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More Guard members to help COVID efforts

METRO, 5A



Facebook

Kwame Kilpatrick was seen with his father, Bernard, on social media late Wednesday.

Kilpatrick emerging from the shadows

Former Detroit mayor adjusts to life after prison in Ga.

BY SARAH RAHAL
The Detroit News

Griffin, Ga. — Kwame Kilpatrick emerged from the shadows of his mother's garage Sunday afternoon, a thinner, grayer version of his former self.

The former Detroit mayor had been joined with friends and family at the home an hour south of Atlanta in a secluded neighborhood of Griffin, a small suburb surrounded by cattle and horse ranches.

Located down a mile-long dirt road into a new-construction community, the single-story home purchased for \$336,848 in 2019 by Carolyn Cheeks Kilpatrick, the matriarch and former U.S. representative, had vehicles stretched down the driveway and around the street. People gathered there enjoyed each other's company in a sunroom in the backyard.

In the garage, Kwame Kilpatrick

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Mall at Partridge Creek faces arduous future

Virus, changing trends contribute to shopping center's challenging year

BY CANDICE WILLIAMS
The Detroit News

Clinton Township — The Mall at Partridge Creek faces a challenging year that could lead to foreclosure, a predicament experts attribute most directly to the booming growth in online shopping spurred by the 10-month-long COVID-19 pandemic.

Starwood Capital Partners, the owner of the luxury outdoor mall in Macomb County, hasn't made an interest payment on its loan in six months. And that's after initially defaulting on a \$725 million mortgage in November 2019 that includes three other mall properties in other states, according to commercial real estate research firm Trepp LLC.

The missed payments signal Partridge Creek's owners are no longer interested in keeping the mall, said Manus Clancy, Trepp's senior managing director. "The loan now comes due next month, and if I were to guess, I think this is coming back to the lenders as real estate owned," he said.

"It could be anywhere from two months to a year. It really depends on



Robin Buckson / The Detroit News

ABOVE: People walk past Clarks shoe store at The Mall at Partridge Creek. BELOW: The future of the mall and its 600K square feet for retailers is unclear.

whether or not the owners of the properties want to fight for the asset to try to keep it or not."

Starwood Capital Partners declined to comment.

This crossroads for Starwood Capital's Partridge Creek play comes amid changing trends in retailing turbocharged by the pandemic. Stay-at-home orders and fears of infection fueled an explosion in online shopping and pushed corporate retailers

to speed exits from bricks-and-mortar spaces. Instead, more retailers are looking to downsize, not open new stores.

"The internet, which emerged about 25 years ago, is hollowing out the mall the same way the mall hollowed out downtown retail," said Mark A. Cohen, director of retail studies and adjunct professor at the

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Andy Morrison / The Detroit News



Requiring 2 years in MSU dorms a bit much for some



Todd McInturf / The Detroit News

Natalie Harmon said the policy will especially impact low-income students since it's cheaper to live in an apartment with roommates.

School says it'll help graduation rates, but students not so sure

BY KIM KOZLOWSKI
The Detroit News

As a freshman at Michigan State University, Natalie Harmon is living on campus this semester and will have the freedom to decide where she will live her sophomore year.

Harmon, however, worries about future MSU students be-

cause the university has changed its campus living requirements and will now require all incoming freshmen to live in its residence halls for two years.

MSU announced the new rule last month, saying it would begin this fall. That policy could have financial impacts for students: According to MSU's website, an average room-and-board package costs more than \$10,500 a year. Annual tuition is about \$14,500.

The new requirement has been in the works for years, MSU officials say, and rooted in studies

that show students who live in the dorms for their sophomore year have overall higher rates of persistence, retention and graduation — especially students of color, first-generation students and students from low-income families.

Harmon, 19, isn't buying it. The revised policy was announced in the middle of the global COVID-19 pandemic, which cost MSU millions of dollars from students who typically

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Why Biden's immigration plan may be risky for Democrats

BY WILL WEISSERT
Associated Press

Washington — President Joe Biden is confronting the political risk that comes with grand ambition.

As one of his first acts, Biden offered a sweeping immigration overhaul last week that would provide a path to U.S. citizenship for the estimated 11 million people who are in the United States illegally. It would also codify provisions wiping out some of President Donald Trump's signature hard-line policies, including trying to end existing, protected legal status for many immigrants brought to the U.S. as children and crackdowns on asylum rules. It's precisely the type of mea-

sure that many Latino activists have longed for, particularly after the tough approach of the Trump era. But it must compete with Biden's other marquee legislative goals, including a \$1.9 trillion plan to combat the coronavirus, an infrastructure package that promotes green energy initiatives and a "public option" to expand health insurance.

