BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION | LUPE MENDEZ

Former island resident named poet laureate

# LOTTERY **NUMBERS**

## TUESDAY

All or Nothing Day 02-04-07-08-10-11-14-16-19-20-21-24 **All or Nothing Evening** 02-03-05-06-07-12-15-17-18-19-20-23 **All or Nothing** Morning 01-02-05-07-08-10-11-12-14-16-22-24 All or Nothing Night 02-03-08-11-12-13-14-15-19-21-22-24 Cash 5 01-04-11-13-25 Estimated jackpot: \$25,000 Daily 4 Day 5-1-1-0, FIREBALL: 9 Daily 4 Evening 6-5-5-2, FIREBALL: 3 Daily 4 Morning 8-7-2-1, FIREBALL: 7 Daily 4 Night 7-7-0-2, FIREBALL: 3 Mega Millions 07-11-33-58-63, Mega Ball: 23, Megaplier: 2 Pick 3 Day 0-3-1, FIREBALL: 2 Pick 3 Evening 1-9-3, FIREBALL: 8 Pick 3 Morning 3-6-2, FIREBALL: 1 Pick 3 Night 0-8-2, FIREBALL: 1 **Powerball** Estimated jackpot: \$268 million

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Today, The Daily News catches up with Lupe Mendez, a former Galveston resident and a longtime educator who recently was awarded the title of 2022 Texas Poet Laureate by the Texas Commission on the Arts.

Name: Lupe Mendez Age: 44 Lives in: Houston Q. Where did you grow up and where did you at-

tend school? A. I am the son of a (former) undocumented Mexican farmer and Southern Tejana. I grew up in Galveston and attended O'Connell High School (class of '95). I am a first-generation student -the first in my family to attend a four-year institution (University of St. Thomas) earning a B.A. in bilingual education and the first in my family to earn a master's degree — a Master's of Fine Arts in creative writing from the University of Texas at El Paso.

### Q. What professional accomplishments are you most proud of?

A. My first book, "Why I Am Like Tequila," came out in 2019 from Willow



COURTESY

Lupe Mendez: "I will hope to bring poetry to the public in a variety of statewide locations. My goal will be to bring the public plus the poet to new spaces they haven't shared together before."

Books (Detroit, Michigan) and won the John A Robertson Award for Best First Book of Poetry from the Texas Institute of Letters. Next to that, I would have to say, being selected as Texas Poet Laureate ranks up there as well.

Q. How did you break into your career?

A. I got my start working my way into the Houston literary scene through its open-mic venues in the late '90s and early 2000s. I went from reading early works on stages across Houston, to then featuring

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at different events, to eventually organizing readings and publishing my work, to now serving as editor and curator for a variety of literary organizations across the nation.

Q. What was your reaction when you learned that you were named the 2022 Texas Poet Laureate?

A. I was actually a bit stunned. I had to have the representative from the Texas Commission on the Arts repeat it over the phone real slow. I didn't believe her at first - I thought she made a mis-



TO READ THE FULL **INTERVIEW WITH** MENDEZ GO TO **GALVNEWS.COM** 

take and giggled quite a bit. It is a blessing. According to the TCA, anyone can nominate a person or self-nominate, and I still have no clue who nominated me for the honor. So, whoever you are, thank you!

Q. Any advice for those wanting to be in the literary field?

A. Keep going. Every dissatisfied crowd or every rejection letter is a moment of learning. The basic fact remains that, regardless of the titles, the fact that you managed to put pen to paper or mouth to mic, you fabricated an image, a whole universe out of nothing but your own fiber, your own being. You are a creator, and that is worth the celebration. No one can take that from you.

Q. What's the best thing about your job/career?

**A.** My job? I get to build a curriculum that directly impacts more students than I ever taught all at one time. About my career, the

notion that even if I pass on and leave the earth, my work will remain. My voice is long and boundless.

Q. Do you have a favorite quote that inspires your decisions?

A. "Poesia, como el pan, es para todos." - Roque Dalton ("Poetry, like bread, is for everyone.")

Q. What can people look forward to as it relates to your career?

A. So if this question is in reference to my job as an educator, unless you are a student you won't see my impact of my work. But if this is in reference to my tenure as Texas Poet Laureate, I am currently working on a full year-long project that I will hope to bring poetry to the public in a variety of statewide locations. My goal will be to bring the public plus the poet to new spaces they haven't shared together before. — Angela Wilson

By Way of Introduction is an occasional Daily News Q&A series where readers can meet some of the movers and shakers and everyday folks who make Galveston County such a cool and interesting place to live.

