

PuLSE Institute Dean, Eminent Journalist Bankole Thompson to Keynote UN World Press Freedom Day in Benton Harbor May 3

Benton Harbor's Peace4Life Student Coalition to Host First-Ever United Nations World Press Freedom Day

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[/EINPresswire.com/](https://EINPresswire.com/) -- Peace4Life, a student-driven organization is thrilled to announce the City of Benton Harbor's first-ever United Nations World Press Freedom Day Assembly, which will take place on Friday, May 3, 2024, from 11:30 AM to 1 PM at the Benton Harbor High School Performing Arts Center.

For the first time, the City of Benton Harbor, will observe the annual World Press Freedom Day on May 3, joining a longstanding United Nations tradition of recognizing the immense role journalists play in safeguarding democracy and disseminating information as well as the challenges they encounter in doing so.

The celebration of the 31st edition of World Press Freedom Day under the global theme "A Press for the Planet: Journalism in the Face of the Environmental Crisis," will focus on the importance of press freedom and access to information. The event will provide a platform for meaningful discussions surrounding global issues of persistent economic inequality that have defined life in Benton Harbor for students and residents alike amid the national headlines.

The highlight of the historic event will be a special appearance and talk given by Bankole Thompson, a nationally acclaimed journalist, author and thought leader, who is a twice-a-week opinion columnist at The Detroit News, and the founding dean of the national anti-poverty think tank, The PuLSE Institute. Considered the leading Black opinion journalist in Michigan, Thompson, has long championed Benton Harbor's quest for racial equality in the media by casting the spotlight on crucial underreported issues in that community. He has appeared on other national outlets including CNN discussing issues



Bankole Thompson, the nationally acclaimed Detroit journalist and standard-bearer for economic justice, will keynote UN World Press Freedom Day Celebration in the City of Benton Harbor on Friday, May 3

important to Black America. Because of his work as a standard-bearer on economic justice issues, Thompson, was named last year to the National Board of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the signature civil rights organization, co-founded by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., who served as its first president, and which played a major role during the Civil Rights Movement.

During the assembly, an intimate book signing session will feature, *Fiery Conscience*, Thompson's latest book, which is a body of work motivated by the nation's uprisings surrounding George Floyd's untimely murder, and which documents his decades of speaking truth to power. The book received a definitive review on April 2 in *Forbes* magazine, the top business magazine for major captains of industry, and has also been listed officially as a research and reference material in the Jean Blackwell Hutson Research and Reference Division at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in New York, the world's leading repository on the Black experience.

The engagement will offer interactive story-sharing sessions, allowing community leaders to impart their experiences and perspectives on solving local issues that connect to global themes including rebuilding community health, trust, and infrastructure following the Benton Harbor Water and Education Crisis.

Additionally, the assembly will feature straight-talk sessions, providing a platform for open honest discussion and Q&A co-lead by Benton Harbor High School media scholars.



Elnora Gavin, a longtime racial justice advocate and the co-founder of Peace4Life, a student-centered group in the City of Benton Harbor, is leading the Michigan city's first-ever UN World Press Freedom Day celebration on Friday, May 3



UN Secretary-General António Guterres has always maintained that freedom of the press is the foundation of democracy and justice.

"We are excited to bring together students, educators, and media professionals for this important event," said Elnora Gavin, the Co-Founder of Peace4Life. "It is crucial to recognize the significance of press freedom in today's world and empower the next generation of journalists and storytellers. Our Youth Representatives opened the week by speaking alongside their state lawmakers at the Michigan State Capitol. On Friday, our Peace4Life Youth Representatives will set in motion, their reimagined healing vision for their world by engaging the greater community in launching a historic Love Letter Campaign addressed to their legislators. This assembly will inspire and encourage meaningful empowered dialogue on global issues."

Gavin added, "We are asking the global community to join our efforts by sharing their stories here at www.lovemistudents.com, We are publishing an ebook collection Invest In Mi Story Impact Mi Life from the stories we capture. We want to thank Bankole Thompson and for his broad support in transforming our communities most in need and for all who will join us now in lifting up the voices of our people while prioritizing funding our communities and building racial equity around the world."

"Democracy and the protracted quest for racial and economic justice cannot thrive without responsible media and conscientious journalists who are willing to ask the tough questions and sometimes push the envelope to bring to the fore issues that are the heart of the survival of communities like Benton Harbor," Thompson said in a statement. "That is why I'm looking forward to coming to a city that exemplifies all of the modern and intractable challenges of our democracy and engaging the future leaders of Benton Harbor on how to become powerful storytellers, so they can tell their own stories to a global audience."

UN Secretary-General António Guterres underscored the importance of World Press Freedom Day, noting, "For three decades, on World Press Freedom Day, the international community has celebrated the work of journalists and media workers. This day highlights a basic truth: all our freedom depends on press freedom. Freedom of the press is the foundation of democracy and justice. It gives all of us the facts we need to shape opinions and speak truth to power."

The event is open to the public, and students, educators, and media professionals are especially encouraged to attend. The assembly promises to be an enlightening and informative experience for all participants.

For more information about the 1st United Nations World Press Freedom Day Assembly, please visit peaceday247.com or contact Angela Wilson Turnbull at (703) 593-3644 or angela@wethepeoplemi.org.

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