In the best of circumstances, enacting such a broad range of legislation would be difficult. But in a narrowly divided Congress, it could be impossible. And that has Latinos, the nation's fastest growing voting bloc, worried that Biden and congressional leaders could cut deals that weaken the finished product too much — or

fail to pass anything at all.

"This cannot be a situation where simply a visionary bill — a message bill — gets sent to Congress and nothing happens with it," said Marielena Hincapié, executive director of the National Immigration Law Center, which advocates for low-income immigrants. "There's an expectation that they will deliver and that there is a mandate now for Biden to be unapologetically pro-immigrant and have a political imperative to do so, and the Democrats do as well."

If Latinos ultimately feel betrayed, the political consequences for Democrats could be long-lasting. The 2020 election provided warning signs that, despite

Democratic efforts to build a multiracial coalition, Latino support could be at risk.

Biden already was viewed skeptically by some Latino activists for his association with former President Barack Obama, who was called the "deporter in chief" for the record number of immigrants removed from the country during his administration. Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont defeated Biden in last year's Nevada caucuses and California primary, which served as early barometers of the Latino vote.

In his race against Trump, Biden won the support of 63% of Latino voters compared with Trump's 35%, according to AP VoteCast, a survey of more than

110,000 voters nationwide. But Trump narrowed the margin somewhat in some swing states such as Nevada and also got a bump from Latino men.

Biden became the first Democratic presidential candidate since 1996 to carry Arizona, in part because of strong grassroots backing from Mexican American groups opposed to strict GOP immigration policies going back decades. But he lost Florida by underperforming in its largest Hispanic county, Miami-Dade, where the Trump campaign's anti-socialism message resonated with Cuban- and some Venezuelan Americans.

Biden also fell short in Texas even though running mate Ka-

mala Harris devoted valuable, late campaign time there. The ticket lost some sparsely populated but heavily Mexican American counties along the Mexican border, where law enforcement agencies are major employers and the GOP's zero-tolerance immigration policy resonated.

There were more warning signs for House Democrats, who lost four California seats and two in South Florida while failing to pick up any in Texas. Booming Hispanic populations reflected in new U.S. census figures may see Texas and Florida gain congressional districts before 2022's midterm elections, which could make correcting the problem all the more pressing for Democrats.

Mall

Continued from Page 1A

Columbia Business School. "In the pandemic, e-commerce business — which has been growing double digits for years — has been growing at warp speed out of necessity."

So what does that mean for the future of The Mall at Partridge Creek and its 600,000 square feet of retail space? Experts say the mall could continue to operate as a shadow of its former self, be revitalized under new ownership or redeveloped for an entirely different use — less than 15 years after the space opened.

The \$155 million open-air mall opened to much fanfare in 2007, and for a time its parking lots were full of shoppers visiting the 90 stores and restaurants, including anchor Parisian, later rebranded as Carson's. The upscale Nordstrom opened a two-level store on the other side of the mall shortly thereafter.

In 2014, the mall's developer, Bloomfield Hills-based Taubman Centers Inc., sold the property to Starwood Capital, the current owners, in a package deal that effectively unloaded seven properties for \$1.4 billion.

"Taubman sort of shed some dead weight to Starwood Capital Partners at the peak of the market," said Kees Janeway, a retail mall expert and managing partner for Detroit-based Iconic Real Estate who worked for Taubman at the time.

"Whenever you're talking about heavy debt load you need



Robin Buckson / The Detroit News

Partridge Creek could continue as a shadow of its former self, be revitalized or be redeveloped, experts say.

to know all your tenants are paying top dollar. I think the story of 2020 with respect to retail is there were a number of significant bankruptcies, and we also had dramatically decreased mall traffic."

Debt exceeds rents

That's just one developing legacy of the continuing pandemic. According to Trepp, Starwood Capital's loan was due mature in late 2019, but the company couldn't refinance at that time. It lost Carson's as a tenant in 2018, Nordstrom in 2019. Similar losses happened at the company's

other three properties.

Partridge Creek's operator received an extension in 2019 to last until this year, Trepp's Clancy said, to "give them more time to find new tenants. I don't think that's been very successful."

Starwood Capital's four-property portfolio that includes Partridge Creek, he added, is underwater by about \$300 million: "The big problem right now is that rents don't support the debt."

Clancy said he did not know Partridge Creek's mall vacancy, but that tenancy across Starwood Capital's four properties

dropped to 76% in 2020 from 96% in 2016. That's higher than average, according to Moody's Analytics REIS: in the fourth quarter of last year, mall vacancy rates ran at 10.5%, up from 10.1% in the third quarter and 9.7% in 2019. Moody's also noted that average mall rent declined 0.8% in the quarter and 1.8% since 2019.

