

SoulVision®

M A Z I N E

**Leon: An
Actor's Actor**



May 2022

BK Fulton



Photo by Louise Keeton

| “When you inspire someone, you ignite a positive future.”

I’ve learned through many trials and tribulations that we can manifest greatness by lifting each other. I found my way to success by reading about the wins of my ancestors. Knowing that they made a way out of no way inspired me. Their stories gave me a blueprint for living, learning and giving. It’s as if their love poured over the fires of my failures and was the catalyst for my phoenix to arise from the ashes. I owe so much to people I’ve never met. What I believe they would want us all to do is to pay their gifts forward for future generations. That is the power of inspiration. It’s eternal. It’s a gift that keeps on giving. When you inspire someone, you ignite a positive future. Our world deserves a positive future. The good news is that we already possess everything required to be great. It starts with inspiration.

In this issue of SoulVision Magazine, we hope to inspire you with the phenomenal work of Leon, an actor’s actor. We also share with you stories on iWoman TV founder Cathleen Trigg-Jones, musician extraordinaire Tom E Morrison, audio engineer Matt Treacy, and photographer Chris McGee. Finally, we give you a fire recipe from Chef Jacoby Ponder, take a look at the important educational work of Partnership for the Future, and honor the legacy of singer, actor, and activist Paul Robeson.

| “I found my way to success by reading about the wins of my ancestors.”

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Leon: An Actor's Actor



Photo by Frederick Johnson

“If you do memorable work you will be remembered beyond your time.”

Leon's path changed before he realized it. In a way, film and theater served as a way for Leon to live out his ambitions and dreams. He grew up in Mount Vernon, New York, a suburb outside of The Bronx. His all-boys Catholic school, Mount Saint Michael Academy, was mostly Italian and Irish. When his sister's high school put on a rock and roll revival, Leon convinced his school to put on their own version. He played Chubby Checker and one of his friends played Elvis Presley. Leon choreographed the entire production. It was a hit. Upon further reflection, Leon recalls the times he snuck into the Wakefield Theater, where they showed Elvis Presley films. Elvis became the catalyst for Leon's acting ambitions. “He sings. He acts. He kisses pretty women,” Leon jokes. “I thought, ‘I could do that.’”

Growing up, Leon's dad placed no limits on his son's dreams. “My dad pushed me to be the best I could be,” Leon says. “I remember him telling me, ‘Son, don't worry about it. Just do your best. The cream will always rise to the top.’” His father didn't know his son would become an actor, but his advice has helped Leon deal with the uphill battle that comes with being a working actor. “In this business, ‘no’ is something you hear 9 out of 10 times and that's only if you are very successful,” he explains. “So you have to have a lot of faith in yourself. You have to believe in yourself for other people to believe in you.”

Leon: An Actor's Actor (continued)



Photo by Ogata

In the early years of Leon's career, his first agent, Miriam Baum, from Artists First and the agency's attorney sat him down to give him a serious chat about the industry. "He said there are thousands of actors across thousands of sound stages," Leon recalls. "When you are on screen it doesn't say \$40,000 or \$100,000 or \$4 million on your forehead. All they will remember is your role and the story you told. If you do memorable work you will be remembered beyond your time."

"You have to believe in yourself for other people to believe in you."

His agent's advice turned out to be true. Role after role, people noticed Leon's charisma and artistry on screen, even some of Hollywood's greats. Leon recalls the time he met Sidney Poitier at the California African American Museum (CAAM). Before Leon could introduce himself, Poitier referred to him by name. "I said, 'Wow, I didn't know you knew who I was,'" Leon recalls. "Mr. Poitier said, 'You are a very good actor. You played my friend Little Richard and I loved it.'" This was coming from a man who Leon looked up to as an actor. Poitier's appreciation for Leon's acting reminded Leon of the importance and value of his work.

