



## Hospital Closures, Substance Use, Lack Of Insurance Plague Rural Communities.

By Jaymie Baxley

Many of North Carolina's so-called rural counties bear little resemblance to the pastoral hamlets that people tend to picture when they think of rural living. In reality, the 78 counties that fall under the common statistical definition of "rural" are home to about 40 percent of the state's population, and North Carolina's rural population is — next to Texas — the largest in the U.S. The problems faced by these disparate communities can vary, especially when it comes to health care. "I get asked all the time, 'How is rural doing?'" said Patrick Woodie, president and CEO of the N.C. Rural Center. "My answer always begins by saying that it really depends on where in rural North Carolina you're standing because it looks very different from different places. Different parts of the state have different challenges. In general, they're all dealing with a lot of the same thing, but it looks a little different as you move

around." Indeed, the main common denominator among the state's rural counties is population density. A county is considered rural if it has 250 or fewer residents for every square mile of land, according to the criteria used by the N.C. Rural Center and other organizations. Despite that fact, of the state's 78 rural counties, about 30 of them are part of metropolitan statistical areas, a designation used by the U.S. Census Bureau to delineate how socially and economically integrated those areas are with the "core" county. "If you look at those 30 or so counties, from an economic vibrancy standpoint, they're doing markedly better than some of our more isolated, rural parts of the state. Western North Carolina, in general, is doing markedly better than some of our communities along the I-95 corridor," Woodie said. For all of their differences, rural counties are disproportionately affected by certain issues. They have fewer residents with health insurance than their more densely populated counterparts. They are losing a higher percentage of people to drug overdose. In some cases, they are served by hospitals that are on the verge of shutting down. While hardly new, those challenges came into sharper focus during the COVID-19 pandemic. At the same time, the global crisis spurred changes that may improve future health outcomes for rural North Carolinians. "There's good and bad that we're learning from COVID," Woodie said. "One of the positive highlights is we are seeing for the first time at a national level, and it's also true in North Carolina, that the rural population is increasing after decades of, at an aggregate level, steady decline. We believe that it will not be an equal increase everywhere, but we do think it is a trend that is COVID-related." He added: "Everybody everywhere is rethinking their total approach to life, their approach to life-work balance and their approach to where

(See HOSPITAL CLOSURES, P. 2)



## Black Startup Founders Face Venture Capital Headwinds

By Will Brown

For startup founders of all backgrounds, venture capital dollars have become tougher to secure than they were last year — and that's especially true for minorities, says Jacksonville-based venture capitalist Jim Stallings.

He founded PS27 Ventures a decade ago to invest in early stage tech startups. "A lot of (venture capital firms) right now are saying, 'Boy, I have to be very thoughtful,'" Stallings says. "They put the highest priority in companies they have already invested in. Most of the companies they have already invested in are white entrepreneurs." Startups face more turbulent waters than they have the past couple of years, as the Federal Reserve has hinted more interest rate hikes may be on the horizon later this year as it tries to tame inflation, and startups and tech investors became wary after Silicon Valley Bank collapsed this spring. For Black entrepreneurs, add on that investors and large companies are reconsidering their priorities following a spending spree tied

to the country's racial reckoning in 2020. To try to give startup founders some steam, PS27 Ventures hosted a Black Founders Demo Day pitch competition last year and this month's inaugural Black Founders Forum, which put founders and funders in the same space and included a pitch competition that awarded \$250,000 to a Black-owned startup. Stallings says the biggest hurdle Black founders face is getting in the room with fund managers. "I talk to Black entrepreneurs all the time. I do a lot of introductions for them," he says. "They are not getting the time face to face. To do a deal, you have to be in the room with an investor. You can do a lot via Zoom or email, but if someone is writing a check for \$1 million or \$2 million, they are going to meet with you face to face. They are going to go to dinner with you. They are going to meet you a lot of times. (Black founders) are not getting past Zoom."

Getting a meeting is one thing, but closing the deal is another. Carla Harris says entrepreneurs who are self-aware of the strengths as well as the shortcomings of their business, and can articulate their story, have a higher likelihood of success when pitching investors. Harris, a Northwest Jacksonville native who's now a senior client advisor for Morgan Stanley and



JIM STALLINGS IS THE FOUNDER AND CEO OF PS27 VENTURES

longtime member of the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, shared her pearls of wisdom in navigating the venture capital marketplace as the keynote speaker in her hometown at the founders' conference. The challenges have been sudden and jarring for start-up founders, Harris says. "Investors, their risk profile has gone up a lot, especially in this inflationary environment and an environment where the FED is, basically, raising interest rates," Harris says.

When her firm had surveyed venture capitalists just last year, it concluded that founders from diverse backgrounds had seen increased interest from venture capitalists. Over the last five years, less than 2% of venture capital dollars have been awarded to Black founders, according to Crunchbase. The first full year after George Floyd's death, 2021, saw the highest amount invested in Black-owned startups, an

(See VENTURE CAPITAL, P. 2)



CARLA HARRIS, A SENIOR CLIENT ADVISOR FOR MORGAN STANLEY

## Youngkin Administration Halts Teacher Diversity Grants Legislators Had Funded

By Anna Bryson

The Virginia Department of Education under the Youngkin administration halted the dissemination of grants intended to help provisionally licensed teachers of color receive their full teaching license, despite funding from the state legislature. Virginia lawmakers appropriated \$50,000 a year for the grants in each of the last three two-year budgets. The grant program is intended to help provisionally licensed teachers of color who are seeking full licensure by subsidizing tutoring and test fees for the exams required for full licensure. A provisional license lasts three years. Many teachers do not obtain their full license because of barriers like cost and time. Without public notice, the state education department stopped announcing and disseminating the grants last year for fiscal year 2023, though the legislature had approved the funding. Unused funds, essentially, sit in the state's coffers. Jeremy Raley, the Virginia Department of Education's chief of staff, said: "The VDOE is currently evaluating this grant program. The Department will communicate more information as it becomes available." He did not elaborate. The annual \$50,000 grant program was an outgrowth of a 2017 task force to diversify Virginia's edu-

cator pipeline. Supporting provisionally licensed candidates in obtaining full licensure, including additional exam preparation, was one of the priority recommendations the task force presented to the administration of then-Gov. Terry McAuliffe in August 2017. The state Department of Education first announced the program in December 2018 in a superintendent's memo under then-Gov. Ralph Northam, and then each following summer up to 2021. The Department of Education did not announce it in 2022, Gov. Glenn Youngkin's first year in office, or so far this year. The application has apparently been scrubbed from the VDOE website. "That budget amendment and other policies that we've implemented are meant to try to cast the net because we know a lot of the times minority teachers (who are provisionally licensed) don't become (fully licensed) teachers because of the burdens, the barriers," said Del. Schuyler VanValkenburg, D-Henrico, a high school teacher in the county's school system. "One of those barriers, for example, is the Praxis test. ... If we have a bunch of (provisionally licensed) teachers who are minority teachers, and that is a barrier in the way of them becoming a full-fledged licensed teacher, well, let's help them." While Virginia's K-12 student pop-



ulation has grown more diverse over the years, Virginia's teacher workforce remains largely white. Last year, fewer than half of Virginia's 1.3 million students were white, according to state data. Black students made up 22% of the state's enrollment, followed by 19% Hispanic students and 8% Asian students. About 82% of Virginia's teachers were white in the 2020-21 school year, according to the most recent federal data. Only 10% were Black. Virginia's teacher workforce mirrors national trends. Research consistently shows that all students benefit from greater teacher diversity, while students of color in particular benefit academically and emotionally from having teachers who look like them. Rodney Robinson, a senior advisor for Richmond Public Schools who was named National Teacher of the Year in 2019, said grants such

as this are important because they help keep teachers of color in the classroom by lowering the costs of licensure. Studies have shown that Black students are more likely to borrow federal student loan money to finance their undergraduate education. "Most teachers of color come through alternative programs and the state of Virginia knows these grants are important ... especially because we know teachers of color take on more debt than white teachers," Robinson said. "If we really want to close the achievement gap, studies show the No. 1 indicator is having teachers of color in the classroom to benefit all students." Youngkin in September announced an executive directive to address the teacher shortage in Virginia schools. His administration has made a point to prioritize recruiting and retaining quality teachers. The administration has also made a point to roll back diversity efforts. One month after his inauguration, Youngkin's new education department scrapped dozens of resources for schools on the department's website aimed at promoting diversity and equity, calling them divisive and at times discriminatory. Virginia's chief diversity official, Martin Brown, slammed diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) initiatives at a Virginia Military Institute event in April and said "DEI is dead."



