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The Carolinian



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Dedicated to the Spirit
and Service of God

HALIWA-SAPONI POW-WOW!



Tyria McCray Photo

This past Saturday several hundred people gathered for the 58th annual Haliwa-Saponi Indian Pow-Wow in Hollister, NC. This celebration is the oldest and largest American Indian Pow-wow in the state and features

American Indian arts, crafts, dancing, food, history, and music. "We enjoy coming to this event every year and it is truly near and dear to us because we are descendants of Haliwa-Saponi. It's amazing to be able to contin-

ue to celebrate and teach people about our culture. Every year the pow-wow grows and we are excited to see where it goes in the future," said Andrea Blue. Every April, the event coincides with the annual blooming

time of the Dogwood Trees in the South East North Carolina region, which was an important plant for native peoples as the bark and leaves were used for various medicines and the wood was used for tools and arrows.

The Haliwa-Saponi population consists of 4,060 Native American citizens of the North East Piedmont region of North Carolina. The name Haliwa is derived from the two counties of Halifax and Warren, which are the an-

cestral homelands of the Saponi people dating back to the early 18th Century. Now majority of them live in Halifax, Nash, or Warren County. See more pictures from the Pow-Wow on page 7.

Lawsuits Are Piling Up Against Cos Who Failed To Honor DE&I Pledges After Floyd

By Stacy M. Brown

NNPA

The aftermath of George Floyd's murder has led to several large corporations facing multiple lawsuits for failing to meet the diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) commitments they made. The commitments were made following Floyd's death in 2020, with businesses quickly issuing statements and pledging to adopt new ways to combat racism. Those pledges included addressing ethnic and gender inequalities among their employee ranks. However, according to Bloomberg Law, a host of lawsuits claim those pledges were never met.

Among the most egregious parties are Wells Fargo and Delta Air Lines. Bloomberg said those companies falsely claimed that, over the past three years, they worked to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion. Five shareholder lawsuits allege that Wells Fargo ran afoul of federal law against discrimination. Wells performed "sham interviews to nominally fulfill a diversity-enhancing policy," the lawsuit claims. Further, the bank's board acted on diversity and inclusion issues only because of negative media coverage. Law firms have filed at least 40 suits alleging that employment discrimination has only

increased since pledges were made. Sarah Fortt, worldwide co-chair of Latham & Watkins LLP's environmental, social, and governance practice, told the outlet that she also noted a spike in "reverse discrimination" claims. According to a published report, these lawsuits take the form of shareholder derivative proceedings, in which investors claim that a company's failure to achieve specific DEI goals caused the value of its stock to decline. Bloomberg noted that "DEI-specialized lawyers, academics, and practitioners contend that companies must balance the needs of the business, employees, shareholders, and customers

when creating progressive initiatives while averting legal action from any of those groups." Bloomberg continued: One strategy offered is formulating policies "aspirationally," or in general terms. Lawyers asserted that instead of creating a strict quota to employ a specific number of people of color for its board, a corporation might aim to match the proportion of people of color in its workforce to that of people of color on its board. Elena Philipova, director of sustainable finance at Refinitiv, noted that the most prosperous businesses are genuine, and authentic and have DEI objectives built into their DNA. (See **DE&I PLEDGES**, P. 2)



HAPPY TO HAVE THE CONVERSATION— Dawn Blagrove of Emancipate NC moderates a discussion on Confederate monuments and their effect on the community. This event was organized by NC CRED and hosted by Shaw University. Read more on page 7.

Progress In Identifying Tulsa Massacre Victims

A forensic anthropologist believes investigators are a step closer to identifying victims of the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre with the discovery of 19 surnames possibly connected to remains excavated from a Tulsa

cemetery. Although the six bodies associated with the names are not confirmed massacre victims, nor do they show signs of trauma such as gunshot wounds, identifying them would provide a pos-

sible roadmap to the most likely areas of the cemetery to search for victims, according to Phoebe Stubblefield. Identifying the remains would help lead to death certificates that contain the date of death,

indicating when the person was buried, said Stubblefield, a member of the team that conducted excavations in the cemetery the past three years. "We get closer to figuring out who was buried in that cemetery and when," Stubblefield said. Investigators could "maybe get the pattern of how people were buried in that cemetery. By that I mean burials for January, burials for February, burials for March, and we're moving toward June" when massacre victims were buried, said Stubblefield. "We can find a greater concentration of probable victims."

The massacre occurred May 31 and June 1, 1921, when a white mob descended on Greenwood—the Black section of Tulsa. More than 1,000 homes were burned, hundreds more were looted and destroyed and a thriving busi-

(See **TULSA**, P. 2)



STATE
NEWS
BRIEFS

CITY RAISES STARTING SALARY FOR POLICE OFFICERS TO \$60,000 ANNUALLY
 In a bold move, the city of Rocky Mount is raising its starting salary for police officers to \$60,000 annually, effective immediately. The \$60,000 starting salary authorized by City Manager Keith Rogers Jr. marks a 36% increase over the previous pay rate for newly hired police officers in Rocky Mount. Rogers said the higher starting salary should improve staffing in the Police Department. "Citywide we are working to update our classification and compensation structure, ensuring that we value all city employees," Rogers said. "Increasing starting pay for our officers will directly address our significant vacancy rate and enhance our recruitment efforts." Police Chief Robert Hassell said he appreciates the support from Rogers. Hassell said the higher starting salary is meaningful for his department's officers.

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'I'm Scared To Become A Teacher': Gun Violence Assessment By Aspiring Educator

By Clayton Henkel

NC Newsline

Kurstin Howe opened her remarks to the Wake County School Board last week remembering each victim of the Nashville, Tennessee, school shooting in March.

Howe is a Meredith College student and part of the future teachers program in Wake County.

Visibly emotional, Howe told school board members that the rise in gun violence across the country has left her scared and angry about her chosen profession.

"I'm scared to walk into a school and I'm scared to become a teacher. I am saddened by the fears teachers, students, staff, and I have to face every day. And I'm sad for all the lives lost due to senseless violence," she said.

Howe has been in the Wake County school system since Kindergarten. So much has changed in that time.

"While children and teachers are being slaughtered at school, school boards and legislative bodies are focused on pronouns, banning books and critical race theory. We have our priorities in the wrong place," said Howe.

It is not enough to simply advocate for safe gun storage or additional resources officers. Howe urged the board of education to call on state legislators to support an assault weapons ban and gun buyback programs, to raise the minimum wage to buy semi-automatic weapons, and to strengthen background checks.

"This country has more guns than any other place in the



world, and we have more guns than we do people," Howe continued. "Just two weeks ago, North Carolina repealed the state's requirement that a person needs to obtain a permit from a local sheriff before buying a pistol. We are going backwards."

Howe said elected officials must focus on common-sense gun control laws, not turning schools into structures that mimic prison.

The Wake County School Board did not engage Howe on her recommendations that were offered as part of the open public comment period.

The board instead approved a three-year, \$532,000 contract for a visitor management system for the district's nearly 200 schools.

The district's school safety advocacy council believes the standardized "sticker badges" will provide better controlled access to buildings and enhanced protection for students and staff.

The system is just one strategy to address a growing number of

online threats that have prompted a flurry of school lockdowns this year for WCPSS.

On the same day Howe delivered her remarks, the Kaiser Family Foundation released a new survey that found more than half of U.S. adults have now experienced a gun-related incident.

This week, NC Newsline takes a closer look at findings from the KFF survey:

21 - Percentage of U.S. adults who say they have personally been threatened with a gun

17 - Percentage who have personally witnessed someone being injured from a gun

4 - Percentage who have been injured by a gun

31 - Percentage who say they have a family member who has been injured from a gun

19 - Percentage with a family member killed by a gun (this includes suicide)

32 - Nearly one-third of Black adults say they worry "every day" or almost daily that a family member will become a victim

of gun violence.

33 - Percentage of Hispanic adults that hold that same fear

10 - Percentage of white adults that carry that worry

44 - Percentage of parents who say they have a gun in the home

52 - Percentage of those gun owners who say the firearm and ammunition are stored together

44 - Percentage who acknowledged that their guns were kept in an unlocked location

4 - Percentage who have shot a gun in self-defense

20 - Number of days since the Republican-controlled NC House overrode Gov. Cooper's veto of a bill (SB 41) repealing the state's pistol-purchasing permit system.

The KFF Health Tracking Poll surveyed 1,271 adults online and by phone March 14-23, 2023.

DE&I PLEDGES

Continued from page 1

Despite the lawsuits, some corporations have moved to improve DEI within their organizations.

For example, in December 2020, Microsoft announced that it had achieved its goal of doubling the number of Black and African American managers, senior individual contributors, and senior leaders in the U.S.

However, the report noted that the company still has work to do to achieve gender and racial parity at all levels.

Additionally, some companies are incorporating innovative approaches to improve diversity and inclusion.

For instance, Airbnb has reportedly implemented a program called "Project Lighthouse" to increase representation across race, gender, and other dimensions.

The program includes creating "belonging assessments" that measure employees' sense of belonging and connection to the company and then creating tailored solutions based on the results.

Still, the report concluded that some corporations had improved diversity and inclusion, while others faced lawsuits for failing to meet their DEI commitments.

The most prosperous businesses are open and honest about their objectives, pay attention to their staff, and incorporate DEI objectives into all operations, Philipova told Bloomberg.

TULSA

Continued from page 1

ness district known as Black Wall Street was decimated.

Most historians who have studied the event estimate the death toll to be between 75 and 300. Historians say many of the victims were buried in unmarked graves, their locations never recorded and rumors have persisted for decades of mass graves in the area.

Two of the 66 sets of remains found thus far have gunshot wounds, officials have said, and those remains are among 10 sets still being analyzed.

Those with gunshot wounds or trauma would indicate the remains were more likely to have been victims of the violence, according to Stubblefield.

City officials and Intermountain Forensics have sought DNA from people who believe they may be a relative or descendant of a massacre victim and others with a historical connection to Tulsa.

That DNA was being compared to samples from the excavated bodies in the effort to identify the remains.

None of the remains have yet been confirmed as massacre victims.

Identifying the surnames helps "move the needle on a more than century-old event," Tulsa Mayor G.T. Bynum said in a statement. "We are still in the beginning stages of this process. There is a lot more investigative work that is happening."

