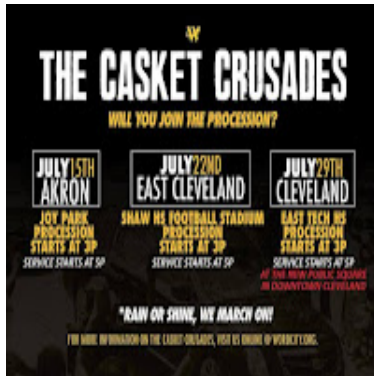


Written by Kathy

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[Clevelandurbannews.com](http://Clevelandurbannews.com) and [Kathywraycolemanonlinenewsblog.com](http://Kathywraycolemanonlinenewsblog.com) , Ohio's most read Black digital newspaper and Black blog with some 4.5 million views on Google Plus alone. Tel: (216) 659-0473 and Email: [editor@clevelandurbannews.com](mailto:editor@clevelandurbannews.com). Kathy Wray Coleman, editor-in-chief, and who trained for 17 years at the Call and Post Newspaper in Cleveland, Ohio. We interviewed former president Barack Obama one-on-one when he was campaigning for president. As to the Obama interview, [CLICK HERE TO READ THE ENTIRE ARTICLE AT CLEVELAND URBAN NEWS.COM](http://Clevelandurbannews.com), [OHIO'S LEADER IN BLACK DIGITAL NEWS](http://OHIO'S LEADER IN BLACK DIGITAL NEWS)

**CLEVELAND URBAN NEWS.COM-EAST CLEVELAND, Ohio**-Black clergy, community activists, family members of victims of crime and others will rally in East Cleveland, a largely Black and impoverished suburb of Cleveland, on Saturday, July 22 beginning at 3 pm at Shaw High School football stadium, the second of three "Casket Crusades" sponsored by the Word Church and its senior pastor the Rev Dr. R.A. Vernon, a three Saturdays event to draw attention to heightened community deaths due to drug abuse and violence.

The event is open to the public, organizers said.

## The Word Church to hold "Casket Crusades" march in East Cleveland on July 22, 2017 to highlight deaths

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The Word Church is an umbrella baptist church with four locations, one in Akron, another in Cleveland on Kinsman Road on the city's east side, a third in East Cleveland, and its headquarters in Warrensville Heights, a staunch middle class Black suburb of Cleveland.

Founded in 2000, it boasts a congregation of some 30,000 people.

Saturday's East Cleveland event is also promoted by the grassroots groups Black on Black Crime Inc. and the Black Man's Army, though spearheaded by the prominent Word Church, and will begin at 3 pm at the Shaw High School football stadium with a scheduled 5 pm service, organizers said.

East Cleveland has some 18,000 largely Black residents, a household median income of \$20,000, and skyrocketing poverty and crime.

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The first of the three "Casket Crusade" marches occurred through the streets of neighboring Akron, Ohio last Saturday and was led by Vernon where the marchers carried empty caskets to symbolize the loss of lives. It drew hundreds, with the third and final march set for Saturday, July 29, a procession beginning at 3 pm at East Technical High School and a service later that day at 5 pm on Public Square in downtown Cleveland.

Drug overdoses in America exceeded 59,000 in 2016, a New York Times report reveals, the largest annual jump in history on years, with heroine and opioid deaths, which predominate in the nation's White communities, reaching epidemic figures.

Drug overdoses are now the leading cause of death of Americans under the age of 50.

Ohio is in trouble too, 2016 seeing some 4,100 deaths from unintentional overdoses, a leap of 36 percent from the previous year.

Cuyahoga County, which includes Cleveland, saw record levels of heroine and fentanyl deaths last year too, figures that have nearly doubled in 2017 in some comparison months, with an overall increase of 24 percent in the Black community for fentanyl deaths, data say.

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Violent crime statistics are no better.

An average of 15,000 people are murdered each year nationally over a period of the last three years with an increase since 2014, and 71 percent of the incidents involved a forearm. And over 80,000 annual rapes nationwide, and more that 300,000 robberies, the FBI reports.

According to [Cleveland.com](http://Cleveland.com) , Cleveland saw the deadliest year in decades in 2016 for violent crimes with some 136 deaths, a 13 percent increase from 2015.

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