## Trailblazing Wartime Therapist & Scientist

A physical therapist, an inventor, a writer, and a forensic handwriting analyst, Bessie Blount Griffin got her start in a one-room segregated schoolhouse with no textbooks — and rose to greatness. During a time when there were few Black women working in science roles, Blount's determined nature and knack for innovation helped her become a trailblazer in every field she entered. She was the first Black woman to appear on The Big Idea, the 1950s television show about modern inventions, and the first woman of color to be accepted to pursue advanced studies at the Document Division of England's Scotland Yard. She also was a founding member of the American Association of Handwriting Analysts and regularly wrote for many leading Black newspapers and magazines. However, she's perhaps best known for her work with amputee veterans, developing inventions and teaching them skills that would help them complete everyday tasks. This is the story of Bessie Blount Griffin, the fierce and resourceful scientist who overcame all the obstacles put in her way — and made history. Bessie Blount Griffin was born on Nov. 24, 1914, in the community of Hickory, Virginia (present-day Chesapeake). Her education started in a one-room schoolhouse called Diggs Chapel Elementary School. According to the New York Times, the school was built by Black community members after the Civil War as a place to educate the children of formerly enslaved people. It was here that Blount butted heads with a childhood teacher in an event that would help shape her entire future.

(See BESSIE BLOUNT GRIFFIN, P. 2)



## BESSIE BLOUNT GRIFFIN

Continued from page 1

Blount was left-handed, something that was deemed unacceptable at the time. When her teacher caught her writing with her left hand, she reprimanded young Blount by rapping her knuckles. Stubborn and innovative even as a young girl, Blount countered this chastisement by teaching herself not only to be ambidextrous, but to write by holding a pencil in her teeth. She also learned how to write with her feet.

"If it was wrong to write with my left hand, then it was wrong to write with my right hand," she later said.

Smithsonian Magazine reports that there were no schools near Blount that offered higher education for Black students, so after completing all the formal schooling available to her in sixth grade, she made her own education plan.

After deciding she wanted to become a physical therapist, she achieved a rare honor at the time. Blount was accepted to Union Junior College and Panzer College of Physical Education and Hygiene. As a physical therapist, she went on to teach amputees returning from WWII how to do everyday tasks after they'd lost hands or feet on the battlefield. Crucial things like eating — but also writing.

And if there was one thing Bessie Blount Griffin could teach from firsthand experience, it was alternative ways to write. Soon, she was teaching patients how to write with their teeth and feet just as she had learned to do years before.

"You're not crippled, only crippled in your mind," she told them. Soon, her work with disabled veterans would inspire her to make her first invention.

Bessie Blount Griffin became a licensed physiotherapist and taught amputees writing skills at Bronx Hospital (now Bronx-Lebanon Hospital Center) in New York.

While there, she realized that the amputees could greatly benefit from a way to feed themselves without a caregiver. She came up with a design for an electronic feeding device that allowed a patient to bite down on a tube and have bites of food delivered to their mouths.

Blount worked on the prototype in her own kitchen, melting plastic using boiling water and employing everyday tools like files, hammers, an ice pick to shape the device.

In 1951 she patented a portion of her design, a portable receptacle device that used a neck brace with built-in support to hold bowls or cups close to the mouth. She was excited to get it put to use. However, the Veterans Administration wanted nothing to do with Blount's invention. Instead, she donated it to the French government so it could start helping people.

Blount also developed a disposable emesis basin to hold bodily fluids and waste, which would spare hospitals from having to clean out their basins after every use. She fashioned the prototype from a mixture of flour, water, and newspaper. The Veterans Administration, again, was not interested. She sold the idea to Belgium, and they still use a variation of it today.

According to her family, Blount never stopped inventing, but did stop applying for patents on her designs.

In the 1960s, Blount began a second career conducting forensic research for police departments in Vineland, New Jersey and Virginia. Her specialty became graphology, the analysis of handwriting to profile one's behavior.

"I have been taught that a person's signature is his 'written' fingerprints and [they] are just as valid as those on his fingers or the sole prints of his feet," she wrote, according to A&E.

During the 1970s, Blount worked as the chief document examiner in Portsmouth, Virginia. Eventually, she ended up working at England's Scotland Yard as a handwriting expert. She went on to specialize in detecting forged documents.

Bessie Blount Griffin continued to work as a consulting forensic analyst into her 80s. Even after she retired from law enforcement work, she still didn't rest, but consulted with museums and researchers, determining the authenticity of pre-Civil War documents and letters related to the slave trade, as well as Native American treaties.

Once, Blount observed her 12-year-old grandson Nicholas' handwriting and (correctly) gave him a diagnosis of weak vision in one eye.

"She said it was all in your writing, that your writing showed you how you were physically as well as mentally," Nicholas Griffin said. "It's a bit of science but it's a bit of a gift — and that's what she had as well." Bessie Blount Griffin died in 2009 at her home in Newfield, New Jersey. She was 95 years old.

# Hospital Closures, Rural—

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

they choose to live their life."

*At-risk hospitals*

Eleven rural hospitals in North Carolina have either shut down or stopped providing inpatient care since 2005, according to data from the Cecil G. Sheps Center for Health Services Research at UNC Chapel Hill. The only states that saw more closures over the same 18-year period were Texas and Tennessee.

Mark Holmes, director of the Sheps Center, said a record number of rural hospitals were expected to close across the U.S. before the federal Public Health Emergency, which took effect in May 2020 and expired earlier this month. That federal declaration provided a "lifeline" to struggling facilities in the form of provider relief funds, he said.

"We're starting to ramp back up again this year," he said. "Something that we're constantly keeping an eye on is this concern that all these

hospitals that probably would have closed in 2020 but were able to hold on for a couple of years are now out of support."

He said that many of those hospitals could be closing in the coming 12 to 18 months.

The Center for Healthcare Quality and Payment Reform recently identified seven North Carolina hospitals that are at "immediate risk of closing because of the severity of their financial problems." A 2022 report by N.C. Health News found that the state's at-risk hospitals are largely based in rural counties that are poorer and have more racially and ethnically diverse populations than most rural counties.

Holmes believes the infusion of pandemic-related funding has contributed to a false impression that imperiled hospitals have achieved financial stability. While some of the state's wealthier hospital systems

saw record profits during the pandemic, the gains made by rural hospitals were not enough to lift them out of the red.

"There's this notion, particularly in Washington, that hospitals had a record year and the rural hospital crisis is over," Holmes said. "That narrative, we don't believe, is an accurate representation of where we are. Rural hospitals, even though they got proportionately twice as much as urban hospitals, they're still way below urban hospitals in terms of survivability."

Substance use

The opioid epidemic has taken an

outrage toll on the state's rural communities.

An N.C. Health News analysis of substance use data from the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services found that rural counties accounted for 42.6 percent of drug overdose deaths reported across

the state in 2021, the latest year for which complete data is available. About 30.6 percent of that year's fatal overdoses were linked to suburban counties, while 26.7 percent were connected to urban counties.

The landmark national settlement with drug companies that abetted the epidemic is set to provide state and local governments with money to bolster services for people who struggle with substance use. Payments from the state's \$750 million share of the settlement, which will be dispersed in chunks over the next 18 years, began last May.

But Loftin Wilson, programs manager for the North Carolina Harm Reduction Coalition, said there are still "way fewer resources in rural counties than in the city." His organization, which focuses roughly half of its operations in rural communities, is attempting to bridge the gap by bringing services directly to indi-

# Venture Capital Headwinds—

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

estimated \$4.34 billion in venture capital. Last year, \$2.25 billion was invested in Black-owned startups — the second highest year on record, but a decline of more than 40% from the previous year's all-time high.

Now, with the market in flux, Harris said one of the most important choices a start-up can make is determining who is hired in the company's embryonic stages.

"The market may be there. You may have the solution to the market, but you cannot meet the demand if you're just one woman or you're just one man," she said.

Despite the challenges, according to the Florida Chamber of Commerce, the Sunshine State has the highest number of Black-owned businesses with employees in the country.

Angelique Hamilton is the founder of one of those 15,000 companies. The native Jaxson founded HR Chique Group, a human relations startup that works with firms across America, in 2019.

"It's a different landscape for us right now, a different world. Probably a year ago, we could go out and secure so many different funds from different individuals and different P.E.'s, but it's just not like that," Hamilton says.

She's hoping entrepreneurs will remain connected to each other and capitalize on the momentum created at the Black Founders Forum. Doing

so, she says, will create a stronger local start-up sector as well as legacies that "can give back to the Jacksonville community."

Another founder, Natalie Mitchell, founded N'sentials in 2021 and is developing its prototype of the women's intimates line. Mitchell, who is in the pre-seed stage, says she now knows to approach angel investors as she looks to launch. She came to that realization after chatting with Founders Day speaker Barry Givens.

Givens is the managing partner of Collab Capital, an Atlanta-based venture capital firm that funds early stage Black entrepreneurs. He warned of another headwind for founders who might hope to go public in a few years: "The (initial public offering) market is dead" — at the moment.

Collab Capital invested \$3.5 million this year in start-ups it had already funded, but \$0 in new companies.

Givens says it's a cycle: Venture capital firms do not have as much to invest in newer startups because their dollars are tied up in other companies that are struggling to grow enough to become publicly sold or acquired by larger companies.

"As investors, it makes it harder for us to raise funds, which then (trickles) down to the founders," Givens says. "We can't write checks at the same frequency. We had to slow down, which means the founders are now struggling to raise capi-

tal."

At this moment, Givens believes only truly disruptive ideas will be funded.

It's a 180-degree shift from three years ago, but he knew that wouldn't last.