Investigators have tracked the surnames associated with the six bodies, four male and two female, to at least seven states: North Carolina, Georgia, Texas, Mississippi, Louisiana, Oklahoma and Alabama.

Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc. - Phi Lambda Chapter Presents

2023 Project Alpha: The Talk



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Project Alpha is designed to provide education, motivation, and skill-building on issues of responsibility, relationships, teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases for young males ages 12-15 years old.

Saturday April 29, 2023

9:00 am - 1:00pm

Roberts Park Community Center

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Registration Closes April 22nd

The Project Alpha curriculum focuses on five key topics:

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- Adolescent Pregnancy and Fatherhood
- Protecting Yourself and Your Partner
- Sexually Transmitted Diseases
- Intimate Violence in Relationships



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Business & Finance

The U.S. Manufacturing Boom Has A Real Estate Problem

IBT— Volkswagen's off-road brand Scout Motors studied 74 different parcels of land across the U.S. last summer as it hunted for a place to build a \$2 billion assembly plant.

It quickly eliminated almost all of them. In one case, they learned it would take six years to build a needed rail link. Others lacked access to clean power - crucial for a project for "green" electric vehicles. Some did not offer enough nearby skilled labor.

"We were hitting a deadline," said Scott Keogh, Scout's CEO, so they settled for a parcel in South Carolina that has all their desired features but is a bit smaller than they initially wanted - 1,600 instead of 2,000 acres.

Scout's scramble highlights a challenge facing dozens of global manufacturers. Fueled by a combination of hefty government incentives, a transition to new transportation and energy technologies, and national security concerns about relying on distant suppliers, especially in China, there's a factory-building boom taking place across the U.S.

But all that new construction has a real estate problem. More specifically, a "megasite" problem. While the U.S. has plentiful land, there are not that many places to quickly plunk a billion-dollar-plus factory.

The factory renaissance could soon hit a barrier because of the scarcity of ready-to-go megasites, according to 25 economic development groups, state and local officials, utilities, and companies interviewed by Reuters.

That would be a problem for the Biden administration, which has pushed through legislation to fuel the developments. Corporations have announced dozens of projects since the passage of the Inflation Reduction Act and the CHIPS Act last year.

A White House official said it was a "high-class problem" to have, adding: "Folks are finding places to build. I don't think I've heard of one company abandoning plans to go forward because they're not able to find a site."



There's no single definition for a megasite, but it generally refers to a very large plot -- one common threshold is 1,000 acres -- tied to transport, low-cost and preferably renewable energy, and a nearby supply of skilled labor.

Local economic development agencies and states have long cultivated big industrial developments by assembling land and installing utilities in the hope of luring the next big auto assembly or steel plant with the promise of fast-track building.

Speed is often key. When electric vehicle maker Rivian Automotive Inc. was hunting for a place to build a \$5 billion plant, it considered a spot just outside Fort Worth, Texas.

But the EV-maker "had some pretty aggressive timelines as far as when they needed certain elements of the transportation infrastructure in place," said Robert Sturns, director of the Fort Worth Economic Development Department. Fort Worth could not meet those, and the project jumped to Georgia in late 2021.

The requirements on megasites can be very specific. Intel

Corp's \$20 billion semiconductor plant going up in Ohio could not be situated too close to a rail line, since passing trains can create unacceptable vibrations, according to the company.

Even smaller factories can find it difficult to build quickly in this environment.

CubicPV, which makes silicon wafers used in solar panels, launched a nationwide search for a 100-to-130-acre site immediately after the IRA passed last August. They have a tight time frame, said Todd Templeton, the company's chief commercial officer, since IRA tax incentives start to phase out at the end of this decade.

They studied hundreds of sites but constantly hit roadblocks. Some locations said it would take two or three years just to get utilities installed, said Templeton. They are choosing from two good possibilities and are aiming to have the plant open by 2025.

One site selection executive, Gregg Wassmansdorf, a senior managing director of global strategy consulting with Newmark Group Inc., estimates fewer than two dozen true megasites are still available across the

country at widely varying stages of development.

"Every company, of course, wants shovel-ready megasites," said Christopher Chung, chief executive of the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina. "But those are more or less pretty picked over with a couple of exceptions here or there."

Didi Caldwell, president of consultancy firm Global Location Strategies in Greenville, South Carolina, uses a database from fDi Markets, a London-based firm that tracks major cross-border investments worldwide, to gauge how fast demand for megasites has grown in the U.S.

According to that source, she said, there were 20 industrial projects with investments over \$1 billion and a promise of creating at least 1,000 jobs announced last year in the U.S. - up from 15 the year before, and only eight the year before that.

In the decade and a half before the recent spike, the annual average was just over five and many years saw just three or four large projects announced.

One major constraint, particularly for energy-hungry factories

such as battery plants, is the need for large amounts of electrical power.

"Some of these projects require hundreds of megawatts," said Caldwell. "At the same time, we're shutting a lot of coal plants."

While the U.S. is investing heavily in building green power sources, those projects also face delays. A report by Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory found that a typical project built in 2022 took five years from the initial request to interconnect it with the electrical grid to commercial operations, up from three years in 2015.

The cost and difficulty of building new long-distance transmission lines has also soared in recent years, said Rob Gramlich, president of Grid Strategies LLC, an engineering and economic analysis firm focused on the power industry.

There's a rush to prepare more megasites. Michigan just created four. The governors of South Carolina, Virginia and North Carolina have each proposed to spend hundreds of millions of dollars on readying industrial sites in the coming years. Illinois this year will allocate \$40 million in grants to prepare existing sites for companies seeking to move quickly.

But creating new megasites

is inherently difficult. Environmental regulations often limit developments, local communities sometimes oppose them, and the sheer scale of the projects often require just the right mix of conditions to make it feasible.

To be sure, companies want more megasites for pocketbook reasons.

"The reason they would like more megasites, of course, is that then they could compete for better pricing" when they have more options to choose from, said Mike Tracy, principal of the Agile Group, which advises companies like automakers.

There are also the intangibles. The VW Scout plant, for instance, is situated in clear view of a major interstate highway connecting South Carolina's coastal regions to the upper Midwest. That means putting the Scout name, being revived by VW after four decades of dormancy, in sight of tens of thousands of passing motorists a day.

"We have a lot of people who are coming from the north or from the Midwest down that highway that would drive right by that facility as they go to the beaches of South Carolina and Georgia and Florida," said Harry Lightsey III, South Carolina's secretary of commerce. "That was all important."

Banking With Bea
By Betesha Ethridge

HOW TO USE YOUR CREDIT

In celebration of Financial Literacy Month, let's talk about credit. I have had many conversations over the past few weeks regarding credit and here are some tips that I want to share with all of you.

Let's start with what factors into your credit score. Typically, 40% is payment history, 23% credit usage/utilization, 11% total balances, 21% credit age, and 5% recent credit inquiries. The credit bureaus only report what they receive from creditors. When searching for a lender, find out what credit reporting agency they search, because the information on that report is what they will see. For example, some financial institutions only check Transunion, but some of the creditors may only report to Equifax. Meaning, if your mortgage company only reports to Equifax, but your financial institution only checks Transunion, your mortgage will not be listed on it, which also impacts your credit worthiness, depending on what you are applying for. The flip side to this is that maybe there is a collection item on your Equifax report, but not your Transunion report. If your financial institution only checks Transunion, this works in your favor.

When it comes to credit cards, I often hear people say, "I want to pay it off and close it." Well, if the reason is to help control your spending, try paying it off and cutting the card up, not closing it. Especially if most of your credit history is related to that account. If you have had that account for many years and you close it, the years are removed from your total credit age. That could have a negative impact. Also, the total amount of available credit decreases. It is ok to have the credit, however it is wise to control the balances.

When it comes to collection items on your credit report there are some factors to consider. The age of that item, the amount of that item, and the balance of that item. According to lendingtree.com, "Successfully disputing inaccurate information is the only surefire way to get collections removed from your credit report." If the collections item is valid, it can stay on your credit report for 7 years. You may be making on-time payments with your other accounts but may wonder why your score isn't improving. It could be because you have something negatively reported each month too. Paying off a collections account could raise your credit scores. After you've paid it, request a "goodwill deletion" from the creditor. Sometimes they are immediately removed without your having to request one.

Your credit report is a picture of your spending and repayment habits. Your overall credit utilization reflects your ability to have discipline with your spending. Try to maintain a balance of 30% of the credit limit. For example, if your credit limit is \$1000, then your balance should never be over \$300 to be considered good. If life happens, and it eventually will, use the credit card. That was the purpose of having it. The secret is to pay at least the minimum amount due, on-time, and when you are able, pay it down to at least 30% of the limit by the end of the statement cycle period. That ensures that the lowest balance is reflected on your credit report. The creditor rewards you for using the card and keeping it in good standing. The credit bureau rewards your score for being in good standing and controlling your spending. It's a win, win!

NC Blockchain Initiative Announces New Appointments And Strategy for 2023-24

The North Carolina Blockchain Initiative (NCBI) was launched in 2019 as a nonpartisan, all-volunteer task force under the supervision of the Office of the Lieutenant Governor of North Carolina to serve as a primary resource on the emerging digital asset and blockchain ecosystem.

Recognizing the increasing importance of financial technology and blockchain-based technologies, bitcoin, virtual assets, smart contracts, and stablecoins, the NCBI is announcing an expansion plan and new appointments for 2023-24. The ongoing initiative will explore the broader implications for this evolving technology, gather information from private and public sources, pursue policy recommendations, and strengthen our state's position as a leader in technological innovation and consumer protection.

"North Carolina is already home to many notable blockchain and FinTech startups, and we need to do all we can to keep our state competitive," said Lieutenant Governor Robinson. "We appreciate the incredible work this task force has done in researching this transformational technology, and we thank them for their continued service." "North Carolina is fortunate to have several national leaders on Capitol Hill focused on the crypto ecosystem, including Representative Patrick McHenry, Chairman of the U.S. House Financial Services Committee, and U.S. Senator Ted Budd, a leading voice on decentralized finance," said Dan Spuller, who serves as a Co-Chair to NCBI, and Senior Director of Industry Affairs for the Washington-based Blockchain Association. "We are a state where hard work, innovation, and our ability to adapt has enabled North Carolina to compete globally on many levels."