Leon's roles in *Cool Runnings*, *Above the Rim*, *The Five Heartbeats*, and *The Temptations* have made him an icon. However, Leon is hesitant to use "icon" to describe himself. "When words like that are used around me, I



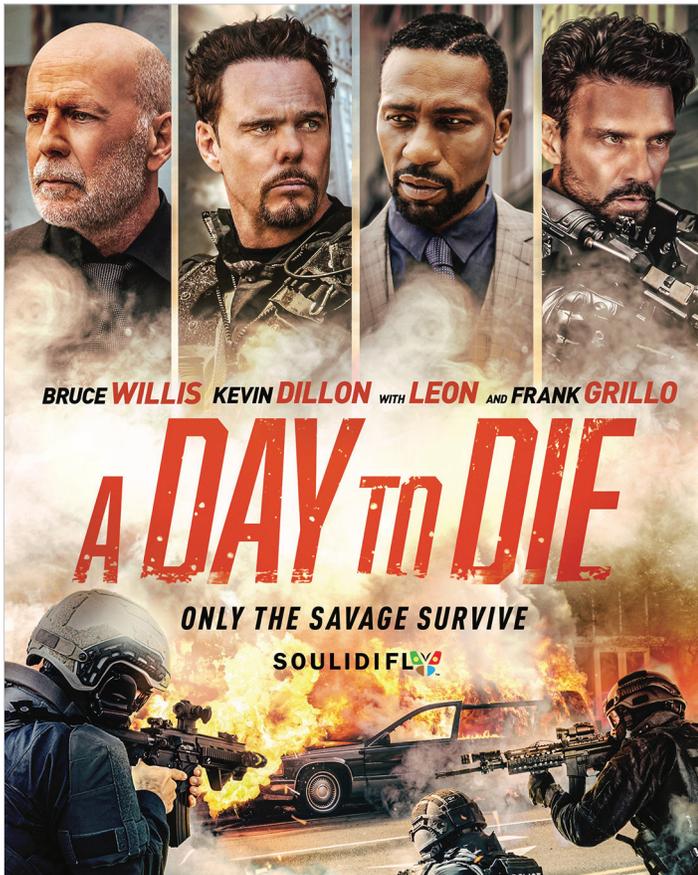
Photo by Frederick Johnson

am very flattered because I don't see myself to be one," he says. He references the sleeper hit *Five Heartbeats*. It was a commercial failure due to a lack of marketing but became a success on home video over the years, especially in African-American households. "You have to realize as much as the *Five Heartbeats* has become instilled and ingrained in our people as our movie that we like to watch at family reunions and holidays, it was still not a broad success in white America. If a white girl saw the *Five Heartbeats*, it was because she went out with a brother; not like she saw it on her own," he laughs.

"If you can tell the story without my character then I am usually not interested."

In his latest film – *A Day to Die* – Leon plays the villain Tyrone Pettis. It is in this role that Leon shines as a multi-layered character with a redemption arc. Leon was initially drawn to the role because of its relationship to the plot of the film. "At some point in this movie, it is everyone against me," Leon explains. "And realistically, if

Leon: An Actor's Actor (continued)



In his latest film – *A Day to Die* – Leon plays the villain Tyrone Pettis.

I am not on screen in this movie, they are talking about me. The actor in you always wants to play these kinds of roles. You want to be the character that flips the plot on its head.” Leon picks roles based on their importance to the film’s plot and not necessarily for its size. “If you can tell the story without my character, then I am usually not interested,” he says affirmably.

A Day to Die is Leon’s first time working with director and writer Wes Miller. He appreciated Wes’ openness to listening to his actors. “When you have a director who listens to you, then you feel free to be in your character and know that he is going to allow you to do things scripted or unscripted,” Leon says. “Wes knows what he wants to do on screen, but he isn’t close-minded.”

Leon is an extremely versatile and talented entertainer even beyond the big screen. He is the lead singer of his band Leon & The Peoples. Just before COVID, they re-

leased their sophomore album, *Love Is A Beautiful Thing*, with two top 20 singles on Billboard’s Hot Singles chart. His band couldn’t tour due to COVID restrictions. Accordingly, he is planning some dates for a tour, which he hopes will bring more positivity to the world. He also has several undisclosed producing and acting projects on his plate. “My belly is full, but I’m hungry,” Leon says smiling.

As an actor’s actor, Leon cautions young people who want to be serious actors to refrain from getting involved in the fickleness of social media. “You can have five minutes of fame on social media,” he comments. “But five minutes is not a long career.” He gives two pieces of advice: apply yourself to stand out from the competition and figure out what you have to offer the industry. “What you have to offer this business is your unique self,” Leon says. “If you do not understand what you bring to the table then you do not have anything to offer.” This is essentially Leon’s blueprint to success.