Three years ago this month, investment banks, retailers, sports leagues and scores of other companies committed to devote more dollars to diversity, equity and inclusion in the aftermath of George Floyd's killing in Minneapolis. Givens considered many of those initiatives "performative capital" and warned entrepreneurs to not rely on a permanent flow.

"Some of these larger corporations, they're having to now look at their DEI budgets and say, 'Hey, I know we promised this, but the way the markets are looking right now, we can't really do that anymore,'" Givens says. "If you go into it, putting all your eggs into one basket, it does hurt."

Despite the challenging environment, Harris, with Morgan Stanley, says the good news is a market in turmoil is an ideal time to start a company.

That's what Harris' grandmother

Emma Jane Smith did in 1949 — another period when the Federal Reserve raised interest rates rapidly in an attempt to fight inflation.

The New Berlin native opened a sundries business Out East, at the

corner of 4th Street and Florida Avenue, in 1949. Harris says her parents — the late John and Billie Harris — were a commercial fisherman and an educator who raised her in a no-excuses household in the Harborview neighborhood. The Bishop Kenny alumna went on to earn two Harvard degrees and enjoy a 36-year career on Wall Street that has seen her help scores of companies reach the initial public offering stage, perform at Carnegie Hall as a vocalist and advise presidents.

"What I did know, and what I learned while I was here in Jacksonville, is that when you commit yourself to excellence at the top of your game, it amplifies your choices. You have more choices the better you do," Harris says.

Recognized with a Lifetime Achievement Award from Crain's New York this month, Harris says she was inspired by the opportunity to talk with those at the start of their entrepreneurial journey.

"A lot of people don't realize what's in front of them," Harris says. "They know they have a great business plan. They know they have a great opportunity. But, to understand what the personal evolution is going to look like around leadership — and it's going to take that in order to manifest as a billion-dollar opportunity — is something, as I said, that's inspiring to me to be able to share."

# NC Senator Says More Sanctioned Gambling "Better Than 50-50"

By Gary D. Robertson

AP

One of North Carolina's most powerful legislators expressed optimism Thursday that a further expansion of state-sanctioned gambling will be worked out before legislators end this year's regular business later this summer.

The General Assembly hasn't adjourned while House and Senate Republicans negotiate sticking points on a two-year state government budget that was supposed to take effect July 1. Chamber leaders also continue to talk about whether they should permit casinos on non-tribal lands, authorize and regulate video gambling machines, or both, Senate leader Phil Berger told reporters.

When asked to evaluate the chances that legislation allowing some combination of new gambling would reach Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper's desk this summer within or separate from a budget agreement, Berger replied: "I'd say better than 50-50."

"It's a serious discussion," he added.

The legislature already enacted a law last month that authorizes betting on sports and horse racing statewide, with the first wagers expected in the first half of 2024. It marked the legislature's largest expansion of gambling since creating a state lottery in 2005. Cooper signed the sports gambling bill into law to public fanfare.

The state currently has three casinos, operated by two American Indian tribes. But legislators, in particular Berger, are worried about casinos that have opened recently in Virginia near the North Carolina border and where North Carolina residents are betting.

The latest opened in Danville, Virginia, roughly 25 miles from Berger's hometown of Eden. Berger said he traveled to Danville this month and estimates 80% of the vehicles in the casino parking lot had North Carolina license plates. Authorizing North Carolina casinos is seen by supporters as a way to neutralize out-of-state gambling, generate revenues for state and local government coffers, and help economically depressed areas where venues would create jobs.

"The gaming is already taking place in North Carolina, and gaming is taking place on the border of North Carolina that is pulling money out of North Carolina," Berger said, adding that a new additional revenue stream "has multiple benefits."

Rep. Jason Saine of Lincoln County, a chief House budget-negotiator who also shepherded this year's sports gambling legislation, said Wednesday he didn't know how House colleagues would respond to

the idea of additional casinos and video gambling because the Senate hadn't yet provided a proposal. That could include how many casinos would be permitted, whether construction would be contingent on local referendums and what the state's financial cut would be.

Berger and Saine confirmed this week that budget differences remain over the extent of a tax-reduction package and how to distribute reserves for items such as capital projects and economic development. And

they both acknowledged a deal may not be finalized until August.

Saine insisted the fate of casino expansion isn't holding up the state budget, but rather the speed at which Republicans lower taxes and what fiscal guardrails are in place while it's carried out. But additional gambling revenues could recalibrate the level of cuts with which House members could feel comfortable.

The Senate's version of the budget wanted to accelerate the ratcheting-down of the individual income tax

rate so that it would reach 3.99% in 2025 and not 2027 as current law directs. And senators wanted to lower it further over time to 2.49% in 2030. The House plan would have lowered slightly further the rate already planned for 2024 but the trajectory would still hit 3.99% in 2027.

To ensure fiscal stability, Saine said, the House wants to block deeper rate cuts unless the state meets certain revenue levels. The Senate has concerns about "trigger" provisions with high benchmarks that could never be


met, Berger said. But Saine acknowledged that locating additional revenue streams could ease such requirements. "It is much harder to sell an expedited tax reform process without the backfill of revenue," he said.

An obstacle to the authorization of further gambling this year also could be a coalition of social conservatives and certain liberals within the General Assembly who say it's not worth the harm that gambling addiction causes families and children.

A similar bloc helped derail sports

gambling in the House last year, but it was overtaken by pro-gambling forces in 2023. Advancing more gambling this summer could be a bridge too far for some lawmakers.

More gambling options would create more gamblers and "just exacerbate all of the social problems that come along with gambling," John Rustin with the anti-gambling North Carolina Family Policy Council said Thursday. "Just because other states make poor choices doesn't mean that North Carolina should do the same."



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**NCDOT TO HOLD A PUBLIC MEETING REGARDING THE REDESIGNATION OF U.S. 70/U.S. 70 BUSINESS AND PORTIONS OF N.C. 42**

**WAKE AND JOHNSTON COUNTIES**



**CLAYTON** - U.S. 70 between Garner and Morehead City is being upgraded to interstate standards. As sections are upgraded, a request is sent to the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) requesting redesignation as I-42. The section between I-40 in southeast Garner and Wilson's Mills has been authorized for redesignation. It is necessary to redesignate U.S. 70 Business and a portion of N.C. 42 in this area.

Project details and maps can be found on the NCDOT project web page: <https://PublicInput.com/US70-NC42-Clayton>. Information will be presented at the meeting allowing for one-on-one discussions with engineers but no formal presentation.

The meeting will be held **July 25** at **Clayton Town Hall, 111 East 2nd Street, Clayton**. The public is invited to attend at any time between **5 and 7 p.m.**

People may also submit comments by phone at **984-205-6615** project code 3374, email [US70-NC42-Clayton@PublicInput.com](mailto:US70-NC42-Clayton@PublicInput.com), or mail at the address shown below by **August 8, 2023**.

By Mail: **Bailey M. Harden**  
 Regional Traffic Safety Engineer  
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NCDOT will provide auxiliary aids and services under the Americans with Disabilities Act for disabled people who wish to participate in this meeting. Anyone requiring special services should contact Diane Wilson, Environmental Analysis Unit, at 1598 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, N.C. 27699-1598, 919-707-6073 or [pdwilson1@ncdot.gov](mailto:pdwilson1@ncdot.gov) as early as possible so arrangements can be made.

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# Business & Finance

## Unfortunately Eliminating Bias In AI May Be Impossible

By Emilio Ferrara

Univ. of Southern Cal

When I asked ChatGPT for a joke about Sicilians the other day, it implied that Sicilians are stinky.

As somebody born and raised in Sicily, I reacted to ChatGPT's joke with disgust. But at the same time, my computer scientist brain began spinning around a seemingly simple question: Should ChatGPT and other artificial intelligence systems be allowed to be biased?

You might say "Of course not!" And that would be a reasonable response. But there are some researchers, like me, who argue the opposite: AI systems like ChatGPT should indeed be biased – but not in the way you might think.

Removing bias from AI is a laudable goal, but blindly eliminating biases can have unintended consequences. Instead, bias in AI can be controlled to achieve a higher goal: fairness.

As AI is increasingly integrated into everyday technology, many people agree that addressing bias in AI is an important issue. But what does "AI bias" actually mean?

Computer scientists say an AI model is biased if it unexpectedly produces skewed results. These results could exhibit prejudice against individuals or groups, or otherwise not be in line with positive human values like fairness and truth. Even small divergences from expected behavior can have a "butterfly effect,"



in which seemingly minor biases can be amplified by generative AI and have far-reaching consequence.

Bias in generative AI systems can come from a variety of sources. Problematic training data can associate certain occupations with specific genders or perpetuate racial biases. Learning algorithms themselves can be biased and then amplify existing biases in the data.

But systems could also be biased by design. For example, a com-

pany might design its generative AI system to prioritize formal over creative writing, or to specifically serve government industries, thus inadvertently reinforcing existing biases and excluding different views. Other societal factors, like a lack of regulations or misaligned financial incentives, can also lead to AI biases.

It's not clear whether bias can – or even should – be entirely eliminated from AI systems.

Imagine you're an AI engineer and

you notice your model produces a stereotypical response, like Sicilians being "stinky." You might think that the solution is to remove some bad examples in the training data, maybe jokes about the smell of Sicilian food. Recent research has identified how to perform this kind of "AI neurosurgery" to deemphasize associations between certain concepts.