North Carolina state policymakers have historically been favorable to blockchain technology, and were among the earliest pioneers of regulatory innovation for the blockchain industry with the passage of the North Carolina Money Transmitters Act of 2016, and bipartisan North Carolina Regulatory Sandbox Act of 2021, the latter of which passed both chambers unanimously and created a multi-agency innovation council.



The passage of the bi-partisan Sandbox Act of 2021 was a clear indicator North Carolina is working to be a leader in the ecosystem," said Agnes Gambill West.

The North Carolina Blockchain Initiative and Office of the Lieutenant Governor of North Carolina announced the following nine appointments to the task force:

- Daniel Spuller - Spuller is Head of Industry Affairs for the Blockchain Association, an appointee to the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond's business and payments advisory council, and previously served in the North Carolina Department of Commerce. He is a reappointment to the task force.
- Eric Porper - Porper is the co-founder of Emblem Vault and Unboxed Venture Studio based out of Durham. He is a reappointment to the task force.
- Stuart Russell - Russell is an attorney for a financial institution and investor in cryptocurrencies. He has previously served as Chair of the Forsyth County Board of Elections, Chair of the Forsyth County Bar Association, and as a member of the Board of Governors for the North Carolina Bar Association. He is a new appointment to the task force.
- Industry Sector Advisors
- Agnes Gambill West (Legal Innovation & Technology) - Gambill West is a professor at Appalachian State University, a visiting senior research fellow at the Mercatus Center, an appointee to the North Carolina Innovation Council, a member of the Business and Consumer Payments Advisory Council for

the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond, and a former NCBI Co-Chair. She is a reappointment to the task force.

- John Bridge (Artificial Intelligence) - Bridge is President of government security at Trust Stamp, and has 34 years of law enforcement and military experience, including 25 years with United States Marshals Service. He is a reappointment to the task force.
- Faruk Okcetin (Web3) - Okcetin is a seasoned entrepreneur starting over 10 different businesses over the last 29 years, currently the Director of Operations at Zeto Inc., a medical de-

vice manufacturer. He is a reappointment to the task force.

- Jai Arun Singh (Web3 Technology) Singh is the co-author of Blockchain for Business, and is an executive with IBM in Research Triangle Park. He is a reappointment to the task force.
- Gerald Wilkie (Bitcoin Mining Specialist) - Gerald brings over 10 years of mining experience to the task force. He founded HMTech in 2014 when he left the corporate world, and he now runs a 12MW hosting facility in Graham. Out of the same facility they operate the largest ASIC repair facility in North America with certifications from all major manufacturers. He is a new appointment to the task force.
- Tobias Barbir (Bitcoin Mining Specialist) - Barbir founded the International Bitcoin Mining Museum. He is a new appointment to the task force.

Notable Accomplishments of the North Carolina Blockchain Initiative:

- Developed a series of policy and legislative recommendations designed to promote opportunities for economic growth and cost efficiencies;
- Played a central role in the development and passage of the bipartisan North Carolina Regulatory Sandbox Act of 2021, and creation of the North Carolina Innovation Council

Raleigh AKAs Host Estate Planning Event

On Tuesday, April 4th, 2023, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated®, Alpha Theta Omega Chapter of Raleigh, NC, hosted an estate planning event entitled "Diapers to Dentures: A Discussion of Estate Planning During Every Phase of Life." Robyn Hicks-Guinn, Managing Attorney of Hicks-Guinn Law, PLLC, and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated member, led the public discussion. Attorney Hicks-Guinn educated the audience on creating and managing trusts, wills, and estate plans. Audience members were given Estate Planning recommendations pertinent to their current phase of life. Several audience members were given resources and consultations through a raffle sponsored by Attorney Hicks-



Guinn. Attorney Hick-Guinn is the daughter of Earlene Briggs, a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated®, Alpha Theta Omega Chapter.

The event was hosted by Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated®, Alpha Theta Omega Chapter's Building Our Economic Wealth Committee. This

committee is focused on building personal, organizational, and community economic wealth and is co-chaired by Ayana Ferguson and Sequita Lindsey.

Golden LEAF Foundation Announces \$5.4 Million In Funding

The Golden LEAF Board of Directors awarded a total of \$5,417,644 million in funding at its April 2023 meeting. The Board awarded \$2,359,000 in funding to support projects through the Open Grants Program, \$2,060,000 in funding to support scholarships for students to attend North Carolina community colleges, and \$748,644 in funding to support a project through the Community-Based Grants Initiative in the Southeast Prosperity Zone. The Golden LEAF Board also awarded \$250,000 in funding for projects through the Flood Mitigation Program.

Directors awarded seven projects totaling \$2,359,000 in Open Grants Program funding. These projects will support job creation and economic investment, workforce preparedness, and agriculture in Beaufort, Davidson, Randolph, Rockingham, Surry, Wayne, and Wilson counties.

•\$500,000 to the Town of Aurora for infrastructure needs to support the new Industrial Facility Training Center, a collaborative project developed with Beaufort County Community College (BCCC), Nutrien, and the Town of Aurora. BCCC will provide customized training for Nutrien employees and offer courses and the opportunity to

earn relevant 3rd-party certifications to at least 60 students from Beaufort, Hyde, Tyrrell, and Washington counties.

•\$340,000 to Barton College for equipment and construction costs that will allow the college to accommodate at least 25 more students in its Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program and also support its new family nurse practitioner (FNP) program, expected to produce 13 new FNPs in each graduating class.

•\$455,000 to Davidson County Schools to support addition of a welding fabrication pathway at South Davidson High School that would double its capacity to 40

for high school students to train and earn a welding certification from Davidson-Davie Community College through the Career and College Promise program.

•\$200,000 to Rockingham Community College for equipment to support expansion of RCC's welding program to help meet the region's welder and welding skills shortage. The college will significantly increase the number of students in its curriculum programs and will create new continuing education programs.

•\$200,000 to Surry Community College to purchase two automatic range trucks with trailers to expand its truck driver training program and to increase the

number of students trained by up to 60 students annually.

•\$500,000 to the University of Mount Olive for design and infrastructure costs to support development of a new livestock/forage training facility that will enable expanded content and experiential learning, and additional credentials offered to prepare more students for entry-level and higher positions at regional ag businesses. The facility will also serve as a research and training site for students and faculty, host training opportunities for farmers and events for high school students, and expose high school students to agriculture related career pathways.

•\$164,000 to Uwharrie Charter Academy (UCA) for equipment for UCA's newly constructed Career Academy facility that will open in August 2023. The Career Academy will train high school students in skills related to construction trades, advanced manufacturing, health sciences, automotive technologies, and other high-demand industries. UCA has also developed a partnership with Randolph Community College to provide program pathways in areas where certification is required.

The Golden LEAF Board awarded \$748,644 in Community-

(See **GOLDEN LEAF**, P. 6)

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Small and local businesses are what make communities strong. When you spend your money with these companies, those dollars stay here. Your dollar circulates in the community so much longer when you buy local. These business owners are your neighbors, your friends and a big part of the financial backbone of our communities.

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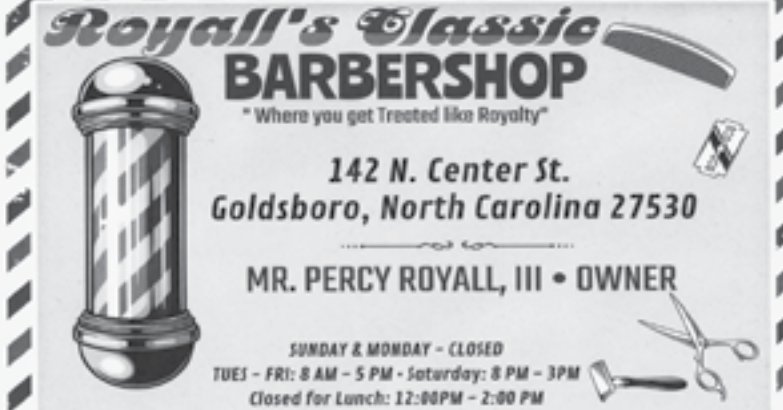
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Health & Wellness

Pandemic EBT Program For Children Is Given A Temporary Lifeline

RALEIGH — A program that helped 1.6 million children get healthy food for the last three years is coming to an end, NCDHHS announced this week.

The Pandemic EBT program continues this summer for K-12 students who attend school in person. The United States Department of Agriculture funds P-EBT and granted the extension. Benefits for all other children will end in May at the end of the school year. This includes children younger than 6 who receive Food and Nutrition Services. Benefits also end in May for students who attended virtual or home school.

The North Carolina P-EBT program will not be available in the 2023-2024 school year.

"This program, though temporary, has been a lifeline for so many children to get nutritious meals when they could not get them at school," said Susan Gale Perry, NCDHHS Chief Deputy Secretary for Opportunity and Well-Being. "Children need good nutrition to grow up healthy and to live their best lives. This program shows how we can meet a critical need for our children across North Carolina."

To be eligible, a student must take part in their school's free- or reduced-price meals program



social services. While P-EBT ends this summer, the FNS program is still available to North Carolina families. Families with children under 5 may be eligible for the WIC program and can learn more at www.ncdhhs.gov/ncwic.

For more information on P-EBT, frequently asked questions or additional updates, visit www.ncdhhs.gov/PEBT. NCDHHS administers P-EBT in partnership with the NC Department of Public Instruction.

For additional summer meals resources, families can do the following:

Text FOOD or COMIDA to 304-304 during the summer months to find a site nearby with free meals for kids Visit NCDHHS.gov/FoodResources for a variety of food resources available for families Visit NCDHHS.gov/ncwic to learn more about the WIC program. It serves families with children under 5, pregnant and postpartum women.

Visit NC 211 provided by the United Way (www.nc211.org) or dial 2-1-1 or 1-888-892-1162.

Women's Health Event

The NCCU for Women's Health Awareness Conference 2023 was held on Saturday, April 15th. Over 800 people attended the day long event on the campus of NCCU. The event featured sessions covering: breast health education; diabetes health education; cardiovascular health education; maternal health education; rheumatoid arthritis; healthy living and much more.

The event was sponsored by NCCU's Department of Health Education, the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS), and the Durham Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc.