Photo by Ogata

“You may know a better actor, a better singer, or even a better person than me,” he says. “But there is no better Leon because I give you uniquely me.”

To learn more about Leon, visit his [website](#) and follow him on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#).

Cathleen Trigg-Jones' Confidence, Grit, and Drive



Photo by Kesha Lambert

| “Not everyone will understand your path.”

Cathleen Trigg-Jones is the founder and CEO of iWoman TV, a streaming network that champions the voices of women. She is a producer, actress, and Emmy-award-winning journalist. Cathleen recalls watching Oprah Winfrey in the early days of her news anchoring. Cathleen was enthralled to see a Black woman who didn't fit the typical profile of a Black woman in the media. “Growing up, I've always dreamt of being on television,” she says. “However, it seemed out of reach or an impossible dream for a young girl who started out in an orphanage.” Oprah taught Cathleen the power of authenticity.

Cathleen describes her mother as her “shero.” She will always be grateful to her mother for adopting her and her brother. “From a very young age, she instilled a strong faith-based value system into me, always leading by example and the epitome of what it means to be a community servant who gives back,” Cathleen says. “In fact, for the past 30 years, she has volunteered at the community nursing home every Sunday to play the piano and sing hymns with the residents who can't get out to church.”

Cathleen Trigg-Jones' Confidence, Grit, and Drive (continued)



Photo by Kesha Lambert



Photo by B. Wilson

Early in 2022, iWoman TV partnered with New York Women in Film & Television to create an online shorts festival for female filmmakers. The winners earned cash prizes and were given the opportunity to be featured on iWoman TV's Creator Conversations series. In addition, winners were offered an opportunity to distribute their work on iWoman TV. iWoman TV is also currently working on a special project with the 2022 Cannes Film Festival. Besides film festival collaborations, iWoman TV is launching the iWoman Film Fund Grant. "We will award grants to female filmmakers in need of financial assistance to finish their projects," Cathleen says. "This grant will allow more female filmmakers to produce content and empower others."

Inspired by what Oprah did for her, Cathleen strives to inspire young women to dream big. "Buy yourself a pair of blinders and earplugs," she says. "The blinders will keep you laser-focused on the goals at hand. The earplugs will block out the noise from the 'well-intentioned' people who will try and give you a million reasons as to why your dreams will never come to fruition." Cathleen has followed her dreams with confidence, grit, and drive. "Remember, your dream is just that, your dream," she says. "Not everyone will understand your path. It's not for everyone to understand."

To learn more about Cathleen Trigg-Jones, follow her on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#). To learn more about iWoman.TV, visit their [website](#) and follow them on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#).



Photo by SLUSA

Tom E Morrison: Musical Chameleon



Tom E Morrison. Photo by James Bell.

“Creativity keeps me sane in these crazy, unsettling times.”

Tom E Morrison was born in Germany and works in the creative industries as a multi-genre music producer, arranger, musician, sound designer, sound engineer, and composer. “Throughout my career, I have been credited with a wide range of internationally renowned artists like Bonnie Tyler,” he says. “I’m passionate about developing new talent working from my studio in London.” Tom’s heart is open to the cultures across the globe and the artists who fall within these cultures. From gentle meditation music to chilled-out electronica, soul/funk, and hard rock, Tom is not bound to one specific musical genre. “I guess you could say that I am a musical chameleon,” he says.

In 2022 he released *Eyes of Love* with his wife and singer Rachel Morrison, and soul artist and rapper Shalane. Tom describes the original recording of *Eyes of Love* as “half-written and half-finished.” The original recording featured Tom playing bass, guitar, and keyboard with soulful vocals from Rachel Morrison and drums by Marc Layton-Bennett. However, Tom felt something was missing. So he decided to add Shalane’s rapping and vocal melodies and tapped Rob Hughes for a saxophone solo. “I could finally complete the production of the song,” Tom says. “We are all very proud of the result.”

Tom E Morrison: Musical Chameleon (continued)



Photo by Edu Bisa Bisogno



Tom E Morrison with collaborators Sydney Jo Jackson, Dr Benstein. Photo by James Bell.