But these well-intentioned changes can have unpredictable, and possibly negative, effects. Even small

variations in the training data or in an AI model configuration can lead to significantly different system outcomes, and these changes are impossible to predict in advance. You don't know what other associations your AI system has learned as a consequence of "unlearning" the bias you just addressed.

Other attempts at bias mitigation run similar risks. An AI system that is trained to completely avoid certain sensitive topics could produce incomplete or misleading responses. Misguided regulations can worsen, rather than improve, issues of AI bias and safety. Bad actors could evade safeguards to elicit malicious AI behaviors – making phishing scams more convincing or using deepfakes to manipulate elections.

With these challenges in mind, researchers are working to improve data sampling techniques and algorithmic fairness, especially in settings where certain sensitive data is not available. Some companies, like OpenAI, have opted to have human workers annotate the data.

On the one hand, these strategies can help the model better align with human values. However, by implementing any of these approaches, developers also run the risk of introducing new cultural, ideological or political biases.

There's a trade-off between reducing bias and making sure that the AI system is still useful and accurate. Some researchers, including me, think that generative AI systems

should be allowed to be biased – but in a carefully controlled way.

For example, my collaborators and I developed techniques that let users specify what level of bias an AI system should tolerate. This model can detect toxicity in written text by accounting for in-group or cultural linguistic norms. While traditional approaches can inaccurately flag some posts or comments written in African-American English as offensive and by LGBTQ+ communities as toxic, this "controllable" AI model provides a much fairer classification.

Controllable – and safe – generative AI is important to ensure that AI models produce outputs that align with human values, while still allowing for nuance and flexibility.

Even if researchers could achieve bias-free generative AI, that would be just one step toward the broader goal of fairness. The pursuit of fairness in generative AI requires a holistic approach – not only better data processing, annotation and debiasing algorithms, but also human collaboration among developers, users and affected communities.

As AI technology continues to proliferate, it's important to remember that bias removal is not a one-time fix. Rather, it's an ongoing process that demands constant monitoring, refinement and adaptation. Although developers might be unable to easily anticipate or contain the butterfly effect, they can continue to be vigilant and thoughtful in their approach to AI bias.

## Sean 'Diddy' Combs Aspires To Create New Black Wall Street

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Sean "Diddy" Combs wants to strengthen the Black dollar: The music mogul is spearheading a new online marketplace called Empower Global that will specifically feature Black-owned businesses.

"I want to create our own Black Wall Street," Combs told The Associated Press about his e-commerce platform, which launched last week. He feels passionate about building substantial wealth in his community similar to the Greenwood community, the thriving Black-owned business district in Tulsa, Oklahoma, that was decimated in a two-day attack by a white mob in Oklahoma in 1921.

Combs said he's not looking for



financial benefit after he invested \$20 million into Empower Global, which allows consumers to purchase products exclusively created and sold by Black entrepreneurs.

The curated marketplace featuring Black-owned brands will allow consumers to purchase clothing, shoes,

beauty accessories including skin care and fragrances, and even wall art. The platform was designed and created by two Black-owned companies, TechSparq and ChatDesk.

The platform launched with 70 brands with plans to introduce new Black businesses monthly. He hopes to showcase more than 200 brands by the end of the year.

"This is about building our own infrastructure and ecosystem," Combs said. "I'm not doing this for profit. This is about us."

Combs said he feels more excited about launching into Empower Global than before the start of his widely-popular label Bad Boy Records.

"I'm going into these areas to di-

versity things and fight for our inclusion. This is a platform about sharing power and empowering each other," he said. "This is something that is for my people. It's a tipping point for us to wake up start paying attention and supporting each other while taking responsibility and accountability."

Combs, who's worked on the platform for years, said it's important for Black people to circulate money in their own community.

"It benefits the community to empower and take care of itself," he said. "Right now, our dollar in the Black community doesn't even last an hour. Most other communities and ethnic groups, they understand the power of unity. Their dollars stay in their com-

munities for days and get passed on to other people that are like them and from their same community."

Combs said he's accomplished his dreams of building hip-hop's biggest empires, blazing a trail with several entities. He's the founder of Bad Boy Records and a three-time Grammy winner who has worked with top-tier artists including Notorious B.I.G., Mary J. Blige, Usher, Lil Kim, Faith Evans and 112.

He created the Sean John fashion clothing line, launched the Revolt TV with a focus on music and has his own vodka. He's also produced the reality show "Making the Band" on MTV.

"My dreams have always been to be

successful in music, being obsessed with fashion and the greatest Black serial entrepreneur to ever live," said Combs, who along with Tyler Perry and Byron Allen is interested in purchasing the network BET. He's also in a dispute with spirits giant Diageo after he sued the company over allegations of racism over how they handled his liquor brands.

"I've graduated from me to we. I'm able to use my God-given intelligence to create," he said. "I'm passionate about the possibility of showing Black economic unity. I'm not going to stop until I'm working with the best brands, the best Black-owned digital mainstream, so we can start fueling our own economic system."



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# Ransomware Criminals Are Dumping Kids' Private Files Online

(AP)—Rich in digitized data, the nation's schools are prime targets for far-flung criminal hackers, who are assiduously locating and scooping up sensitive files.

Often strapped for cash, districts are grossly ill-equipped not just to defend themselves but to respond diligently and transparently when attacked, especially as they struggle to help kids catch up from the pandemic and grapple with shrinking budgets.

Often strapped for cash, districts are grossly ill-equipped not just to defend themselves but to respond diligently and transparently when

attacked, especially as they struggle to help kids catch up from the pandemic and grapple with shrinking budgets.

"A massive amount of information is being posted online, and nobody is looking to see just how bad it all is. Or, if somebody is looking, they're not making the results public," said analyst Brett Callow of the cybersecurity firm Emsisoft.

Other big districts recently stung by data theft include San Diego, Des Moines and Tucson, Arizona. While the severity of those hacks remains unclear, all have been criticized either for being slow to admit to being

hit by ransomware, dragging their feet on notifying victims — or both.

While other ransomware targets have fortified and segmented networks, encrypting data and mandating multi-factor authentication, school systems have been slower to react.

Ransomware likely has affected well over 5 million U.S. students by now, with district attacks on track to rise this year, said analyst Allan Liska of the cybersecurity firm Recorded Future. Nearly one in three U.S. districts had been breached by the end of 2021, according to a survey by the Center for Internet Security,

a federally funded nonprofit.

Just three years ago, criminals did not routinely grab data in ransomware attacks, said TJ Sayers, cyber-threat intelligence manager at the Center for Internet Security. Now, it's common, he said, with much of it sold on the dark web.

The criminals in the Minneapolis theft were especially aggressive. They shared links to the stolen data on Facebook, Twitter, Telegram and the dark web, which standard browsers can't access.

The Minneapolis parents informed by the AP of the leaked sexual assault complaints feel doubly victim-

ized. Their children have battled PTSD, and some even left their schools. Now this.

"The family is beyond horrified to learn that this highly sensitive information is now available in perpetuity on the internet for the child's future friends, romantic interests, employers and others to discover," said Jeff Storms, an attorney for one of the families. It is AP policy not to identify sexual abuse victims.

Minneapolis Schools spokeswoman Crystina Lugo-Beach would not say how many people have been contacted so far or answer other AP questions about the attack.

Despite parents' and teachers' frustration, schools are routinely advised by incident response teams concerned about legal liability issues and ransom negotiations against being more transparent, said Callow of Emsisoft. Minneapolis school officials apparently followed that playbook, initially describing the Feb. 17 attack cryptically as a "system incident," then as "technical difficulties" and later an "encryption event."

The extent of the breach became clear though when a ransomware group posted video of stolen data, giving the district 10 days to pay the ransom before leaking files.

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# Health & Wellness

## What is Long-Term Care Insurance And Do You Need It?

By Barbara Marquand

Nerdwallet

Long-term care insurance is designed to bridge the gap and cover costs health insurance won't.

It might be hard to imagine now, but chances are you'll need some help taking care of yourself later in life. The big question is: How will you pay for it?

Buying long-term care insurance is one way to prepare.

What is long-term care insurance?

Long-term care refers to a host of services that aren't covered by regular health insurance. This includes assistance with routine daily activities, like bathing, dressing or getting in and out of bed.

A long-term care insurance policy helps cover the costs of that care when you have a chronic medical condition, disability or disorder such as Alzheimer's disease. Most policies will reimburse you for care given in a variety of places, such as:

- Your home.
- A nursing home.
- An assisted living facility.
- An adult day care center.

Considering long-term care costs is an important part of any long-range financial plan, especially in your 50s and beyond. Waiting until you need care to buy coverage isn't an option. You won't qualify for long-term care insurance if you have a debilitating condition, and long-term care insurance carriers won't approve most applicants older than 75. Most people with long-term care insurance buy it in their mid-50s to mid-60s.

Whether long-term care insurance is the right choice depends on your situation and preferences.

Before you shop for coverage, it's important to learn more about the following topics:

- Why buy long-term care insurance?
- How long-term care insurance works
- Cost of long-term care insurance
- Tax advantages of buying long-term care insurance
- How to buy long-term care insurance
- Understanding state "partnership" plans

Why buy long-term care insurance?