# **HISTORY** | TULSA RACE MASSACRE

# Biden decries 'horrific' Tulsa massacre in emotional speech

## **By JONATHAN LEMIRE**

and DARLENE SUPERVILLE Associated Press

### » TULSA, Okla.

An emotional President Joe Biden marked the 100th anniversary of the massacre that destroyed a thriving Black community in Tulsa, declaring Tuesday that he had "come to fill the silence" about one of the nation's darkest and long suppressed - moments of racial violence.



come here to help fill the silence, because in silence wounds deepen."

After Biden left, some audience members spontaneously sang a famous civil rights march song, seen in the mirror dimly." "Ain't Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me Around." In 1921 — on May 31 and June 1 — a white mob, including some people hastily deputized by authorities, looted and burned Tulsa's Greenwood district, which was referred to as Black Wall Street. As many as 300 Black Tulsans were killed, and thousands of survivors were forced for a time into internment camps overseen by the National Guard. Burned bricks and a fragment of a church basement are about all that survive today of the more than 30-block historically Black district.

### On Tuesday, the president, joined by top Black advisers, met privately with three surviving members of the Greenwood community who lived through the violence, the White House said. Viola "Mother" Fletcher, Hughes "Uncle Red" Van Ellis and Lessie "Mother Randle" Benningfield Randle are all between the

ages of 101 and 107. Biden said their experience had been "a story an awakening going on in this country."

Several hundred people milled around Greenwood Avenue in front of the historic Vernon African Methodist Episcopal Church awaiting Biden's arrival at the nearby Greenwood Cultural Center. Some vendors were selling memorabilia, including Black Lives Matter hats, shirts and flags under a bridge of the interstate that cuts through the district.

that he was appointing Vice President Kamala Harris to lead efforts on voting rights as the GOP carries out efforts to pass laws restricting access to the ballot.

Republicans portray such legislation as aimed at preventing fraudulent voting, but many critics believe it is designed to limit the voting of minorities.

Biden has pledged to help combat racism in policing and other areas following nationwide protests after the death of George Floyd - a Black man who died while being forcibly detained by a white Minneapolis police officer — a year ago that reignited a national conversation about race.

**BIDEN** 

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"Some injustices are so heinous, so horrific, so grievous, they cannot be buried, no matter how hard people try," Biden said. "Only with truth can come healing."

Biden's commemoration of the deaths of hundreds of Black people killed by a white mob a century ago came amid the current national reckoning on racial justice.

"Just because history is silent, it does not mean that it did not take place," Biden said. He said "hell was unleashed, literal hell was unleashed." And now, he said, the nation must come to grips with the subsequent sin of denial.

**OBITUARIES** | TODAY'S DEATHS

Henry "Rick" Castillo, Sr., 63, Galveston Edna Lee Chambers, 81, Santa Fe Joyce Davis Clark, 91, Galveston Barbara Ann (O'Quinn) Grubbs, 84, Brenham LF"John" Holman, age not provided, Huntsville Mildred "Millie" McCall Jenkins, age not provided, Dickinson Elvira Valdez Rios, 91, Galveston Rojelio "Roy" Solis, Jr., 67, Texas City Kathleen Sue "Kitty" Thibodeaux, 78, Santa Fe

For today's obituaries » C4



"But no longer," the president told the survivors. "Now your story will be known in full view."

Outside, Latasha Sanders, 33, of Tulsa, brought her five children and a nephew in hopes of spotting Biden.

"It's been 100 years, and this is the first we've heard from any U.S. president," she said. "I brought my kids here today just so they could be a part of history and not just hear about it, and so they can teach generations to come."

John Ondiek, another Tulsan in the crowd following Biden's speech on cellphones, said he was encouraged that, "There aren't just Black people here. That tells me there's

The names and pictures of Black men killed by police, including Eric Harris and Terrence Crutcher in Tulsa, hung on a chainlink fence next to the church.

Biden briefly toured an exhibit at the center, at times stepping closer to peer at framed historic photographs, before he was escorted into a private meeting with the three survivors.

America's continuing struggle over race will continue to test Biden, whose presidency would have been impossible without overwhelming support from Black voters, both in the Democratic primaries and the general election. He announced Tuesday

Biden called on Congress to act swiftly to address policing reform. But he has also long projected himself as an ally of police, who are struggling with criticism about long-used tactics and training methods and difficulties in recruitment.

The Tulsa massacre has only recently entered the national discourse - and the presidential visit put an even brighter spotlight on the event.