Photo by Edu Bisa Bisogno

2022 also finds Tom collaborating with up-and-coming artists Sydney Jo Jackson, Dr Benstein, and James Brown Jr. on a new soul/disco/funk project. Tom will be co-writer, co-producer, and guitarist. “We are in the process of completing the first four tracks and are very much looking forward to this release and performing it live,” Tom says. Tom is also working with Knagen Films and award-winning filmmaker, Jeffrey T. Schultz, and Oscar-nominated producer, Sam Kadi, on the musical arrangements for the film *Mommy, Wake Up*, whose script was a quarter-finalist in the 2020 PAGE Awards international screenplay competition.

“I feel blessed being busy,” Tom says. “Creativity keeps me sane in these crazy, unsettling times.”

Click [here](#) to view video.

To learn more about Tom E Morrison, visit his [website](#) and follow him on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#).

Chris McGee's Natural Eye for Beauty



Photos by Chris McGee

| “Let your community inspire you.”

Chris McGee is a photographer who currently resides in Meridian, Mississippi. Before becoming a photographer, Chris McGee served his country as Chief Petty Officer for the United States Navy. He retired after 24 years in 2020. In 2018, he began his photography career. “I initiated my photography career in 2018 because of my passion and a keen eye for the art,” he says. “I also enjoy videography, but photography is my first love.”

His photography is mostly inspired by Gordon Parks. “I love his contributions to art and what he stood for, especially using photography and moving images as a way to escape the negatives and inequalities of life,” Chris says. He is also inspired and involved with the photographers in the local scenes around Mississippi like Mitch C. Davis, Terrell Winters, Supa Images, Antwon Hatfield, Meka Matthews, Bryson McDonald, Terrence Smith, and Kendall Davis. “These photographers are all great and professional in their own unique way,” Chris says. “They are humble and have no time for competition because they are honing their skill level, and that inspires me.”

His most recent project was Black History Month themed. The project took place on Farish Street in Jackson, Mississippi. Farish Street was once the largest economically independent Black community in the state.

Chris McGee's Natural Eye for Beauty (continued)



Chris McGee served his country as Chief Petty Officer for the United States Navy. He retired after 24 years in 2020.
Photo courtesy of Chris McGee.



Model: Shantelle Thomas. Chris' most recent project was Black History Month themed. The project took place on Farish Street in Jackson, Mississippi. Farish Street was once the largest economically independent Black community in the state.



Chris hopes to expand his business and brand to more cities. The goal is to become a nationwide name in photography and videography. For now, Chris continues his life of service as a firefighter for the Department of Defense. This year has been successful for Chris McGee. His work has been published in *In The City Magazine* (Atlanta) and *DUENDE Magazine*. With camera in hand, Chris simply wants to continue to get better. "I want to provide quality and, most importantly, unique content that lifts and satisfies people," Chris explains. "I'm motivated to become the best photographer and videographer I can be."

To learn more about Chris McGee, visit his [website](#) and follow him on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

Matt Treacy's Reverence for Our Analog Past



Matt Treacy is a producer, musician, and audio engineer for Free Jambalaya, a production studio located in Ashland, Virginia. Photos courtesy of Matt Treacy.

“I take a lot of pride in creating new music that is powerful, authentic, and culturally relevant.”

Matt Treacy is a producer, musician, and audio engineer for Free Jambalaya, a production studio located in Ashland, Virginia. “I work with some of the most talented hip hop and spoken word artists in the area and I take a lot of pride in creating new music that is powerful, authentic, and culturally relevant,” Matt explains. “As an engineer, my vision is to blend analog audio/video production with modern-day technology.”

Matt believes there is magic in working with a live band/performers. Matt’s output pays homage to the great engineers and artists of the analog past. “I want to help create a future built on the sturdy foundation of the analog world, while also thriving in the digital space,” he explains. For the last few years, Matt has worked with ZBey the Poet, also known as Zenobia Bay, as her producer. This year, Zenobia Bey was named one of the recipients of the YWCA Outstanding Women Award for her community work in Richmond. “I am working with ZBey to bring a narrative, storytelling style to her music,” Matt explains. “ZBey is an artist who shares my vision for analog recording and we have had a great collaboration for the last few years.” ZBey the Poet is releasing a new album, *Substance Abuse*, this month. The album will reflect the new narrative direction that Matt brings to her music.