Nearly 70% of 65-year-olds will eventually need long-term care services or support, according to 2020 data — the latest available — from the Administration for Community Living, part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Women

typically need care for an average of 3.7 years, while men require it for 2.2 years.

Regular health insurance doesn't cover long-term care. And Medicare won't come to the rescue, either; it covers only short nursing home stays or limited amounts of home health care in specific instances, such as for rehab after a hospital stay.

If you need custodial care, which includes supervision and help with day-to-day tasks, and you don't have insurance to cover long-term care, you'll have to pay for it yourself in most states. You can get help through Medicaid, the federal and state health insurance program for those with low incomes, but only after you've exhausted most of your savings.

People buy long-term care insurance for two reasons:

1. To protect savings. Long-term care costs can deplete a retirement nest egg quickly. The median cost of care in a semiprivate nursing home room is \$94,900 per year, according to Genworth's 2021 Cost of Care Survey

2. To give you more choices for care. The more money you can spend, the better the quality of care you can get. If you have to rely on Medicaid, your choices will be limited to the nursing homes that accept payments from the government program. In many states, Medicaid doesn't pay for all assisted living costs.

Buying long-term care insurance might not be affordable if you have a low income and little savings. The National Association of Insurance Commissioners says some experts recommend spending no more than 5% of your income on a long-term care policy.

How long-term care insurance works

To buy a long-term care insurance policy, you fill out an application and answer health questions. The insurer may ask to see medical records and interview you by phone or in person.

You choose the amount of coverage you want. The policies usually cap the amount paid out per day and the amount paid during your lifetime.

Once you're approved for coverage and the policy is issued, you begin paying premiums.

Under most long-term care policies, you're eligible for benefits when you can't do at least two out of six "activities of daily living," called ADLs, on your own or you suffer from dementia or other cognitive impairment.

The activities of daily living are:



- Bathing.
- Caring for incontinence.
- Dressing.
- Eating.
- Toileting (getting on or off the toilet).
- Transferring (getting in or out of a bed or a chair).

When you need care and want to make a claim, the insurance company will review medical documents from your doctor and may send a nurse to do an evaluation. Before approving a claim, the insurer must approve your plan of care.

Under most policies, you'll have to

pay for long-term care services out of pocket for a certain amount of time, such as 30, 60 or 90 days, before the insurer starts reimbursing you for any care. This is called the "elimination period."

The policy starts paying out after you're eligible for benefits and usually after you receive paid care for that period. Most policies pay up to a daily limit for care until you reach the lifetime maximum.

Some companies offer a shared care option for couples when both spouses buy policies. This lets you share the total amount of coverage, so

you can draw from your spouse's pool of benefits if you reach the limit on your policy.

Cost of long-term care insurance

The rates you pay depend on a variety of factors, including:

Your age and health: The older you are and the more health problems you have, the more you'll pay when you buy a policy.

Gender: Women generally pay more than men because they live longer and have a greater chance of making long-term care insurance claims.

Marital status: Premiums are lower for married people than for single people.

Insurance company: Prices for the same amount of coverage will vary among insurance companies. That's why it's important to compare quotes from different carriers.

Amount of coverage: You'll pay more for richer coverage, such as higher limits on the daily and lifetime benefits, cost-of-living adjustments to protect against inflation, shorter elimination periods and fewer restrictions on the types of care covered.

A single 55-year-old man in good health buying new coverage can expect to pay an average of \$2,100 per year for a long-term care policy with an initial pool of benefits of \$165,000, according to the 2023 price index from the American Association for Long-Term Care Insur-

ance.

Those benefits compound annually at 3% to total \$400,500 at age 85. For the same policy, a single 55-year-old woman can expect to pay an average of \$3,600 per year. The average combined premiums for a 55-year-old couple, each buying that amount of coverage, are \$5,025 per year.

A caveat: The price could go up after you buy a policy; prices aren't guaranteed to stay the same over your lifetime. Many policyholders saw spikes in their rates in the past several years after insurance companies asked state regulators for permission to hike premiums. They were able to justify rate increases because the cost of claims overall were higher than they had projected. Regulators approved the rate increases because they wanted to make sure the insurance companies would have enough money to continue paying claims.

Tax advantages of buying long-term care insurance

Long-term care insurance can have some tax advantages if you itemize deductions, especially as you get older. Federal and some state tax codes let you count part or all of long-term care insurance premiums as medical expenses, which are tax-deductible if they meet a certain threshold. The limits for the amount of premiums you can deduct increase with your age.

## Deer Populations Pose COVID Risk



By Lisa O'Mary

WebMD

An estimated 3 in every 10 white-tailed deer in the U.S. have had COVID-19, and new research suggests deer populations could be a source of virus mutations that may be passed to humans.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which led the research project, humans transmitted the virus to deer at least 100 times. The virus then spread widely among free-ranging deer populations, and there were three possible cases of the deer transmitting the virus to humans.

The data comes from tests done between November 2021 and April 2022 on more than 12,000 deer found across half of the U.S. Sequencing of the virus found in the deer showed that deer had been exposed to all of the prominent variants, including Alpha, Gamma, Delta, and Omicron.

Some of the findings about transmission were published Monday in the journal Nature Communications, in which researchers noted that in addition to deer, the virus has been found in wild and domestic animals, including mink, rats, otters, ferrets, hamsters, gorillas, cats, dogs, lions, and tigers. Animal-to-human transmission has been documented or suspected in mink and domestic cats, in addition to white-tailed deer.

The findings are important because the animal populations can become "reservoirs ... in which the virus circulates covertly, persisting in the population and can be transmitted to other animals or humans potentially causing disease outbreaks," according to the paper, which was a collaboration among scientists from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, CDC, and the University of Missouri.

In the three cases of possible deer-to-human transmission, researchers said that mutated versions of the virus previously only found in deer had been found in COVID test samples taken from one person in North Carolina and two people in Massachusetts. Those deer-specific mutated versions of the virus have not been found in any other human samples, lending evidence that the mutations occurred within deer.

"Deer regularly interact with humans and are commonly found in human environments — near our homes, pets, wastewater, and trash," researcher and University of Missouri professor Xiu-Feng "Henry" Wan, PhD, said in a statement. "The potential for SARS-CoV-2, or any zoonotic disease, to persist and evolve in wildlife populations can pose unique public health risks."

In the Nature Communications paper, the researchers suggested that deer may be exposed to the virus from human food waste, masks, or other waste products. The authors concluded that further study is needed to determine how virus transmission occurs between deer and humans.

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# Ag-Grow-Culture

## Agriculture Production Around The World Is Hit By Climate

By Jason Lindsay

Staff Writer

In the year of El Nino, agriculture production across the world is faced with yet another hurdle. The planet is witnessing some of the hottest days on record; El Nino has altered the trade winds, and some areas recorded oceanic temperatures in the upper nineties. The nation is the wettest it has been in over two decades, and the late frost of this year has dropped yields to extremely low rates leaving states to Georgia short in their staple, peaches. While listening to meteorologists, there's one thing they all agree on, there's no certainty on how the weather will respond to such irregular atmospheric patterns, and they know, more than likely, it will not be good. With such uncertainty, the question becomes how do we prepare?

For the American farmer, the soil is our livelihood. Whether growing commodity, specialty, or pasture, the soil is the setting and the host. Before mechanizing the farm experience, agriculture was intensely manual. Mechanizing farming brought farming to scale in the easiest way the world had ever witnessed. By this time, much of the world had been influenced or infiltrated by colonial influence, with agriculture as no exception. The colonial farm of long straight rows and monoculture lay throughout the world's terrain. In many cases clear cutting (raping the land of all trees) was a common practice, then they would replant with a single variety, where nature thrives in diversity, and straight lines, where nature fashions itself in a circular mode.

When the pilgrims stole this native land, they began to rob the land of native treatment. Back in Europe,



propaganda was cycling throughout peasant communities regarding how rich the soil of the "New World" was. The fertility of American soil and the abundance of space to farm led pitches to persuade or coerce Europeans to relocate. The land of America was so fertile, much due to the regenerative practices of the indigenous people, that it established the backbone of the United States. Even with the unnatural nature of colonial farming, the native ground yielded, almost completely without resistance, for two centuries (16th-18th Century).

In the early 1800s, European peasants had taken siege of native land now known as southern Georgia. After removing the land of

its people, the trees were next. The land was cleared of its vast vegetation, sending most of the lumber to Europe as is a common practice even today. Once the trees were removed, these European farmers would lace the land with cotton seed, planted in straight rows stretching across painting the Georgia hills. For the European settlers, this was a win. The land was theirs, and the crop was in, but the soft multicolored soil had its own plan.

American soil had been cultivated for the first time without considering the existing ecosystems. The land had never been clear cut, and the European farmers' education did not incubus erosion prevention measures, and the land didn't

take that lightly. The rain came, and because all the trees were gone, there was nothing to keep the land from washing away, and wash away it did. First, gullies began to form, and small gullies became big ones which caused erosion levels to accelerate. By 1850, ditches as deep as five feet had formed and continued to evolve. Today, this area is known as Providence Canyon State Park. The affected area extends across 1,109 acres consisting of 16 canyons, with the depths exceeding 150 feet in some areas. The land said "NO."

