“They are always empowering and always leave you with a sense to do more and connect more.”

YVETTE FRIESE, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, URBAN LEAGUE

SPRINGFIELD

Model, mechanic inspire

Women’s Leadership Conference returns after pandemic hiatus

BY JEANETTE DURRIDGE

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A
s the first African American model to ap-
pear on the covers of GQ and Sports I-
llustrated and as the creator of “America’s

Next Top Model” and her own production

company, Tyra Banks said she realized her

brand was being a risk-taker, a rule-breaker and a

person of firsts.

Now she is starting a new venture by creating Smize Cream, a brand of ice cream that has a cookie dough surprise in every cup.

“We launched a business during COVID,” Banks said. “We are still in the growth phase of it.”

DETROIT

US ups standard for gas mileage

New vehicles sold in the U.S. will have to average at least 40 miles per gallon of gasoline in 2026, up from about 28 miles per gallon of gasoline, will have to average at least 40

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**Ukraine**

**Ukraine denies strike on Russian fuel depot**

By Philip Marcello Associated Press

Kyiv. Ukraine.

Valentyn Tebah, who is a leading member of Russia's Mainland of Conduct, in advance of our next scheduled board meeting on April 13.

**Conference (CONTINUES FROM PAGE A1)**

**Let’s stop playing defense and let’s play offense. What can we do for women when people are getting laid off and things are tough?**

Tyra Banks

At the same time, she started writing a blog where women could get advice and support. She called her project “Women of Wisdom,” with no shame, expanded it to a book and started Girls Inc., a nonprofit organization to help women. The idea was to create a forum where women could share their stories. It has grown into a business with over 2,000 Girls Inc. chapters across the United States.

**Bay Path University awards Shaeve Puehl of Springfield, Mass., with the Distinguished Alumnus Award. Joseph of Springfield pose for a photo at the 25th anniversary of the Bay Path University’s 25th Women’s Leadership Conference yesterday, see more photos at MassLive.com.**

**Smith quits academy over slap at Oscars**

By Lynn Elber Associated Press

LOS ANGELES

Will Smith accepts the award for best actor in a leading role for “King Richard” at the 94th Academy Awards on March 27 in Los Angeles, California.

Smith stunned Rock, the theater crowd and viewers at home when he slap雍 says. Universal Pictures。” Before you ask me, I just want to say, it was one of the most difficult moments of my life. It was not an attempt to besmirch your reputation or your character. I fundamentally believe that what Ranveer Singh did was the right thing to do. My ethics were not up to that standard. I do not apologize, I do not regret, I do not seek forgiveness. I deeply regret the pain I caused.”

**African refugees see bias on Russian fuel depot**

By Bini Qi and Phil Marczak Alaska Press

COLUMBUS, OH

Will Smith takes the stage to accept his Oscar.

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