Matt Treacy's Reverence for Our Analog Past (continued)



For the last few years, Matt has worked with ZBey tha Poet, also known as Zenobia Bay, as her producer. ZBey tha Poet is releasing a new album, *Substance Abuse* this month.



Matt with students of Dr. Zoe Spencer's Virginia State University Leadership class. The class shows students how a professional studio works.

Along with working with local musicians, Matt is the lead audio engineer for Free Jambalaya's award-winning horror/fiction podcast named *Phantom Limb*. "We are currently in the middle of season 2, which features many popular actors from the Richmond area," Matt says. Matt's collaboration with Virginia State University is a project that is close to his heart. "The studio has been hosting Dr. Zoe Spencer's Leadership class to show them how a professional studio works," Matt explains. "The students have really embraced the experience and we are releasing an original song and accompanying music video at the end of their semester."

Beyond his in-studio work, Matt is digitizing the studio experience. He is currently working on *Cloud Sessions*, a new pay-per-view live stream series. The series will give viewers "a multi-camera inside look at a real recording session." Additionally, Free Jambalaya hosts *All The Way Live Music Reviews*, a free live stream by Cruz Inc. Radio on YouTube. "I look at digital productions like this as the uncharted future of the entertainment industry, and I want to explore it," he says.

To learn more about Free Jambalaya, visit their [website](#) and follow them on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).



ZBey with her Community Makers portrait commissioned by the VMFA. The portrait was used as the artwork for her single "Eye Write."

CHEF'S CORNER

Chef Jacoby Ponder



Photo by Keith Saunders



Photo by Joshie Photos

To learn more about Chef Jacoby Ponder, watch him on [YouTube](#) and follow him on [Instagram](#).

“This is one of my favorite recipes. It’s my version of the stuffed chicken from Ruth’s Chris, but in my version I add a few extra herbs and a dash of Emblem Lemon Olive Oil.”

Butter Chicken

Course: Lunch or Dinner

Cuisine: American

Prep Time: 30 mins

Cook Time: 45 mins

Total Time: 1 ½ hours

Serving Size: 1-2

Ingredients

- 2 boneless and skinless chicken breasts
- 2 tbsp garlic salt
- 2 tbsp onion powder
- 1 tbsp paprika
- Pinch of sea salt
- Dash of cracked pepper
- 2 tbsp butter
- 5 oz softened cream cheese
- 1/3 cup fresh grated parmesan cheese
- 1 1/2 tbsp mayonnaise
- 1 cup fresh chopped spinach
- 2 garlic cloves minced

Preparation

1. In a large bowl, combine softened cream cheese, mayonnaise, parmesan cheese, minced garlic, and chopped spinach. (reserve for later).
2. Make a small incision forming a small pocket into the thickest part of the chicken breasts.
3. Season each breast with garlic salt, onion powder, pepper & salt, and paprika on all sides. Stuff each chicken breast with the cheese mixture (by pipping the cream cheese mixture into the small incision). To keep the filling inside, seal each end of the breast with a toothpick.
4. Preheat a skillet with butter and a teaspoon of olive oil over medium heat. Brown all sides of the chicken.
5. Place into an oven at 300°F and continue cooking until the internal temperature reaches 165 °F.

COMMUNITY

Partnership for the Future's Mission of Educational Equity



Dionne Henderson, president and CEO of Partnership for the Future. Photo by Samia Minnick.

“We are now intentionally seeking to close the wealth gap through educational equity.”

Partnership for the Future prepares high-achieving students for success in college and beyond. The organization was founded in 1994 after Alan Kirshner, an executive at Markel Corp., and other community leaders in Richmond, Virginia, read the story of Cedric Jennings in *The Wall Street Journal*. Jennings was a successful student at Frank W. Ballou Senior High, an underserved high school in Washington DC. During the summer of his junior year, he was part of MIT's summer program for minorities. At his end of the year assessment, it was decided that Jennings was not a good fit for MIT and he was encouraged to apply elsewhere. While Jennings was later accepted into Brown University, his story is too common for ambitious students from underserved communities.

“The majority of our students are first-generation college students and are from economically disadvantaged communities,” says Dionne Henderson, president and CEO of Partnership for the Future. “Our year-round program includes goal setting, career exploration, cultural capital sessions, paid internships, and one-on-one mentorship.”