Even though Partridge Creek is better suited for social distancing as an outdoor mall during a pandemic, Janeway said, its success comes down to tenant rent payments: "If your tenants aren't paying rent and you have debt on property, it doesn't matter if it's

an apartment building or a mall; push come to shove, you've got to make a payment."

According to its website, Partridge Creek has nearly 80 stores and restaurants open with only three temporarily closed stores. It also lists three new stores, including Versona, a women's boutique that opened in September. It replaced Charming Charlie, a women's accessories company.

One recent day at the mall, shopper traffic was light but steady, with people making purchases and returns. Restaurant patrons picked up carryout orders. With reduced capacity rules in place due to the pandemic, Apple and Lululemon had lines of customers awaiting entry. Most other storefronts appeared open for business, while a few empty storefronts dotted the mall's corridor.

The loss of anchor tenants hasn't deterred Marysville residents Josie Awe and Jada Kaufmann from making Partridge Creek a regular shopping destination. The friends said they feel more comfortable shopping in an open-air setting.

"I do miss Nordstrom a little bit, but I feel it doesn't make that much of a difference because there's so much of a variety here," Kaufman said. "I think when a store leaves another one comes here, which is nice."

Changing character

Columbia's Cohen predicted that stores like Apple and Lululemon, which were performing strong before the pandemic, will continue to do so. At issue is whether they would want to remain in the mall.

J. Jill recently exited the mall after the company announced last year that it would close some of its stores. Clark's is closing at the mall, with its last day of business today, according to the company. Francesca's voluntarily filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection last month with plans to sell.

Forever 21 is propped up by landlords after filing for bankruptcy in 2019, Cohen noted: "There are a bunch of tenants who are not likely to be survivors of the pandemic. Then there are some very high-profile retailers that probably don't want to be left on a sinking ship, like the Apple store, American Eagle, Aerie, things of that sort."

The future of Partridge Creek and other struggling malls across the country remains to be seen. Trepp's Clancy says repositioning specialists purchase foreclosed malls at reduced rates, sometimes resulting in spaces with new tenants and different character.

"If you can buy it for 20 cents on the dollar, the rents in place can easily support that number and they can make it work," he said, adding there are about a dozen examples of the giant online retailer Amazon.com Inc. turning malls into distribution centers.

Janeway said he can see mall properties being fully or partially redeveloped to incorporate self-storage facilities or entertainment complexes: "I think you might see the emergence of some creative ways to reuse those spaces."

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Kilpatrick

Continued from Page 1A

trick, in gray sweatpants and a white T-shirt, grinned then chuckled as he was approached by a reporter: "I'm not going to talk to you."

The now 50-year-old loaded a duffel bag into a silver SUV in the driveway and departed.

Kilpatrick's Sunday and the four previous days were a once-unimaginable whirlwind unlike anything the former mayor has experienced in more than seven years.

After being found guilty of orchestrating a racketeering and bribery scheme while in public office, Kilpatrick was sentenced to 28 years in prison in 2013, the longest issued in a federal corruption case in U.S. history.

But all that changed after midnight Wednesday, when in one of his final acts, President Donald Trump commuted Kilpatrick's sentence and freed him from a lockup at a minimum-security prison in Oakdale, La. Kilpatrick still had 16 years remaining on his sentence after receiving credit for good behavior in prison.

Less than 24 hours after Trump's commutation, the ex-mayor reunited with family at Atlanta's airport and was embraced by family his first weekend as a free man.

Kilpatrick appeared Wednesday night in a photo with his father, Bernard, who also lives near the Atlanta area in Fayetteville, Ga., a half-hour from Cheeks Kilpatrick. Bernard Kilpatrick himself served a short, 10-month prison term on tax charges after jurors in the City Hall corruption case failed to reach a consensus

about whether he had participated in the racketeering conspiracy headed by his son.

'Kwame came home'

Before the federal corruption case came into view, Kilpatrick resigned from office in 2008 after a text messaging scandal revealed an illicit affair with his then-chief of staff, Christine Beatty, who also now lives in Midtown, Atlanta. Beatty spent 69 days in jail after pleading guilty to obstruction of justice in the matter.

Over the weekend, Kilpatrick's sons and nephews could be seen on social media joined with Beatty's children, saying, "It's a celebration," as they cheered drinks to #FreeKwame in an AirbnB in Barnesville, Ga.

During live videos, the relatives said, "The system's corrupt. Twenty-eight years ... he's guilty

by association."

On social media, Detroit rappers Iceaware Vesso and Snap Dogg wrote "welcome home" to the former mayor. Another Detroit rapper, Gmac Cash, well-known for his song about Gov. Gretchen Whitmer called "Big Gretch," released a similar title following Kilpatrick's release.