It was at the point of these unnatural phenomena that American soil could take no more, and by the 1900s, the Midwest was experiencing the dust bowls triggered by

amateur farm practices that fostered equipment that depleted the land, and it was gone with the wind.

Within the confines of agriculture, desolation is the reward for bad practices. Every "bad practice," be it agricultural or forestry, contributes to the planet's warming. Clearing trees reduces the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> absorbed and the amount of rainwater the ground can hold. The mismanagement of cattle results in waste pollution, releasing Methane (CH<sub>4</sub>) into the atmosphere, greatly contributing to a warmer planet.

Yet, just as bad practices are rewarded by desolation, good practices are the road to remediation. Take the methane released by cattle dung mismanagement. Methane is produced naturally throughout the course of nature, be it released from the ocean, termites, and wetlands; natural terrains and ecosystems account for thirty - six percent of the methane in our atmosphere. As for the remaining sixty - four percent, yeah, that's all manmade.

When you consider that methane is twenty - five times more dangerous than carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), these emissions are simply irresponsible. And to add insult to injury, over the last 150 years, CH<sub>4</sub> levels have doubled.

This is not even the saddest part. CH<sub>4</sub> can be converted into energy and used to power our world. Instead of becoming a pollutant that makes our planet uninhabitable, CH<sub>4</sub>, along with other natural gases, is considered the primary energy source for the future.

Not to mention that the United States electrical grid needs real work. The entire nation has only three sections ( Eastern, Western, and ERCOT (Electrical Reliability Council of Texas)). To make matters worse, each

section is almost completely isolated, with no backup system or plan. Over seventy percent of the U.S. grid is more than twenty - five years old. This isolated aged system is fragile, to say the least, and increased storm surges are showing just how delicate it is. It is amazing how the very thing that is killing us can be used to empower us, literally.

Another method to reduce climate change is the reduction in pesticide usage. Pesticides are not only bad for agricultural land but also toxic to produce. While nitrogen fertilizer is often highlighted for using an extreme amount of fossil fuels to produce, manufacturing synthetic pesticides uses ten times more energy. Synthetic pesticides also release nitrogen oxide from the soil, and when mixed with other pollutants from aerosol cans, paint thinner, vehicle exhaust, and industry (to name a few), "ground-level ozone" is produced, creating more pollution. Ground-level ozone is harmful to plants and people. In the worst case, ground-level ozone can cause emphysema, bronchitis, and asthma.

Pesticide addresses pest control the same way the nation addresses its issues: placing Band-Aids on a gunshot wound and never really addressing the underlying issues. The very need for pesticides is a sign of an imbalance; remediating soil and planting pollinators is the permanent remedy. Oddly enough, natural soil remediation measures like planting pollinators take the carbon dioxide out of the air and plant it in the earth, where it can be used and stored for long periods of time. We must educate ourselves and decide for ourselves what the road to remediation looks like. Our efforts can start in our home, flow out to our community, and lead our nation.



## Extreme Heat Costs Both NC Workers & Employers Alike

RALEIGH, NC — According to a new report, North Carolina employers may be paying higher workers compensation claim costs in years with more hot weather. The Excessive Heat in North Carolina report found a link between extreme heat exposure in four major industries and avoidable costs to employers, including increased worker compensation for missed wages. The report was prepared by Milliman and commissioned by NRDC (Natural Resources Defense Council).

The report's key findings include:

When all four industries (agriculture, construction/erection, cartage/trucking, and commercial enterprises) were considered together, there was a positive correlation between the annual number of hours with a heat index above 90°F and workers compensation claim costs for lost wages. In other words, employers paid employees more during hot years for missed work days due to illness or injury from any cause.

The strongest relationships between heat and workers compensation costs for lost wages were in the cartage/trucking industry (such as package delivery and ambulance service workers) and commercial enterprises (such as warehouse workers and gas station attendants). The positive correlation between hot years and the severity of lost wage claims (i.e. the cost per claim) was notably strong in cartage/trucking.

Based on the available sample data, cartage/trucking was the only industry to show a significant positive correlation between heat and workers compensation claims for medical costs.

Outside the workers compensation system, heat was correlated with healthcare use by the general population immediately after extreme heat events and for up to three months later. However, the observed relationship depended on a complex interaction between heat, an individual's other health conditions, and socioeconomic factors such as living conditions and access to healthcare.

"Workers are protected from all kinds of hazards, such as ladder falls and electric shocks. But federally and in most states—including in

North Carolina—there are no such standards protecting workers from heat. That needs to be fixed, and fast, especially as climate change makes heat season ever more brutal in the Southeast and across the country," said Juanita Constible, Senior Advocate for Climate & Health at NRDC (Natural Resources Defense Council). "The report makes clear that the avoidable costs of workplace heat exposure, such as missed work time and emergency room visits, are considerable in four of the most heat-exposed industries in North Carolina."

"Everyone has the right to a safe and healthy workplace. We should be doing everything we can to avoid preventable injuries at work like those caused by exposure to high temperatures," said Clermont Fraser Ripley, Workers' Rights Project Co-Director at the North Carolina Justice Center. "We should be doing everything we can to avoid preventable injuries at work like those caused by exposure to high temperatures."

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and a handful of state agencies are working to improve existing heat standards or to develop new ones. Industry groups aren't exactly happy about that, arguing that heat standards will cost too much. This argument, of course, only considers up-front compliance costs for employers—such as providing drinkable water to employees, allowing people to take cooldown breaks before they faint, and keeping air conditioning units in working order.

Industry's "too costly" argument leaves out the avoidable health-related costs of heat, such as reduced productivity and emergency room visits. A new report from Milliman, an independent actuarial consulting firm, suggests these costs may be considerable in four heat-exposed industries in North Carolina. In general, the report found moderate to strong links between increases in annual heat exposure and statewide increases in annual workers compensation costs for lost wages.

Milliman used data from 2011 to 2018 to examine the relationship between the annual number of hours with a heat index above 90°F and

all-cause workers compensation claim costs. They considered four heat-exposed industries in North Carolina:

Agriculture, which includes farm, nursery, and logging workers; Construction and Erection, which includes everyone from road workers and roofers to swimming pool installers; Cartage and Trucking, which includes workers engaged in activities such as mail and package delivery, taxi driving, and ambulance services; and Commercial Enterprises, which includes occupations such as hay and grain dealers, gas station attendants, and warehouse workers.

Correlations between heat and workers compensation costs in each of these four groups were calculated relative to workers in clerical offices, banks, and other indoor settings that likely have air conditioning.

When the four industry groups were considered together, there was a strong positive correlation between extreme heat and indemnity costs per \$100 of payroll (pure premium), and a moderate positive correlation between heat and indemnity costs per claim (severity). (See the yellow box above for definitions.) The strength of the relationships between heat and costs in the four groups together appear to be driven by the strength of the results in two industries: Cartage and Trucking, and Commercial Enterprises. The strongest correlation was for wage-adjusted indemnity severity in Cartage and Trucking. Thankfully for some of the workers in that industry, UPS and the Teamsters union have reached a tentative deal that would get air conditioning and other heat protections into much of the company's vehicle fleet.

The researchers could not conclude there was a significant relationship between heat and lost wage costs when they considered the Agriculture industry or Construction and Erection industry alone. This might be due in part to small sample sizes. Many farmworkers aren't covered by workers compensation in North Carolina, and many construction workers may be denied benefits because they're being illegally misclassified as independent contractors.

## \$2.2 Billion For Black Farmers

The Biden-Harris Administration has unveiled a \$2.2 billion relief initiative aimed at providing support to Black farmers and other individuals who have faced discrimination within federal government lending programs.

The Inflation Reduction Act, part of Biden's commitment to addressing historical injustices, includes a total of \$5.3 billion dedicated to offering relief to tens of thousands of farmers across the country.

Of the allocated funds, \$3.1 billion reportedly will be used to assist distressed borrowers in paying off their farm debts without losing their land or becoming ineligible for future assistance.

An additional \$2.2 billion will be allocated specifically to farmers who have suffered discrimination through USDA farm programs.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced that applications are now being accepted for the Discrimination Financial Assistance Program, which aims to provide financial aid to farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners who have experienced discrimination in USDA farm lending prior to 2021.

"The opening of the application process is an important step in delivering on our commitment to providing financial assistance to

those who faced discrimination in USDA farm lending, as swiftly and efficiently as possible," Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack emphasized. The initiative comes after decades of Black farmers accusing the USDA of discrimination and being denied loans crucial for their livelihoods and land preservation.

A study conducted in May 2022 revealed that Black farmers had lost over \$326 billion in land value throughout the 20th century.

The Washington Informer reported in 2022 that researchers considered that figure to be a conservative estimate of the actual financial impact racist practices have had on Black American farmers since 1920.

Biden issued an executive order last year, instructing the USDA to establish a 15-member independent equity commission aimed at rectifying discrimination within its policies and practices concerning Black farmers.

Under the initial Build Back Better plan, the Biden administration said it wanted to allocate significant funds to support Black farmers.

