



### Fighting for justice

Even after 819 days, Tawanda Jones stands vigil against police brutality after the death of her brother. **14A**

### On the upswing

Merchants' consumer survey shows improvement initiatives have led to desirable traits in West Baltimore. **3A**

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MAXIMILIAN FRANZ

Richie Armstrong, center, is arrested by Baltimore City police officers March 29 during a protest demanding jobs from construction work on an East Baltimore Development Inc. site. A recent survey by the University of Baltimore's Schaefer Center for Public Policy showed most Marylanders are satisfied with crime prevention by police, but not with the officers' treatment of minorities.

## Protest at Towson U. produces pact with president

By DANIEL LEADERMAN

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As students occupied the president's office Wednesday afternoon, Towson University became the second Maryland campus in less than a week at which protesters presented administrators with a list of demands for increasing diversity.

Meanwhile, officials at another local university say it is trying to confront racial tensions head on, in part by encouraging students to have discussions that might offend them.

Black students from Towson and the Johns Hopkins University demanded the hiring of more black faculty members, more instruction in cultural competence and stronger responses to incidents of racism and discrimination, among other items.

After Towson students arrived at interim President Timothy Chandler's office, a meeting that lasted hours ended with Chandler signing a revised list of demands early Thursday morning, student media reported.

Towson students also demanded that policing practices be equitable for events led by white students as events led by black students and for Chandler to resign if he didn't keep his promise to address the concerns and "effectively represent black students," according to The Towerlight,

SEE TOWSON 10A

## On policing, a mixed bag

### State's residents give thumbs up to police fighting crime, thumbs down for treatment of minorities, new survey finds

By LAUREN KIRKWOOD

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A large majority of Marylanders believe police are doing a good job of fighting crime but most individuals in the state also believe officers are not treating minorities the same as they treat whites, according to a recent survey by the University of Baltimore's Schaefer Center for Public Policy.

The results of the survey, "2015 Maryland Policy Choices:

Policing Questions," also revealed striking differences between public perception of police in Baltimore city, the Baltimore metro area and the state as a whole — namely, residents of the state's largest city have a much less positive outlook on police than elsewhere in the state.

"In Baltimore city, a lot more people reported receiving unfair treatment from police, either themselves or a family

SEE SURVEY 15A

### FOCUS ON Legal

## Law firms give back to employees, clients at holidays

### Attorneys: Parties, luncheons celebrate the season

By LAUREN KIRKWOOD

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As the winter season approaches, legal professionals are busy preparing for the round of potlucks, holiday luncheons and festive cocktail gatherings held by their firms or business acquaintances.

But while holiday parties are a mainstay of many attorneys' social calendars, not all law firms plan their yearly celebrations with the same goals in mind — some firms, for example, hope to provide a relaxed environment for their employees to socialize outside of the office, while others organize gatherings tailor-made for networking.

For Davis, Agnor, Rapaport & Skalny LLC in Columbia, firm holiday gatherings are a chance to connect with coworkers, but also a way to foster relationships outside the company, said firm principal Paul G. Skalny.

The firm holds a holiday luncheon

SEE PARTIES 8A



Davis, Agnor, Rapaport & Skalny LLC in Columbia holds an annual party the Thursday after Thanksgiving known as the "first party of the year" in Howard County, according to principal Paul G. Skalny. The event typically draws around 400 people.

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## Parties >> Many December parties the firm holds are more family-focused

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just for employees, Skalny said, but the real highlight of the season is the annual party held on the first Thursday after Thanksgiving. That gathering, which typically draws around 400 attendees, has become known in Howard County as "the first party of the year," he said.

"It's a combination of clients, referral sources, elected officials, friends and people with whom we serve on boards," Skalny said. "We really view this as a party where we bring together people who have an interest in seeing one another and who are in a position to develop strategic relationships."

It's not strictly a "client appreciation" event, he said, but rather a way to use the firm's network to connect people who could benefit from one another's acquaintance.

Other law firms emphasize internal festivities over large celebrations during the holidays.

"Most of our events are firm events to boost morale and get people to get to know each other better," said Joanna Trela, executive director at Rosenberg Martin Greenberg LLP in Baltimore.

Back in 2012, Trela said, Rosenberg Martin Greenberg considered holding an "open house" holiday event for clients and community members to celebrate the firm's 25th anniversary, but decided to use the funds to establish a



PHOTO COURTESY OF ROSENBERG MARTIN GREENBERG  
**'Santa Claus' (better known as litigation paralegal Peter Coolbaugh) makes an appearance last year during Rosenberg Martin Greenberg LLP's family holiday party. The firm also holds an annual cocktail party and dinner for attorneys and their spouses.**

continuing fund for the Baltimore Community Foundation.

Instead of holding client-centered events, Trela said, the firm holds several for employees, including an annual cocktail party and dinner for the firm's attorneys and directors and their spouses. In December, the firm holds a more family-focused holiday event where attorneys' children are invited, she added.

"The newest male employee will typ-

ically dress up as Santa, and once we know how many children are coming and their ages, we get gifts for all the children," Trela said. "It's a great way for kids to come in and see where mom and dad work and meet their coworkers."

Offit Kurman P.A., which is based in Maple Lawn but has several other offices in the state, as well as in the wider mid-Atlantic region, will hold six separate holiday parties for employees

this year, said Bryan Lawson, the firm's marketing director.

Most of those will be held in Maryland, from Bethesda and Frederick to Baltimore and Maple Lawn, along with Philadelphia and Tysons Corner, Va. Instead of holding a firm-wide gathering, which the company does in the summer months, Lawson said Offit Kurman opts to encourage employees to get to know their immediate colleagues better in a smaller setting.

"The rationale of having a couple different types of get-togethers is that the holidays are a little bit more intimate, and then a big summer bash lends itself to a more informal get-together," he said.

However, he added, senior firm employees often attend more than one of the holiday parties, with the goal of making connections with employees who work farther away.


"Management is encouraged to go to as many as they can," Lawson said. "There's six of them all within two weeks, so it makes for a busy couple of weeks."


But even with half a dozen parties, he said, the purpose is to bring employees together rather than bring in work for the firm.

"It's not for business, but for morale," Lawson said. "It's a morale program and a way to give back to the employees and their spouses."

### FOCUS ON

Legal





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