Kilpatrick's youngest son, Jonas, an aspiring rapper himself also wrote a verse on his father's reunion, saying on social media Thursday: "Give the mandate to vacate the 28. We've been screaming 'Free Kwame' since the beginning. We be screaming Black Lives Matter, and they not gonna listen. ... It's a sad story with a happy ending. Kwame came home, and his family's hearts began mending."

Jonas also posted a picture on Instagram that day with his father: "Tried to take us out but we

back nowww," he wrote.

'He's very happy'

The former mayor's plans for post-prison life are unclear, according to those close to him.

"I think he's going to take a real, long deep breath," said his lawyer, Harold Gurewitz, on Wednesday. "I am really pleased for him and his family that he will be out of custody and with them."

State Rep. Karen Whitsett, Detroit, spoke with Kilpatrick soon after his release. While she declined to give details of the call, she said he "is doing awesome."

"He's very happy," Whitsett said. "I'm thrilled for him. It's God's blessing, and I was just a tool that was able to be used."

In May, the Ebony Foundation, a national nonprofit pushing for Kilpatrick's release for months, sent out a press release touting an expected release. The

announcement was backed by Whitsett, who said she spoke with Trump about Kilpatrick's release while the president was in Michigan and confirmed it herself with the White House.

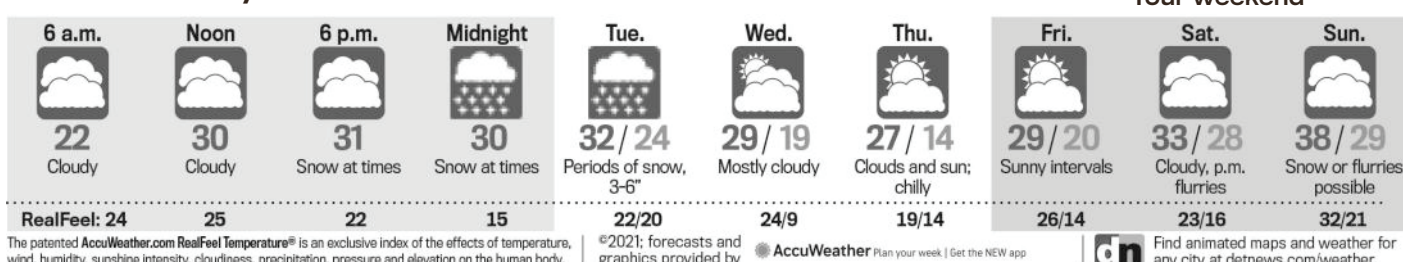
While that announcement was premature at the time, the White House ultimately credited Whitsett last week, among many other supporters, in announcing Trump's decision.

The Detroit lawmaker said she "was not a fan" of Kilpatrick while he served in Detroit but felt a responsibility to advocate for him.

"I just thought that his sentence was unjust, which was why I spoke to the president about him and asked for his release," she said.

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Staff Writers Robert Snell and Beth LeBlanc contributed.

Weather: 7-day forecast



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Lottery

MICHIGAN

Sun., Jan. 24

Monday: 855, 1185

Evening: 385, 8014

Fantasy 5: 7, 23, 28, 29, 32

Double Play: 2, 17, 23, 33, 35

Monday jackpot: \$100K

Keno: 2, 7, 9, 18, 19, 20, 25, 27, 29, 30, 35, 39, 46, 50, 51, 54, 57, 63, 70, 77, 78, 79

Poker Lotto: 8♠, 3♥, 8♦, J♣, 8♣

Sat., Jan. 23

Midday: 657, 7510

Evening: 238, 5915

Fantasy 5: 11, 19, 22, 34, 36

Double Play: 2, 8, 18, 24, 30

Keno: 10, 12, 20, 24, 27, 29, 32, 38, 40, 45, 47, 48, 51, 53, 56, 57, 60, 63, 68, 76, 77, 79

Poker Lotto: A♥, K♠, 9♠, 7♠, 10♠

Classic Lotto: 11, 31, 37, 40, 46, 47

Double Play: 4, 8, 23, 31, 33, 36

Wednesday jackpot: \$1.2M

Powerball: 5, 8, 17, 27, 28; 14

Wednesday jackpot: \$20M

Fri., Jan. 22

Mega Millions: 4, 26, 42, 50, 60; 24

Tuesday jackpot: \$20M

Thu., Jan. 21

Lucky for Life: 11, 15, 26, 34, 47; 15

OHIO

Sun., Jan. 24

Midday: 026, 4767

Evening: 510, 5418

SUNDAY'S CROSSWORD ANSWERS, 10B

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