Partnership for the Future's Mission of Educational Equity (continued)



The majority of Partnership for the Future's students and alumni are African American.

Dionne finds fulfillment in helping students understand their full potential in a country that is continuing to have conversations about racial and systemic inequality. "Although higher numbers of African American students are graduating from college, the wealth gap between African Americans and white Americans in this country continues to increase," Dionne says. "We are now intentionally seeking to close the wealth gap through educational equity."



Partnership for the Future will tackle this issue with data-driven initiatives and programs. Two outcomes will come out of this approach: students will graduate with low or no college debt and they will learn how to build wealth throughout their educational and professional careers. Partnership for the Future alumni range from those in their early twenties to mid-forties. "We are now positioning ourselves to provide support that will not only impact the lives of our students and alumni but potentially generations to come," Dionne says.

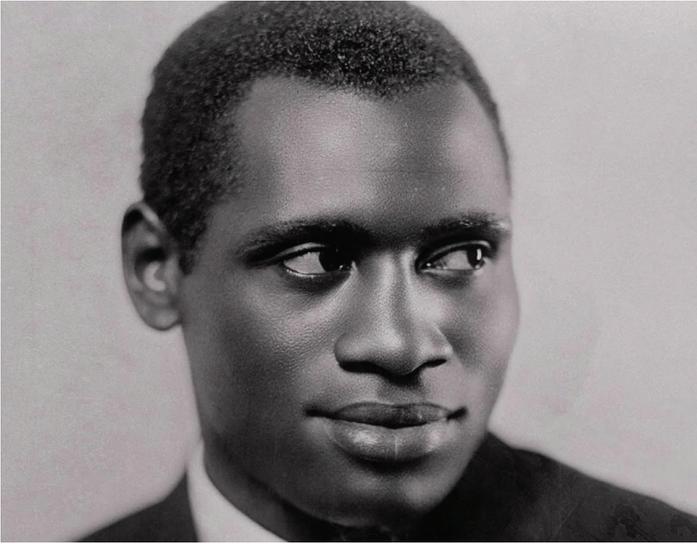
Students at Partnership for the Future's 2021 Reaching for the Stars ceremony. Partnership for the Future celebrates their students' college acceptance and announces how much they earned individually and as a class in scholarships. Last year's total was \$16,312,866.

Photos by Max Williams.

To learn more about how you can support Partnership for the Future, visit their [website](#) and follow them on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

LEGENDS

Paul Robeson



*Photo courtesy of Rutgers Special Collections
and University Archives*

Paul Robeson was an All-American athlete, scholar, baritone, stage actor, and social activist. The son of an escaped slave, Robeson won 15 varsity letters in football, baseball, basketball, and track at Rutgers University. He graduated valedictorian and went on to law school at Columbia University in the early 1920s. While working at a law firm, Robeson felt his talents were better suited to dedicating his life to promoting African American history and culture in the arts. In his film and stage roles, he portrayed a dignified Black man who had humanity. Leading roles in the film *The Emperor Jones* and the stage production of *Othello* (both London and Broadway productions) cemented Robeson as a powerful force and inspiration for future Black actors. *The Emperor Jones* distinguished Robeson as the first African American leading man in mainstream movies and *Othello* distinguished Robeson as the first Black American to play the title role on Broadway.

As he traveled through the US and to Europe and beyond to put on concert performances, he aligned himself with labor, civil, and anti-colonial movements. His rendition of “Ol’ Man River” became a song of protest and solidarity with working-class people around the world. Because of this, Robeson was seen as an ideological threat by the US government. In 1950, his passport was revoked. The fight for Justice cost Robeson his health. It wasn’t until 1958 that his passport was reinstated. While he continued his fight for justice and peace, Robeson retired from the public eye in 1963, and on January 23, 1976, in Philadelphia at the age of 77, he passed away. Robeson lived a life of dignity and courage that should serve as an inspiration for those who refuse to flinch in the face of injustice.

**“Our grandfather, who was the son of ex-slaves — if he can do what he did with nothing, what is our excuse?” – Linda Kenny Miller, granddaughter of Dr. John A. Kenny, Sr. (NPR, StoryCorps)
– Dr. John A. Kenney, Sr.**