Mathias Bishop Photos



this school year. (Check here to see if your child's school participates.) Students must be approved by May 31 to receive benefits this summer. They must also attend school in person. Eligible students will receive one payment of \$120 in July to cover the summer. The payment is made to the card for families who receive FNS benefits or P-EBT benefits.

Families new to the program will receive a card in the mail. COVID-19 related absences are not a factor in summer.

Families who have not already qualified for free or reduced lunch should apply by May 1. Applications take more than a month to process and must be approved by May 31. Apply to the school's free or reduced meals program

or Food and Nutrition services. Enrollment for P-EBT and school meals is automatic for families with FNS benefits on or before May 31.

If you need information on how to apply for free or reduced-price meals, contact your child's school. To apply for FNS, visit www.ncdhhs.gov/FNS or apply through your local county department of

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An Introduction To Black Agriculture, A Fundamental Story

By Jason Lindsay

Staff Writer

Agriculture holds a particular story when it comes to the black agrarian of America. With two sides of the coin, the black farmer has most commonly found the tail end. After building the wealth of this nation through agricultural advances in crops like rice, sugar, and later cotton, the black agrarian skill set and national connection to nature evolved the United States to a stature of nationality.

The demand that led to the formation of the trans-Atlantic slave trade was a demand for agricultural skills. The people captured and kidnapped to this country were known for their agrarian services, be it the ability to expand rice cultivation, identify timber and the wide variety of uses, identify land contoured, and lay plans for man-made lakes and rivers; the new American slave was, in fact, African's highly skilled labors. A skill that, in some ways, is still unmatched today.

Even though Asia is known for rice cultivation, some even argue the origin of rice in Asia. Yet the largest rice paddies in the history of rice cultivation lie on the coastal plains of South Carolina. Capturing Africans from the west coast of Africa who were renowned rice planters according to the explorer of

the time, yet it would be on new land in the west, under the tyranny of slavery in a form never foreseen in world history, which these African would engineer and construct the largest rice fields in the world. The rice paddies of South Carolina are so extensive that still, today, hundreds of years after the trans-Atlantic slave trade, it can still be seen from space.

It is a known fact that through the production of African-grown rice in America, America established its first wealthy class. It was the contribution of these same people that gifted America with instruments like the banjo, which would later become an American staple.

Over three hundred years after the emancipation proclamation, black folk would waste no time in organizing. With the United States government not following through on its promise to the once enslaved of "forty acres and a mule," black folks were no strangers to hard work, and despite much discrimination and launching reaching a rate high than seen during slavery, we manage to purchase over 15 million acres mainly across the south by 1910, a fifty-year span.

To place this into perspective, from the emancipation proclamation (1863) to 1910, without any assistance from the institution that kept us in bondage,



black folk collectively purchased 300,000 acres of land per year for over fifty years.

It was this time that brought some of the nation's first noted African American intellectual minds like W.E.B. Du Bios, who was the first black graduate of Harvard. Being a study of sociol-

ogy, Du Bios collected the first social data on black people in America and used it as a point of resolution for issues in the black community.

In the same instance, well-born almost twelve years before Du Bios, Booker T. Washington was a son of the South. Born

in Franklin County, Virginia, Washington wouldn't gain his freedom until he was nine years old. Washington would go on to earn his way into Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, and with borrowed money from Hampton and a local black church, he purchased 100 acres of farmland just outside of Tuskegee, Alabama, on which he would form the Tuskegee Normal School for Colored Teachers.

Washington would lead with an example of fortitude. During the first year in Alabama, Washington and his students would host the classes in a local black church while they were building the University's first building out of bricks made with their own hands. Onsite buildings began going up black students from across the south began raining in.

Washington notices an ongoing trend amongst the new students. A good percentage of students showed up without shoes. With Washington quoted stating: "I have learned that success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which he has overcome while trying to succeed." Washington would overcome the obstacle of barefooted students by creating a show-

making shop. So the student that walked on to this rural black institution could leave knowing how to make shoes themselves.

It has been from the rural black-stewarded lands of America in which the nation's greatest thinkers and doers have blossomed. Black survival can be directly attributed to black collectivism. In the 1880's and 1890's right here in North Carolina, came the rise of Black Populism.

The University of North Carolina, Greensboro, highlighted this history in an article entitled "Black Populism in the New South." They explain black populism rising during the fall of reconstruction, yet witnessed the erection of Jim Crow laws. Through the ambition of black farmers, farm workers, and sharecroppers, the organizations found a place and purpose. Labor movements, cooperative movements, black banks, and credit unions were all created to serve a people whose own government ignored.

Groups like the "Farmers of Color Alliance" (1886-1891) would form after black farmers were denied entry into white lead coops. The alliance would place clauses into their by-laws, stressing emphasis on having both black and white members, making sure they weren't perpetuating the problem.

A man by the name of Walter A. Pattillo would lead the efforts in North Carolina. A preacher and community leader in Granville County, NC, Rev. Pattillo, was amongst the leaders of the Farmers of Color Alliance after starting and growing the black baptist church in his area, developing and molding public education opportunities for black children, and starting a black orphanage in Granville County.

The black populist movement would combine with the People's Party, a third party in the United States that was violently weeded out by the Democratic Party of the early 1900s.

Black Populism holds the secret of how people survive in a nation that hates them. Black Populism is the last collective politic of black agrarian-based communities. What most folk don't know is that black agriculture has been forced into a politic, and stories that have yet to be told but are being told now. To be continued.

USDA Partners For Small Business Outreach

Washington, D.C.—The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), in partnership with the Small Business Administration (SBA) and the Federal Depositary Insurance Corporation (FDIC), is hosting a series of regional economic development workshops on the "Path to Prosperity" in Mississippi, Kentucky, and Georgia to provide small businesses, including farmers and ranchers, with the resources and tools they need to grow.

"These independent businesses, in rural communities, are the cornerstone of American life but many of them lack the same level of access to resources and economic development as their counterparts in larger metro areas," said Malcom A. Shorter, USDA's Acting Assistant Secretary for Administration. "USDA is committed to ensuring that small businesses of all types have the knowledge and opportunity to prosper, create jobs and stimulate their local economies."

The partnership and the "Path

to Prosperity" workshops align with the Biden-Harris Administration's Executive Order on "Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government" and show the Department's commitment to increase access to USDA's products and services and improve service delivery in rural and underserved communities.

Shorter said "Given USDA's procurement portfolio of more than \$9 billion annually, we can help small businesses access capital through government contracts. Last year, 25.8% of the Department's contracts went to small, disadvantaged businesses, surpassing our goal of 21.5%, and we plan to exceed that goal again this year."

Through the "Path to Prosperity" regional economic development series; Federal, state, and local government agencies, along with private sector and non-profit partners, will provide small businesses and aspiring en-

trepreneurs with resources and an opportunity to engage with experts and each other to learn best practices. The no-cost series features experts in how to start a business, how to access capital, and how to do business with the government. They will also include facilitated lender-small business matchmaking sessions. In order to meet participants where they are, the partnership will be conducting a pre-event assessment. Additional resources and experts will be provided based on any further needs.

Presenters will discuss:

- Incentivizing unbanked and under-banked small business owners and individuals to establish a sustainable relationship with an insured financial institution,
- Expanding technical assis-

tance and financial education for small business owners and individuals to improve their bankability,

- Increasing the number of SBA certified lenders to provide access to capital for small, minority, and underserved businesses, and

- Developing contracting relationships with Federal government and private industry partners.

Workshop participants include small businesses, financial institutions, community development financial institutions (CDFIs), trade groups, local, state, and Federal agencies, community leaders, nonprofits, and community-based staff representing organizations.

To learn more, visit www.usda.gov.

Leroy James: Pitt County Agricultural Icon

By Amanda Hadden

Special To The Carolinian

Leroy James, 89, was born in Ahoskie, NC. He grew up on a farm with his parents and 11 siblings. He and four of his siblings attended college, he attending North Carolina A&T University from 1953-1957.

While at A&T, he was under the tutelage of historic professors such as Dr. AP Bell, Dr. Samuel Dunn and Dr. Talmedge Brewer. Excelling at his studies, he was offered a four-year scholarship to Tuskegee's School of Veterinary Medicine, the only HBCU with a school of veterinary medicine. Traditionally African American students who went to college had additional responsibilities to provide for their families, because his parents had three children in college at the same time, he had to turn down the offer to Tuskegee. As a result, he began his career with the Wayne County Agricultural Extension office in Goldsboro,



working with George McDaniel, the black cooperative extension director.

When James began his career with Agricultural extension, extension was segregated with black agents only being able to work with black farmers and receiving a much lower salary than their white counterparts. In 1958 the chairmanship for Pitt County became open and James applied.

He got the job with the stipulation that he would be able to work with white and black farm-

ers. With this promotion, James became the first African American County Extension Chair in Pitt County and the third in the state behind Carl Hodges in Durham County and James Wright in Hertford County. These opportunities were brought about by the winning of African Americans in the Bazemore Class Action lawsuit, which provided equal opportunities for pay and upward mobility in the North Carolina Agricultural Extension system.

James served as County Extension Chair for 12 years, working



in extension a total of 30 years.

During his tenure, he was approached by farmers in the area about needing a place to sell their produce. Seeing the need and serving his community, James established the Pitt County Farmers Market, which now serves over 98,000 customers annually.

In 2015 he was honored by the Pitt County Board of Commissioners, naming the market after him. The Leroy James Farmers Market is located at 4560 County Home Rd, Greenville, NC 27858.

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Golden LEAF—CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

Based Grants Initiative in the Southeast Prosperity Zone funding to the Town of Maysville located in Jones County to establish a workforce development training center in collaboration with Lenoir Community College to be located in a vacant building owned by the town. The project is expected to close the skills gap of needed workers in maintenance, construction trades, and other high-demand, local jobs. This project brings the total awarded in the Southeast Prosperity Zone through the Community-Based Grants Initiative to \$10,997,459.

The State of North Carolina appropriated the Golden LEAF Foundation \$25 million for a Flood Mitigation Program. The Flood Mitigation Program will award funding of up to \$250,000 per project. Funds may only be

awarded to units of local government. The Golden LEAF Board awarded \$250,000 in funding to the Town of Manteo in Dare County to implement design solutions to reduce flow at a connection point and correct other deficiencies in the drainage system at Simon and Agona streets. This area has been identified by the Town of Manteo as a high-priority area due to frequent and often prolonged flooding during significant rainfalls, which submerges roadways and adjacent properties.