However, the plan was scuttled after white farmers filed lawsuits claiming that the earmarking of funds specifically for Black farmers amounted to discrimination.

The legal action has resulted in the tying up of \$4 billion as the

administration continues to defend the action in court.

Further, a 2021 report from ProPublica also shed light on the systematic discrimination faced by Black farmers at the hands of various federal agencies, including the USDA.

The report detailed how the USDA impeded Black farmers' access to critical federal funds through discriminatory loan denials and deliberate delays in financial aid.

"If you are Black and you're born south of the Mason-Dixon Line and you tried to farm, you've been discriminated against," Lloyd Wright, the director of the USDA Office of Civil Rights under Presidents Bill Clinton and Barack Obama, and a Black Virginia farmer, stated in the report.

The White House said the launch of the \$2.2 billion relief initiative represents a significant step towards rectifying the historical injustices faced by Black farmers and marks the Biden-Harris Administration's commitment to addressing systemic discrimination in federal lending programs.

With the Discrimination Financial Assistance Program now accepting applications, eligible farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners should now have access to needed financial assistance.



## US Gives Go-Ahead NJ Offshore Wind Farm To Start Construction

The federal government gave the go-ahead for New Jersey's first offshore wind farm to begin construction, clearing the way for the first of at least three — and likely many more — such projects in a state trying to become the East Coast leader in wind energy.

The U.S. Bureau of Ocean Energy Management approved a construction and operations plan for Ocean Wind I, a wind farm to be built by Danish wind energy company Orsted between 13 and 15 miles off the coast of Atlantic City. The wind farm would power

500,000 homes.

Additional approvals from the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the National Marine Fisheries Service, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency still must be obtained, which Orsted estimates will happen by the second quarter of 2024.

The project already has all of the major state permits it needs, said Larry Hajna, a spokesman for the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection. Two minor state permits remain outstanding.

The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management's action represents the third federal approval of a commercial-scale offshore wind energy project in the U.S., joining the Vineyard Wind project in Massachusetts and the South Fork Wind project in New York, both of which are now under construction.

Orsted said it plans to begin construction in New Jersey this fall, "delivering on the promise of good-paying jobs, local investment and clean energy," said David Hardy, the company's CEO for the Americas.



# Community

## Smart Start Aims For Success

By Tyria Bourda  
Staff Writer

A private-public partnership serving Wake County is changing children's lives. Smart Start, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization located in Raleigh, ensures children, birth to five, are prepared for school success. Their mission is to improve child care quality, accessibility and affordability. By focusing on children who are most in need, the nonprofit funds local programs that expand access to early learning and services for children.

To ensure the mission is carried out effectively, Smart Start leaders make the community, parents, and teachers their partners. Families are offered additional at-home services for which includes early literacy, healthy habits, and parent education.

"The key is learning from and being responsive to the community. The agency must adapt and evolve. In the early years, we engaged primarily by phone, in-person conversations, and paper surveys. Now many families prefer digital access and communications. In response, WCSS has evolved its system of recruitment and enrollment to meet families where they are, online and in-person," Said Gayle E. Headen,

Executive Director. Furthermore, when speaking about parents' morale, Gayle stated that parenting is difficult and no one can do it alone. Right now, families struggle to access high-quality, affordable child care. Teachers struggle, too, with most making \$10-12 an hour. She emphasized that affordability and access are problematic.

"Parents and educators need our state to make significant investments in early learning and services. Without access to early care and learning, many children start school behind and stay behind. Families need us to do more to support a fully funded, equitable early childhood system. They need community support and WCSS is that support for them. We're here for parents whether you are in the workforce or at home with your children. WCSS funds, administers, or connects parents to a program that benefits their young learners," said Headen.

In regards to funding decisions, Each year, with the support of community workgroups, WCSS' Program Planning Committee studies Wake County's needs and assesses the gaps in services for children. These workgroups are community leaders, child care professionals, nonprofit agency representatives

and staff. They identify services that would fill an existing gap in service, or modify and strengthen existing programs.

Once identifying services, WCSS' core values, guiding principles and bidding requirements are presented. In addition, organizations submit a proposal that outlines a creative, competitive solution to community issues.

Lastly, WCSS staff review submitted proposals and budget materials. The allocation committee develops a funding recommendation for services in each goal area established through the strategic plan. The committee presents this information to the Board of Directors for consideration and an ultimate decision. Once funding recommendations are approved by the Board of Directors, staff contract with the funded agencies to sustain and expand needed services in the community.

Overall, Smart Starts want to communicate one message to the community, that is, a commitment to children, their future, and their families. Every child in every community deserves a pathway to success in life. Smart Start Academy plans to build those pathways, to be thoroughly responsive to children needs, especially those most marginalized.



## The Males Place Gives Young Men A Safe Place To Flourish

By Tyria Bourda  
Staff Writer

Positively impacting over 3000 young men; 98% African-American and 2% multi-racial, The Males Place aims to provide a guided journey to manhood. As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization based in Charlotte, NC, it teaches young men ages 12-18 a three-tiered program combining agriculture, mentoring, and social justice.

By creating a safe environment for young men to grow exponentially, the organization's mission ensures comprehensive and prevention-based behavioral health programming for all young men once a week. Every Wednesday during the month, young men participate in various programs with the first Wednesday focusing on black history; whether ancient or modern. The second Wednesday emphasizes career exploration and the third Wednesday holds group discussions. Finally, the fourth Wednesday allows parents and families to communicate with the young people about their progress throughout the program.

One interesting fact is that many young men are highly interested in agricultural community service. As a master gardener, Winston articulates the importance of young black boys understanding sovereignty and

farm. Since 2009, The Males Place has been a proud leader in the production and distribution of seasonal and culturally relevant produce grown in their community garden. By offering direct access to fresh vegetables, fruits, and herbs, the nonprofit's vision is to be a food oasis and a beacon of hope and inspiration.

To understand more about why this nonprofit came about, Winston shared his early years in South Carolina. Raised by his mother and others, he mentioned his gratitude for Black adults who played an immense role in his upbringing. Much of what he does is a tribute to his mother and others in his community.

Once receiving his bachelors of Public Health at the University of South Carolina, he began working at a maximum security prison in Columbia, SC. During this period, he observed the abundance of black men who were incarcerated because they were not properly socialized and/or did not have the means to hire a lawyer. Knowing that, Winston felt the need to have more prescriptive and preventative teaching on the cultural legacy of black men.

"We created this organization to serve as a multidimensional black male-led African center that develops and nurtures black boys. We use rights of passage, manhood train-

ing, and national and international training. We also plan to broaden the experience of these young black boys and stretch them beyond what society deems their place in life," said Winston.

Recently, The Males Place was included in the Men of Change Art Exhibition with an award of \$25,000. The Men of Change traveling Art Exhibition provides powerful positive images and exemplary contributions of past and contemporary Black men. This award was sponsored nationally by The Ford Motor Company Fund, The Smithsonian, Wells Fargo Bank, and the Levine Museum of The New South.

In sum, many graduates from the program have matriculated to a four-year college or university, community or technical college, enlisted in the military, entered the workforce or entered entrepreneurial endeavors. When it comes to leaving a legacy, Winston shared that The Males Place will continue to educate young black men. This will enable them to focus on their gifts and talents. The Males Place wants the surrounding areas to know that they unapologetically love, admire, and respect young black men.



"We are consistent toward the freedom, liberation, and development of black boys and subsequently the black family."



# Reach out. Help is here.

If you're struggling with feeling sad or worried or even angry, you don't have to keep the hurt inside. Talk to someone.

Find people and resources that can help at [ncdohhs.gov/OpenToCare](https://ncdohhs.gov/OpenToCare).

**NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**



# Church

## SERMON of the WEEK

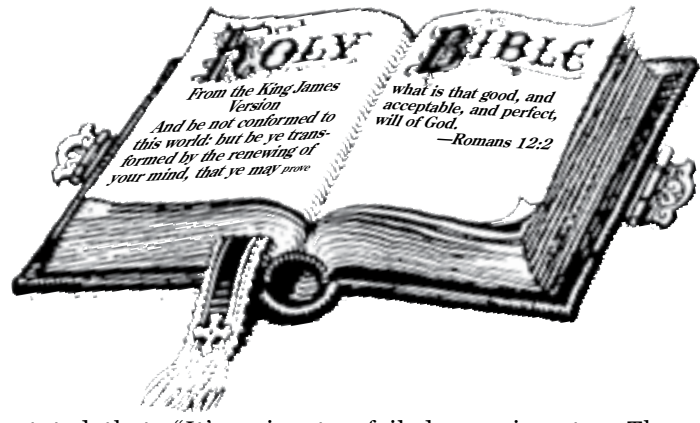


**A COMMENCEMENT SPEECH WORTH REMEMBERING – FALL FORWARD**

Lincoln Park Holiness Church is all about community. Whether it's feeding, providing emotional support or educating, their main focus is leading souls to Christ. On this particular Sunday morning, a different approach was taken with all eyes focused on the big screen to relive a speech by one of Hollywood's finest African American Actors and philanthropist, Denzel Washington.

