrested and charged with theft on April 23, according to the Mobile Police Department. At 9:43 p.m., officers responded to Belk’s at 3201 Airport Boulevard in reference to a shoplifter. Officers discovered Hendry concealed merchandise and exited the business without paying.

■ Christopher Jones, 22, was arrested and charged with unlawful breaking and entering a vehicle on April 24. At approximately 8:45 a.m., officers responded to Rangeline and Orr roads in reference to a vehicle burglary. Officers discovered Jones entered the victim’s vehicle and removed items, according to the MPD.

■ Sharda Winston, 31, was arrested and charged with robbery and attempt to elude on April 24. At approximately 3:15 p.m., officers responded to the Bamboo Steakhouse at 650 Cody Road South in reference to a robbery. Officers discovered Winston and her children had left the business after paying half the bill. An employee walked outside to film Winston leaving when she struck him with her vehicle before fleeing. The victim was transported to the hospital with a non-life-threatening injury. Officers found Win-

ston at her residence and took her into custody, according to the MPD.

■ Ronald Jenkins, 62, was arrested and charged with possession of drug paraphernalia on April 24. At approximately 9:20 p.m., officers were in the area of St. Stephens Road and Magnolia Drive when they observed a possible vehicle burglary. Jenkins was detained and found in possession of drug paraphernalia. Officers later discovered the vehicle owner gave the subject permission to use the vehicle, according to the MPD.

■ Wilson Purifoy III, 52, was arrested and charged with domestic violence harassment, domestic violence by strangulation, domestic violence assault and interference with an emergency call on April 25. At 4:53 a.m., officers responded to the 8700 block of Zeigler Boulevard in reference to a rolling vehicle domestic altercation. Officers discovered the incident occurred at the 9400 block of Chisholm Court. The female victim’s husband strangled and punched her in the face and she left the scene in her vehicle. Purifoy followed her to the 8700 block of Zeigler Boulevard, where he was taken into custody, according to the MPD.