The North Carolina Community College System was awarded \$2,060,000 by the Golden LEAF Board to support scholarships for students from rural and suburban counties to attend participating North Carolina community colleges. Curriculum students can receive up to

\$2,250 per year, and continuing education students can receive up to \$1,850 per year. The Golden LEAF Foundation has awarded funds for scholarships to students attending North Carolina community colleges since 2000.

Since 1999, Golden LEAF has funded 2,088 projects totaling \$1.2 billion supporting the mission of advancing economic opportunity in North Carolina's rural, tobacco-dependent, and economically distressed communities. Golden LEAF's 15-member Board of Directors is appointed by the Governor, the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House. Buddy Keller of Sanford was welcomed as the newest member of the Board at the April meeting. Mr. Keller was appointed by the Speaker of the House.

Community

Confederate Monument Removal Forum Highlights Conflict

By Tyria McCray
Staff Writer

To highlight the impact on confederate monuments, NC CRED hosted a symposium focused on helping people understand the harm confederate monuments cause and why they need to be removed. Last Thursday from 10-4pm, local elected leaders, students, local nonprofits, and Raleigh residents, gathered at Shaw University's historic Estey Hall to learn the key reason for monument removal. Discussed were specific harms from multiple perspectives, and the need for urgency in eradicating these symbols of white supremacy. Also touched on was the need to address the immense harm they have inflicted in our communities.

"I'm glad you are here and interested in moving forward in our quest of justice and equality. We need to ensure that black lives matter is not just a slogan but a reality," said James E. Williams, NC CRED Board Chair. "About 10 years ago, many of us realized that there was a need for some entity to address the racial disparities and inequities within our criminal justice system. We began to figure out a way to get them to the table to begin to implement policies and changes to address them. So that is basically why NC CRED was formed."

As the symposium was underway, the first panel discussion gave an interesting perspective on the harms to society caused by confederate monuments. The four panelists consisted of Executive Director of WeAre nonprofit, Ronda Taylor-Bullock, UNC Chapel-Hill Professor Deborah Gerhardt, Chapel Hill's new poet laureate, Mr. Cortland Gilliam, and Public Defender Stuart Hig-

don of Gaston County shared their experiences, perspectives, and why this work is important to them.

"These monuments of hatred contribute to the feelings of superiority. If we are taking monuments down, some white people are taking that as us taking away their superiority. That is why it is important to talk about the harm if we care about people. We also have to think about the children we want to raise and what they need to know," said Bullock Stuart Higdon, also shared his thoughts.

"I didn't go to school with a black person until 6th grade. So the legacy of racial justice was not something that came easy. I didn't understand how it played a part in law until I became a lawyer. Also, I think it's important that we address symbols when people come into a courthouse. In front of the courthouse, there is a confederate monument and we are working on that. So as we represent hundreds of black people and employ black attorneys, we are continuing to learn about the harm it is causing to our society," said Higdon.

Following that discussion, Dawn Blagrove, Executive Director of Emancipate NC, moderated a candid, yet intriguing discussion focused on the consequences of confederate monument removal. Panelists included, Calvin Stevens of CATE Services & Construction, LLC, James Crawford, Former Chatham County Commission, Attorney Jeremy Collins of Blackacre & Providence Omnistructure, and Mondale Robinson, Enfield Mayor and Founding Principal at Black Male Voter Project, & Activist. Panelists shared that since their involvement in confederate mon-



ument removal, there has been more rigamarole in what happens in the background. They began to address the harms caused by confederate monuments and why removing them is not an easy task, nor one that comes free of consequence and repercussions.

Looking back to September of 2022, the removal of a Confederate monument in Enfield, NC has divided the town. Since the removal, the mayor and town residents have been receiving death threats and racial slurs. At the request of the police chief and district attorney, the State Bureau of Investigation began investigating Mayor Mondale Robinson and the removal of the monument.

"Since then, we are still dealing with repercussions of white su-

premac. I've been dealing with death threats, emails, and had to be escorted to my car. I have also been targeted by the guy who spearheaded the Charlottesville riot who is a member of the loyal white knights of the Klu Klux Klan," said Robinson.

The last discussion focused on the history and present landscape of confederate monuments. Moderated by Dr. Valerie Ann Johnson, Dean of School of Arts, Sciences, and Humanities, panel-

ists centered on the history of confederate monuments removal, elaborating on efforts that are underway in Edenton and Gaston County and the harms being cited as cause for their removal.

Andreas Heath of Move the Monument Coalition in Edenton, NC shared that the coalition has been fighting to remove a Confederate monument honoring the legacy of the pro-slavery Confederacy. Following a lawsuit filed against the town by various

pro-Confederate groups to keep the monument in its place, the Coalition erected a billboard to demonstrate they aren't backing down.

History Professor at UNC Chapel-Hill, W. Fitzhugh Brundage spoke of his contribution to the book *Confederate Statues and Memorization* which artfully engages the past and its influence on present racial and social tensions in an accessible format for students and interested general readers.

Lastly, Abraham Rubert-Schweel, NC native and attorney for the firm Tin Fulton Walker & Owen, reflected on his current civil rights cases, some including confederate monuments. One case in particular is NAACP v. Gaston, a suit seeking to remove the Confederate Monument located in front of the Gaston County Courthouse. He also emphasized that his team was contacted to address and tackle systemic challenges to unconstitutional state, city and police conduct, in addition to the monument lawsuit.

To close out the conference, Akiba Hausson Byrd, Jr. gave a heartfelt spoken word performance. As a poet, organizer, author, NC A&T Alumni, Byrd's poetry focuses on going through life as an African American man and finding his purpose. He shared that by baring his strengths, and his weaknesses, he hopes to inform, entertain, and inspire a new generation of freedom seekers to search for, and follow their own path.

Top Ladies Ready Teens For Success

On this past Saturday, 15April, The Wendell Top Ladies & Top Teens spent a busy day with service projects that positively impact the community. Support for The UNCF & The March of Dimes for Babies were the focus. The UNCF was highlighted by a visit to The HBCU, A&T University in Greensboro. An extensive tour was led by Lady Ashley Campbell, a senior student, tour guide, former Wendell Top Teen & a newly inducted Top Lady. The tour provided the group with a valuable outlook of college life.

The group's community project was followed by a March of Dimes for Babies' fundraising project to raise awareness & to support the research to help prevent preterm babies birth defects & infant mortality. It was an enjoyable experience by the group to be able to make such a difference in the lives of so many, especially for families



of color. On the same day, The Chapter's Community Partnership was enhanced as 3 Wendell Top Ladies, who volunteer as members of the local Church's Health Ministry, became certified in "Provider First Aid & Basic CPR" to support the local congregation & community.

The Chapter continues to provide community service by both the Wendell Top Ladies & Top Teens as well as strengthen the mentor/mentee relationship; exposing & enhancing leadership skills in efforts to prepare The Top Teens for culture, education & civic volunteer service projects & other worthwhile community endeavors"

More Housing For Wake Co.?

More affordable housing could be coming to Wake County thanks to tax credit approval recommendations on Monday from the Wake County Board of Commissioners. They unanimously recommended \$11.8 million in funding for six development projects in Cary, Knightdale, Raleigh and Rolesville, paving the way for the projects to now be submitted to the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency for final approval.

"We are committed to enhancing our stock of affordable homes to meet the needs of our diverse community," said Wake County Commissioner Dr. James West. "Our recommendation for this funding today means many households could soon have equitable access to safe, affordable housing, making for stable, secure living and upward mobility."

The new sites would bring 515 new units to the area, which would bring the total number of units created or preserved since the Housing Department launched the new Affordable Housing Development Program (AHDP) in 2019 to 3,373.

The projects are:
\$1,198,000 for Hampton Springs

Apartment in Raleigh (56 affordable senior units)

\$700,000 for Lake Haven Apartments in Raleigh (56 affordable senior units)

\$4,000,000 for Birch and Branch Apartments in Raleigh (180 affordable family units)

\$1,510,000 for Rose Park Manor Apartments in Cary (81 affordable senior units)

\$2,700,000 for Knight's Court in Knightdale (78 affordable senior units)

\$1,700,000 for Oak Grove Crossing Apartments in Rolesville (64 affordable family units)

All 515 of these new units would serve low-income households. Of the new units, 242 will serve households earning 50% of the area median income (AMI) or below, and 141 of those will serve households earning 30% AMI or below.

Each year, the Wake County Housing Affordability and Community Revitalization Department issues a request for proposals from developers willing to create new housing at affordability levels the market will not naturally produce. Wake County then provides gap financing through

a mix of county and federal dollars combined with Federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credits and other state funds administered by the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency.

With NCHFA approval, developers can begin working with the respective municipalities to launch the building process. All construction must be completed within the next two years.

The amount of funding needed to create affordable housing has increased significantly over the past few years. Per-unit construction costs have increased 40% from 2019 based on cost information received from developers. Interest rates have increased significantly, and land costs continue to escalate. The combination of these elements increases the amount of gap financing required to make developments feasible.

The Commissioners action directly supports the 20-year Affordable Housing Plan approved in Oct. 2017. It also aligns with their Community Health and Vitality goal of creating affordable housing opportunities and supporting efforts to end homelessness.

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SERMON of the WEEK



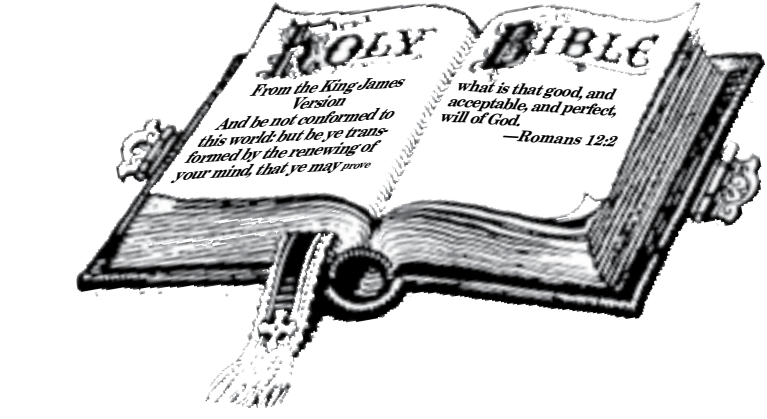
THAT FAITH TALK

By Elder Demetrius Hunter
Sermon Text: Joshua 14: 6-12

Here lately, I have been told by my brother and his wife that I have a very high vocabulary. They say the way I talk is not normal. My lovely wife sometimes says, "Don't be using that Physiological talk on me." Now the way I speak is influenced by the way I write daily for my occupation. Now at this point, how I speak is second nature.

I don't know when but at some point, my speech and the way I talk turned into what it is. So that when I speak, people will recognize that I work in a certain line of work. Well, what about us in church? Do we have the same thing? When we open our mouths, what comes out? Are we known by the words we speak? What do people know about us when we speak? Well, I would like to examine this story to see what we can learn from it as it pertains to our speech.

First, remember Caleb is having a conversation with Joshua as he is splitting up the land as Moses and God commanded? Caleb, at 80 years old, is making his plea to get what is coming to him. You see, Caleb never forgot the promise. At times we can get so tied up and tangled up in the problems of this world that we lose focus on the promise. We get so overwhelmed with praying for our children we forget that the Bible says to train them up in the way that



they should go. We get so tied up with going to the doctor that we forget that the Bible says that not all sickness is unto death. Even in the church, we get so caught up in who is going to preach or lead service or who is doing what, we forget He said, "If I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto me." So, I ask do you remember? We must hold on to the promise because my Bible says his promises are yes and amen!

Secondly, whose report will you believe? Caleb discusses the point that he has always believed the report of the Lord. He discusses how when he was sent to the promised land; he gave a report that they can get what God said. He then went on to say that he had waited 40 more years to get the promise.

The devil wants you to doubt the plan of God! Caleb recounts past times when his Faith rose above the circumstances. You see, sometimes you must go back and read the past chapters of your book. Go back and see how God moved. Go back and see how he provided. My reflection of God's grace creates the hope of my present.

So, Caleb makes a profound statement. He says, "I am just as strong now as I was then." He is saying that the same God that did it long ago can do it now. So, it doesn't matter how long it's been, my strength is not found in my physical attributes, but the Joy of the Lord is my strength. Don't doubt my abilities because I can do all things through Christ. I be-

lieve in the report of the Lord because if I have breath in my body, He can do it.

Lastly, Talk That Faith Talk: Caleb says to Joshua give me this mountain. It is time for the church to stand up. It is time for true believers to stand up and take their place. We now are in the days of this Bible quoting jelly back church. We are hiding out in the building, hoping that God will send the blessing. But what if we talk that Faith Talk like Caleb?

Caleb said I am going to get my blessing. I'm not satisfied with this passive Faith. I am going to talk my talk. I'm going to speak like I know God is going to move because if you give me a mountain, my Bible says with the Faith the size of a mustard seed, I can tell that mountain to move.

When I'm at work, I got to talk that Faith talk. I'm not hoping God saves my children; I'm expecting God to save my children. I'm not hoping God will heal my body; I expect God to heal. I need the devil to be on notice. I'm not playing defense anymore; I'm on offense. I'm moving differently now. I got that Faith Talk. I'm not saying "if" no more; I'm saying "when." This Faith I have goes past my circumstances. Past what it looks like. Past what people say. I got that Faith Talk. When people see me, I want them to see my Faith!

To view complete sermons by Pastor William Eli Ratcliff and associate ministers, please visit our YouTube Channel. Thank you!

Practical Biblical Principles

IT WAS THE BLOOD

Read: Matthew 27:3-4

Today it appears the way political interest seizes power and holds on to it are expressed, interpreted, and communicated as an untruth or lie. The way this works is as if the truth is always on trial. It appears when the lie is told often enough it becomes the truth. This is an old communist trick/strategy which has worked so well for the social/communist political leaders of today.

However, this is not new strategy to whitewash or lamplight the truth for it has been around since the time of Jesus. This same twisting the truth, gas-lighting and white-washing were directed toward Jesus, the Son of God. The result of such lying is what put Jesus on the cross and put Him to death. The truth of the matter is all of what happened to Jesus was all a part of God's plan to wash man of his sins. This is often misunderstood in that God allowed lies to bring out the truth which will result in man's total salvation and redemption. Well, this is what makes God, God. We serve a God, Who is able to turn the worst of events into good events for the sake of redeeming man. And this is exactly what happened at Easter at Calvary.

All the lies, deceit, anger, cheating, stealing, jealousy, fear of losing religious power were pulled into one hideous "black bag" and was swallowed up at Calvary. For a little while, God no longer had any animosity toward any one on the earth. Not even Judas. It was the blood which Jesus shed while being beaten and whipped at the

whipping post. It was the drops of blood oozing from His scalp resulting from the thorn pricks in His scalp as the soldiers pressed the crown of thorns upon His head. It was the blood Jesus shed while being beaten as He carried our heavy cross along the long, uphill pathway to Calvary. That last bit of blood which oozed out of His hands and feet along with the remaining mixture of blood and water which spurted from His side when that Roman soldier pierced Him in His side with his spear. This means Jesus' heart was pierced by the spear. All of this letting is what made all the difference in eliminating all of God's anger from the earth. Man's sin is now forgiven through Jesus.

All man has to do now is simply accept Jesus and His redemptive work He did for all of mankind on the cross.

No man can explain the reason why God chose to only accept the shedding of blood before He could even begin to forgive man. The act of killing certain animals, draining its blood, and offering it in a religious ritual seems primitive by today's religious standards. This has always been God's requirement from the beginning as God begin to set free the Israelites.

Starting in Egypt during the first Passover ritual, God commanded Moses to tell the people to kill a fresh, unblemished lamb, drain its blood, and paint it on the door posts of the houses of those in obedience. I will send the Death angel and he will Passover your house when he sees the blood on the door post. The only animal which symbolizes Christ is the

lamb because of its meekness and allows itself to listen and hear only his master's voice.

As time moved toward the cross and the Lord's Covenant, the lamb evolved into the symbol of Christ, the door post turned into the Holy of Holies where the blood of the lamb is shed on an annual religious schedule. This schedule evolved into our easter Celebration. Our Easter celebration causes us to remember and recall the shed blood which did the work for our salvation. Jesus throughout His ministry and obedience to the father brought all of this together and made it all happen by volunteering to come down from heaven and die like a slain lamb before the slaughter - the cross (Hebrews 9:22).

There is life in the blood (Genesis 9:4-6; Leviticus 17:11). God gives us strict commandments about dealing with blood. This includes the issues of abortion. No one has the authority to stop the life which God gives.

The above scriptures may well be the source or beginning of our understanding God and His requirements on the shedding of blood. Life is in the blood. And Jesus paid it all - in blood, His blood. Our soul's salvation is signed in blood by Jesus, Himself. It was the blood which did it. No other blood for man's salvation would be accepted by God. Again, Jesus paid it all in blood!

J. L. Caldwell, Pastor
New Jerusalem Baptist Cathedral
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Livingstone To Host Worship Institute



DR. WILL HARRIS



PASTOR CHRISTOPHER GRAY



LAMAR CAMPBELL

SALISBURY - For the first time in recent history, Livingstone College, a historic black college founded by the A.M.E. Zion Church, will host a Worship Institute.

The event will be held on Saturday, April 22, from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m., at the Walls Center Chapel, 800 W. Thomas Street, Salisbury, on the campus of Livingstone College. The program is cosponsored by Gethsemane Missionary Baptist Church, Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church and Moore's Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church, all of Salisbury.

The various sessions will include the following topics and presenters:

- What Worship Is - by Pastor Christopher Gray, director of the Livingstone College Gospel Choir, from 9:30-10:30 a.m.

- What Worship Does - by Dr. Will Harris, minister of music at Lewis Chapel Baptist Church in Fayetteville, from 10:45 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.

- What God wants to do with you in Worship - featuring

gospel recording artist Lamar Campbell, minister of music at Mt. Carmel Missionary Baptist Church in Indianapolis, Ind.

Campbell was born and raised in Indianapolis, where he was active in the church and musically gifted from an early age. Playing piano in his home church from the age of eight, he became the music director of a church when he was only 15 years old.

After graduating from high school, Campbell pursued studies in several different areas in search of a vocation before feeling a call to the music ministry as his God-appointed career. He studied music at the Jordan Music College at Butler University in Indianapolis before founding his first group in the late 1980's, known then as Lamar Campbell & Praise. That ensemble released a major-label album two years later that performed moderately well nationally, yielding a major hit titled, "This Debt of Love I Owe."

That group disbanded in 1992 and he formed Lamar Campbell

& Spirit of Praise. His song, "More than Anything" is translated into seven different languages.

Harris is a singer, songwriter, recording artist and workshop clinician. A native of Oxford, Miss., he began singing and playing music in church at an early age. He is the CEO of Sirrah Lee Music Group, LLC, a music consulting business that houses his private voice and piano school, and his award-winning recording choir, "Will Harris and Friends."

Pastor and professor, Gray released a single in 2021 titled, "Exalt," that is available on all digital platforms with the Livingstone College Gospel Choir. Under his leadership, the choir has also performed with Grammy-award winning artists such as Fred Hammond, Donnie McClurkin, Erica Campbell and James Fortune.

The worship institute will include a continental breakfast at 8 a.m. and lunch from 12:30-1:30 p.m.

Obituaries

For Aunt Mae: "Her Pink Day At Sunset"

Poem of Love
T'was the dark of evening's
Glove that came to you,
Whispered the last breath of
Earth's, to have to do.
We found its truth in mere
Moments to say
We knew you had slipped away.
Away from life's sorrows and all
Of its demands
All of the last of meannesses delivered
By man's callous and indifferent hands;
You were granted God's sweet Pre
Repose into peace and rest,
Away to enter into His hands at your best



MARY COTTON BOBBITT

King predeceased her in August 2002. During her twelve years she was a homemaker, a student, and a pre-school teacher.

Being a country girl at heart, Mary was granted privilege to build a home in what was then the country. In 1979 she moved to her home on Barwell Rd. in eastern Raleigh. It was much of her heart's delight to make a wonderful home for her family there. The family enjoyed working together, preparing, eating, and sharing many delicious meals. Mary, King, and Darrell were cooks.

Mary enjoyed new friends from introduction's affordances throughout her life. One of her most fond truths was that she kept a lifetime cache of friends from her childhood community. She reckoned with the loss of many who predeceased here.

Personal enjoyments included cooking, reading the Bible, taking trips with family and friends. She loved being home and soaking in the pleasure of having her homestead. She was one who cared for others. She thought it a gem to have wonderful neighbors.

She is predeceased by her father and mother, four sisters, Clara, Mildred, Jessie, and Marthel, one brother Horace, her husband, King, her son Darrell, her granddaughter, Telisa Hinton. Mary leaves to live, her dearest great grandson, Tzruel Hinton Johnson, niece, Kayolyn Person Jervay, nephews Wald-seemuller Person, and Paul Jervay Jr., and close cousins. Mary was the last living of 36 first cousins.

She leaves some most special friends from ages of years from Rhamkatte. Before she left, she found favor to have some caregivers who made it possible to have her last independence in living in her home. Words will never express the genuine and sincere gratitude that I have for the love, care, and physical giving to Aunt Mary by Mr. Joseph Holden, Mr. Larry Stanford, and her "goddaughter", Ms. Minnie Futrell.

My last writing to my Aunt Mary is to say that I had the honor to learn what an aunt can be. "Aunt Mae" was with rights to say that she was my other mother. She took it on with an open heart and open arms. She cared for me, desired for me, and she loved me. We shared many colors of life. I met her one January morning in 1952, and I did bid my aunt goodbye on the evening of April 1, 2023.

Church Briefs

shortly!

Youth Bible Study
Macedonia NLC invites all youth to learn with us on Tuesdays at 7:00 p.m. for Preschool to Elementary school and 7:30 p.m. for Middle to High school.
Meeting ID: 875 629 8755
Passcode: youth
To Call in Dial: 1 646 558 8656

Young Adult Bible Study
Join us for Young Adult Bible Study every second and fourth Tuesday at 8:00 p.m. Please contact Reverend Mecca Dixon, Young Adult Pastor for more information.

Tuesdays In The Word
MNLNLC weekly Bible Study sessions, Tuesdays in the Word with Dr. Joe, will be Tuesdays at 6:00 p.m. online. MNLNLC invites you to join us each Tuesday!
Church Community Food Ministry Weekly Food Distribution

Join the Church Community Food Ministry in distributing food to those in need in the community. Volunteers are needed to help set up, sort, assist guests, and break down. Join us every Thursday, first, third, and fifth Saturday in the Macedonia NLC parking lot, when the weather permits, from 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.
Congratulations Pastor Stevenson on being awarded the 2023 Community Impact Award. The Community Impact Award is presented by the Middle Eastern Province of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. and The North-eastern Region of Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc. to individuals who have made noteworthy contributions to the improvement of the Raleigh area.
Breanna V. Garner - Macedonia NLC Staff Writer for the Carolinian Newspaper
Macedonia New Life Church
2004 Rock Quarry Road, Raleigh, NC 27610
Senior Pastor: Rev. Dr. Joe L. Stevenson

HAPPENINGS AT THE MAC...

Macedonia New Life Church (Macedonia NLC) is continuing weekly in-person worship services on Sundays starting at 9:30 a.m. and masks are now optional. The Family Life Center will now be available for overflow. The nursery is now open to children up to four years old.

JOIN SUNDAY SCHOOL ON ZOOM.com

Macedonia NLC invites you to join us Sunday morning on zoom at 8:00 a.m. for Sunday School Meeting ID: 918 5873 2456
Passcode: 461350

To Call in Dial: 1 646 558 8656
Rev. Marilyn Fonville, M.Div.
Macedonia NLC - Sunday School Superintendent/VBS Coordinator

Youth Sunday School
Youth Sunday School return has been delayed. The new starting date will be announced



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Letters To The Editor

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN,

"Quit lying there on your bunk with 'time on your hands' when you could think of it as TIME IN YOUR HANDS, waiting for you to mold it. How you use your time now will affect not only you in profound ways, but many who are involved with you, including your family and me."

- Hill Harper, 'Letters to an Incarcerated Brother'

7,218 days and counting. For the last 19 years, 9 months, and 1 day, Robert Odom has been incarcerated in the North Carolina Department of Corrections. Since his voluntary surrender to the custody of the Fayetteville Police Department in the early morning hours of May 8th, 2003, this is where he has been: in custody.

On the night of April 20th, 2003, Robert carried out the gang-influenced killing of Corey Underwood. It was a horrible crime motivated by drugs, alcohol, and gang politics. After 2 years of confinement, Robert's trial for 1st-degree murder began. Two days of testimony by his brother and other family/friends commenced before Robert's quest for forgiveness and redemption was underway: he stopped the trial and officially accepted responsibility for his transgressions. His statement on the record that day was clear: "I did not want to continue putting Corey's family through this. They NEED to start healing."

That was July 21st, 2005. One could hear Corey's uncle, Willie Underwood, softly speak, "God bless you." Corey's sister, Sheree Bullock, was not as generous in her speech towards Robert and RIGHTFULLY so. Most memorably, she said, "I don't know personally if I could EVER forgive you... ..What you did was so wrong."

That moment in time has stuck with Robert for the 18 years since those words were uttered. Within the first 12 months, Robert officially accepted God into his life and removed the gang from it. Since then, Robert has been driven to become the best version of himself for not only his family but for Corey's family as well. Attempts have been made over the last two decades to reach out to his [Corey's] family and help all those involved make sense of what happened that night. "Legal hurdles" have prevented Robert from doing so. Still, even though those obstacles have stunted Robert's attempts at a restorative connection to help Corey's family find space to heal in any way he can, he continues to strive by God's Will.

Let's be clear: ABSOLUTELY NOTHING can replace the hole in the Underwood family's hearts that were left when Corey's life was taken. He was too valuable a person to his child, sister, uncle, and others. What CAN be salvaged is the life that was left and an honoring of the memory of Corey's existence. Robert has acknowledged that fact. He has worked tirelessly to be better than that night in April 2003.

Since his conviction in 2005 (some 18 years), Robert has had only 11 infractions - all of which occurred in the first two years, save for a pair of them. The last infraction took place over a decade ago. To put this in perspective, Robert spent over seven of those years navigating the evils of one of the worst prisons in North Carolina at the time; so bad, in fact, the prison [Lanesboro Correctional Institution] was shut down due to rampant corruption among employees and graphic violence among the incarcerated population before its transition into a women's facility. Robert's path away from that environment with his sanity, integrity, and person intact speaks to his determination to succeed and his growth as an individual.

As of this date, Feb. 9th, 2023, Robert has shown a remarkable ability to learn AND excel in a continually antagonistic setting this has proven to be both psychologically oppressive and physically taxing.

He has taught himself the value of visual art in the incarcerated person's rehabilitative process. His many works have been showcased in exhibits nationally including the "Incarceration and Creation: Art as a Human Need" exhibit at Sandy Spring Museum, the "Degrees of Separation" exhibit at Baltimore County Arts Guild, the "Sotto Voce" exhibit at York and Penn Gallery and the "Emergence" exhibit at Workhouse Arts Center.

Academically, Robert has completed many courses including "Character Education", "Thinking For a Change", and Napoleon Hill's Success Strategy". In 2022 alone, he completed over 350 lessons in 38 courses from the Edovo online education forums including, "Parenting While Incarcerated", "Michael G. Santos' Straight-A Guide to a Law Abiding Life", "Anger Management", and "Headspace ignored Meditation Sessions and Mindfulness Training." He has also been certified as a trained facilitator in both "CBI Thinking For a Change" and "Father Accountability".

Robert also recently graduated Cum Laude (3.58 GPA) and route to earning a Bachelor of Liberal Arts degree in Pastoral Ministry with an Emphasis in Adult Counseling from the Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary's College at Southeastern in Wake Forest, NC. He attained his Christian-based theological degree while actively professing and practicing the Islamic faith becoming the first Muslim to do so at the school. Through a Covid-19 pandemic and differences in doctrine and ideologies, he and his classmates showed what can be accomplished when people down their prejudices and biases and truly love their neighbors.

We as a society can show that Robert Odom's change from a marijuana and alcohol-infused gang member to a pious and devout man of God is a possible reality that cannot be wasted with his perpetually continued incarceration.

Can one deny - after having knowledge of Robert's act of violence some 20 years ago - that of the possible ways to honor Corey's memory, ensuring he [Robert] becomes the type of man who NEVER does this to anyone else is a most reasonable conclusion? Is that not the goal of an institution that prides itself on being a place of rehabilitation? Genuinely rehabilitating in a carceral setting, which is publicly presented as a true system of rehabilitation, is the most effective way of accomplishing that goal of not only honoring Corey by ending that chain of violence that was started long before his death, but also by creating a more God-fearing, ethically-bound, and socially mature individual in the person responsible: Robert Odom.

Robert has been removed from the lifestyle - that brought about so much pain to Corey's family and his own - for the last 18 years. His dedication to stopping the unnecessary violence caused by the gang culture is a priority of his. Robert's time mentoring children, through the Final Step program at Central Prison in Raleigh, NC, is proof of that effort to steer those children at risk of joining a gang - or are already there - away from that path of destruction that now envelops him; even after being 18 years removed from it.

What Robert did that night in 2003 should NEVER happen again. Having him back in society, as an active participant in the attempted abolishment of this type of crime, is tantamount to him continually remembering his wrong as well as his continued success because of the value it offers his rehabilitative measures. He has shown exemplary progress in that time and is ready to show he can be a productive citizen of the world after 20 years of removal from that society.

We need to visit Robert's situation and ask ourselves, "Why are rehabilitated individuals still burdening taxpayers' wallets when they could be easing that burden as law-abiding citizens?" Robert Anthony Odom, a first-time felon, has earned his freedom, as evidenced by his progression over the last two decades, and has shown that he is working with others to ensure his transgressions never occur again.

#FreeRobertOdomNC

Editorial Policy

Unsigned editorials in this space are the opinion of the newspaper. All other opinion pieces, including those from regular columnists, are the opinion of the writers themselves. The Carolinian strives to provide provocative commentary that is likely to spur thoughtful debate, regardless of whether we agree with it.



FUNdraising Good Times

By Mel & Pearl Shaw
Saad & Shaw



SHAPING OUR ENVIRONMENT: THE POWER OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

An interview with landscape architect John Jackson III
Part one of a two-part series

Public spaces, monuments, buildings, and parks shape the environment we live in. They influence who we know ourselves to be - consciously and unconsciously. The landscaping of space can give us a feeling of powerful potential. Landscaping - or a lack of landscaping - can also reinforce feelings of neglect or hopelessness. While we may not always be conscious of the physical settings we live and move within, there is a group of professionals who dedicate their lives to imagining, creating, and sculpting our environment. These are landscape architects.

The works produced by landscape architects are powerful. Think of the Vietnam War Memorial in Washington, DC and the National Civil Rights Museum in Memphis, TN. The way these spaces are designed bring history to life evoking deep emotional responses. It's not only the monument or the museum but the way in which the environment is shaped. Nationally recognized landscape architect John Jackson III president of JPA Inc. opened our eyes to the powerful impact of how public spaces are designed.

Founder of one of the country's few African American owned landscape architecture firms, Jackson and his team work nationally on projects large and small. While serving all clients, they also have a special niche where very few can compete. That is their work to ensure that future generations understand the past. In his own words, "we plan and design culturally significant projects so that the eyes of future generations can see and experience the legacy of African American history and its contributions."

His work is especially relevant now as communities across the country - and around the world - come together to envision, advocate for, and build public spaces that bring Black history, visions, and aspirations to life. Having a vision is the first step. Then you need a landscape architect to help with planning, cost estimating, and community engagement. There is so much to consider: site suitability, irrigation design, pedestrian and vehicular improvements, site design, visual enhancement, tree planting and landscaping, materials, and more.

Jackson encourages those who are organizing to develop public spaces and monuments to "clarify what you want the monument to convey to the viewers, clearly define the impact that the monument will have or had; its niche in the world and consider the long-term maintenance of the monument for its longevity." He also underscores the critical importance of community engagement. "It is invaluable; it provides the designer/planner the opportunity to obtain the user's needs, desires/wishes for the project. Community engagement also provides the community an opportunity to be a part of a project which in turns gives them a voice in the direction of a project."

Jackson and his firm have decades of experience creating African American culturally significant developments. "Our work, as it relates to African American culturally significant projects is one of our core competencies. We have worked on projects all over the United States and have won many honors and awards for our work."

Child Watch

By Marian Wright Edelman



DOING SOMETHING

After yet another mass shooting made headlines this week—this time, at a bank in Louisville, Kentucky—the chief medical officer for University of Louisville Health gained national attention as he shared his emotional thoughts on the regular toll gun violence takes. As Dr. Jason Smith spoke at a press conference to give an update on the victims' conditions, he said: "For 15 years, I've cared for victims of violence and gunshot wounds. And people say 'I'm tired,' but it's more than tired. I'm weary. There's only so many times you can walk into a room and tell someone, 'They're not coming home tomorrow.' And it just breaks your heart when you hear someone screaming 'Mommy,' or 'Daddy.' It just becomes too hard day in and day out to be able to do that. My team is fantastic. They're absolute professionals. They're wonderful. But sooner or later, it catches up to everybody. You just can't keep doing what we're doing . . . You can't keep seeing all the people with these horrific injuries coming through the door without doing something to try and help. And I don't know what the answer is. I'm a doctor. I don't know what the answer is. But to everyone who helps make policy, both state and federal, I would simply ask you to do something. Because doing nothing, which is what we've been doing, is not working."

Dr. Smith's voice is one more in the overwhelming chorus urging elected leaders to do something to stem our national

gun violence epidemic. In Tennessee, where three nine-year-olds and three adults were killed at the Covenant School on March 27, that cry became a roar as thousands of people, many of them high school and college students, descended on the state capitol in Nashville to demand lawmakers protect children instead of guns. The whole nation watched what happened next to three members of the state's House of Representatives who were willing to listen. Reps. Gloria Johnson, Justin Jones, and Justin Pearson stood with their constituents—and were quickly attacked by Republican peers in the state legislature, who then voted to expel Reps. Jones and Pearson from their elected positions.

When Rep. Johnson was asked why she thought she survived the expulsion vote but Reps. Jones and Pearson did not, she was candid: "Well, I think it's pretty clear. I'm a 60-year-old white woman and they are two young Black men." The same forces that stripped two young Black male legislators from elected office for standing up to entrenched power structures, standing with their voters, and standing against gun violence have been at work in Tennessee and across our nation for a very long time. But those forces have not had the last word.

The councils in Rep. Jones's and Rep. Pearson's districts who were asked to appoint temporary replacements for their positions both unanimously nominated Reps. Jones and Pearson to fill their own vacant seats. Both men were sworn in again this week, and both also plan to run again in the required special elections to fill them permanently. Reverend Janet Wolf, a longtime Children's Defense Fund colleague, ally, and friend in Tennessee, was on the streets during the protests, inside the gallery during the votes to strip Reps. Jones and Pearson from office, and there to witness their return. As she sat through the attacks on the three representatives, she recognized the votes as part of continued attempts to undermine the power of voters in Knoxville, Memphis, and Nashville. But in the protests and their aftermath she also felt hope.

Rev. Wolf saw firsthand how the young people surging on the state's capitol represented an incredibly diverse range of backgrounds and local public and private schools, and could sense how the coalition in the streets marked a turning point. As one young woman told her, "I feel like I'm living history." Rev. Wolf says for her and others in Tennessee who were young during the Civil Rights Movement, seeing this generation ready to change things was a profound moment: "It was beautiful to see all of these young people and remember what it was like to feel that change was just around the corner—and to feel hopeful that systemic change is not only possible, it is happening."

When Tennessee Governor Bill Lee signed an executive order on Tuesday strengthening background checks for gun buyers and asked state lawmakers to do even more, it was just one sign that calls for change were being heard. The young people and politicians and their supporters who are calling for more have no intention of giving up. They are committed to doing something, and their struggle should give all of us hope.



To Be EQUAL

By Marc H. Morial
President, National Urban League

"TENNESSEE THREE" FIASCO HIGHLIGHTS LINK BETWEEN RACISM AND GUN VIOLENCE

The crowd of more than 1,000 that gathered at Tennessee's Capitol to demand safer gun policies was mostly white.

The three 9-year-old children and two of the three staff members who died in the mass shooting that inspired the protest were white.

The group of legislators who stood at the House podium with a bullhorn to lead protestors in the galleries was multiracial.

Only the Black legislators were expelled.

The Tennessee lawmakers who voted to expel House members Justin Jones and Justin Pearson while sparing Gloria Johnson shifted focus away from the outcry against gun violence - which cuts across every demographic - toward their own appalling racism.

In the eyes of the nation, when the House convened on the morning April 6, the Tennessee Three were facing expulsion because they protested gun violence. When it adjourned that evening, the Justins had been expelled because they are Black.

The reality is that racial resentment and gun extremism are inexplicably linked.

Racial resentment is a "statistically significant" predictor of white resistance to gun safety policies, research shows. Yet those same "racially resentful" Americans are less likely to support "gun rights" if they believe Black people are exercising those rights more than they are.

Despite the reality that a gun in the household offers almost no protection against assailants, doubles the risk of death by violent homicide and triples the risk of death by violent suicide, the vast majority of gun owners cite "protection" as their reason for owning one.

Clearly, for many white gun owners "protection" means "protection from Black people."

The high rate of gun ownership in the South, even today, can be traced to the backlash against Reconstruction. The higher the rates of historical enslavement in a county, the higher the rates of contemporary gun ownership.

Nearly half of Southerners live in a household with at least one gun, compared to 28 percent of Northerners. Six of the ten states with the highest rates of gun violence - including Tennessee - are in the South.

Sports

USA Wins Big At BJK Cup Qualifier

The professional tennis world spotlight was focused on Delray Beach, Florida for the Billie Jean King Cup, the former Federation Cup, qualifier on April 14-15, 2023; where the United States and Austria met on the court. The United States team overpowered Austria 4-0 led by world's #3 Jessica Pegula and #6 Cori "Coco" Gauff.

After an approximate 40-minute rain delay, match play started off on the evening of April 14th at the Delray Beach Tennis Center Stadium. Playing in front of her hometown crowd, Coco Gauff took on Austria's Julia Grabher. Grabher had few answers for the game of Gauff who served as fast as 121 mph and multiple baseline winners. Gauff dispatched Grabher 6-1, 6-3 in just over sixty minutes of play and the win was her first in BJK Cup competition. Gauff in a post-game interview said "It was a very special moment out there for me today playing for my country, my home city."

The second match had teammate Jessica Pegula taking on Austria's 20-year-old Sinja Kraus. With Pegula dominating in the first set, 6-0, Kraus mounted a challenge to push Pegula but to lose 7-5 and put the USA up 2-0. In the post-game interview, Pegula stated "She (Sinja) hit the ball big, was going for her shots". Pegula added "I wish I could have served it out at 5-3 because I thought I played a pretty solid match until then. Was able to play a couple of really good games to close it out."

During a changeover break in the second match on April 14th, tennis legend Chris Evert was presented the ITF Tennis Commitment award by her friend and tennis legend Billie Jean King for her dedication to the tournament.

The second day on April



15th, matched up Jessica Pegula against Austria's Julia Grabher and defeated her 6-1, 6-3. The win clinched the victory for the United States, 3-0. The final match, doubles, paired up Coco Gauff with teammate Caty McNally to take on Austria's Sinja Kraus and Melanie Klaffner with the USA winning 6-1, 6-4. The USA moves onto the finals later this year at a location yet to be disclosed.

When asked about her influence on kids in Palm Beach County, FL (location of Delray Beach) after her match on April 14th, Gauff stated "It means a lot to me seeing all those kids in the crowd seeing us play. Like, I mean I remember being that

kid. I was that kid a couple of years ago watching Serena and Venus. I'm nowhere the level of them but maybe can I have like 10% of that they did for tennis, maybe I can do that in the future."

The Billie Jean King Cup team play was originally started in 1963 as the Federation Cup with female

players representing their countries. Was rebranded the Billie Jean King Cup in 2020 in honor of the tennis legend and her efforts to make tennis more equitable for, and fighting injustice against, women.

All of the photos were taken by Carolinian photographer Steve Worthy