With the help of pathos and rhetorical devices, Denzel Washington used his past experiences to express his ideas through his Commencement Address on May 16, 2011 at the University of Pennsylvania. His speech was viewed for the purpose of the young people at "Lincoln Park" for our Youth Sunday Worship Service.

Washington began his speech stating that the graduates should put God first in everything they do because everything they see was because of the grace of God.



He stated that, "It's going to take hard work and there will be setbacks, but if I fall, I will fall forward. Falling forward means that I am still progressing. It means that I am learning. And it means that I can pick myself up and keep on going." Denzel continues, "When you get it, reach back pull someone else up."

Don't be afraid to go outside the box. Don't be afraid to think outside the box. Don't be afraid to fail big...to dream big! To get something you've never had, you have to do something you never did."

He also said that he found that nothing in life is worthwhile unless you take risks. Nothing, Nelson Mandela said, "There is no passion to be found, playing small and settling for a life that's less than the one you're capable of living."

Washington gave examples of falling forward such as Reggie Jackson striking out 2,600 times in his career, the most in history in baseball. Even I didn't know that. I only remember his successful home runs. And how about Thomas Edison conducted 1,000

failed experiments. The 1001st was the light bulb. What if he hadn't continued? How long would it have taken for someone to discover the light bulb?

Denzel Washington even shared some of his failures. Even though he laughs at them now, at the time failing wasn't funny. The actual speech is worth listening to whether you are an adult or child. I encourage you to use as a teaching tool in your youth ministry.

The service closed by letting our youth know that everything comes with a price and I'm a firm believer that hard work pays off. Furthermore, don't worry about setbacks but use them as an opportunity to make a step up!

Many attending say that they were motivated by the service. And most of all, many people (young and old) said that several things they heard this past Sunday were worth remembering and worth striving for.

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

## Practical Biblical Principles

### THE TWO BOOKS

Read: Revelation 20:11-15

Several years ago, I found myself being confronted with records of my own handwriting which were more than forty years old. The records in question were those I had filed to retrieve from the U.S. Naval Headquarters in Washington, DC. I was in the process of filing for my compensation from the Navy as the result of service during the Viet-Nam war.

I felt strange looking at and reading my own forty-year-old recorded accounts of my own handwriting in cursor. These were required daily reports of actions during the times I stood the four-hour watches in the pilot house aboard my ship at war time. Looking at my own handwriting, my own signatures and explanation of any, and all actions which happened during my watches on board ship some forty years ago gave me the feeling I had been watched since that time. I was looking at a portion of my past which impacted my life.

There is a lot of truth in what the older folks use to say, "God is watching all we do and records all we say, holding us accountable (Matthew 12:36). The word "accountable" gives us a sense of bookkeeping, wherein, on-going accounts of actions are being recorded for the purpose of being recalled when needed.

St. Paul in his letters to the churches wrote with a warning of accounts will be noted as to how well God's word is practiced within the church (1 Corinthians 4:1).

In the Book of Revelation, we

see these words of prophetic warning in the scriptures (Revelation 20:12), "And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and the books were opened. And another Book was opened, which is the 'Book of Life.' And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books."

It appears that The Holy Spirit keeps record and account of our actions and intents while we are here upon the earth. There is that old saying or belief that it is St. Peter who keeps our records. However, this is based upon the promise that Jesus told Peter He will give to him the keys to the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 16:18-19). At any rate, there appears to be a journal of our life's actions and work somewhere in heaven and Christ have access to them all. It will be Christ Who will Judge us out of the two Books spoken of in this scripture (Revelation 19:15). He who has ears let him listen.

The two Books of accounts mentioned here are first, the Book of Life, and second The Book of Works. The most important and valuable Book is the Book of Life. The Book of life is that Book which God writes our name when we are born. As we mature and get to know Christ in a personal way and accept Him as our Lord and Savior, our name stays in the Book of Life. If we choose not to follow Christ and accept Him as Lord and Saviour, then it is from our very own doings and the rejection of Christ that we cause our name to be erased out of the Book of Life by Christ Himself (Revelation

20:15).

The second Book is the Book of Works. Do not think for one moment God keeps these books to determine our entrance into heaven. Paul preached that we do not get to heaven by our works, but by faith. There are several Books of works, but only one Book of Life. The Books of works, by which we will be judged, is recorded to determine our level of rewards. This Book has nothing to do with earning a passage into heaven. Rewards will be given only to those whose name was found in the Book of Life.

If your name is not found in the Book of Life, the Book of works will mean nothing anyway. Whatever your reward was supposed to be is lost forever because one's name was not found in the Book of Life.

The truth of the matter is all who now stand before the Great White Throne will basically be those who have lost out of Heaven. God will have already taken all of His children home in the Rapture, whose names were found in the Book of Life.

The Jewish believers will come later after the 144,000 Jewish Saints, and the two great witnesses preach the gospel to those left upon the earth. The Books will close forever, and Christ will be married to His Bride, the church, and Christ will present the church-Bride faultless and spotless to the Father. Eternity begins.

J. L. Caldwell, Pastor New Jerusalem Baptist Cathedral Durham, NC Website: www.myn-jbc.org

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## Co-workers Could Bear Costs Of Accommodating For Religion

By Debbie Kaminer

CUNY

The Supreme Court issued a unanimous decision that will transform the role of faith in the workplace in a way that could elevate the rights of religious workers at the expense of their colleagues.

On June 29, 2023, the court ruled unanimously in favor of a Christian postal worker who quit his job and sued the U.S. Postal Service for, in his view, not doing enough to accommodate his request to not work Sundays.

The case, known as Groff v. DeJoy, addressed an employer's obligation to accommodate religious employees' requests under federal law.

The upshot is that the ruling means religious employees may have an easier time getting their companies to accommodate requests. But while on the surface it may seem businesses will bear the costs of doing so, as a scholar of employment discrimination I believe other employees may ultimately pay for much of the burden of accommodation.

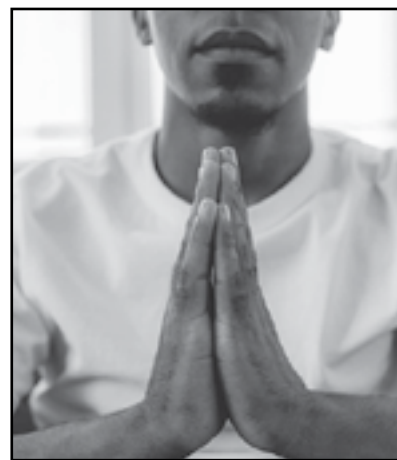
### RELIGIOUS RIGHTS IN THE WORKPLACE

Employers are required to accommodate the religious needs of employees under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, so long as they can do so without imposing an "undue hardship."

Congress didn't define what that term meant, and it took another dozen years for the Supreme Court to do so in *Trans World Airlines v. Hardison*. The court determined that Title VII does not require employers to bear more than a "de minimis," or minimal, cost in accommodating religious employees. The new ruling requires a higher level of accommodation by employers.

Relying on this "de minimis" standard, employees requesting religious accommodation in the workplace have generally fared poorly in the courts. Supporters of more religious accommodation in the workplace have tried many times to amend Title VII to redefine undue hardship as a "significant difficulty or expense."

From 1994 to 2013, over a dozen bills attempting to codify this definition were introduced in Congress, with none coming close to passage. After failing to persuade Congress to amend Title VII, religious advocates turned to the Supreme Court. The



court's decision to hear this case in the first place was highly unusual because it suggested it was considering overturning its own long-standing precedent.

The other key issue in the case was whether or not a religious accommodation that imposes on co-workers can count as an undue hardship on the employer.

Since *Trans World Airlines v. Hardison*, most federal appellate courts have determined that accommodations affecting religious employees' co-workers – such as requiring them to take over undesirable weekend shifts – can be an undue hardship, even if the business is not directly harmed. In practice, that has made it easier for an employer to avoid accommodating a religious request.

### BUSINESS INTERESTS VS. RELIGIOUS RIGHTS

Ultimately, the court didn't overturn the precedent set in *TWA v. Hardison*.

Instead, it took the equally unusual position of explaining that for almost half a century both the lower courts and Congress misunderstood that decision and that de minimis had never been the appropriate standard. Rather, the court noted that the earlier Supreme Court decision stated three times that accommodation is required unless it results in "substantial" – not minimal – costs.

Relying on this long-ignored language, the new ruling revised "undue hardship" to mean "when a burden is substantial in the overall context of an employer's business."

The court's compromise ruling left unclear what "substantial" means, so I expect more court cases to come as employees push the limits of what

can be accommodated.

In addition, the ruling seems to permit employers to sometimes shift this increased accommodation cost to co-workers. While the court provided little guidance on when an accommodation would burden co-workers, this could have the effect of limiting other employees' rights.

Take, for example, one common type of accommodation request, which is time off from work for religious observance.

In those cases, either co-workers can bear the cost of accommodation, by covering for the religious employee without necessarily earning more income, or the employer can bear the cost of accommodation, by hiring additional workers, paying premium wages or suffering a loss of productivity.

The Supreme Court ruling determined that a cost to co-workers can only count as an undue hardship if those impacts also affect the overall business. That means employers might be able to shift the cost of accommodation onto co-workers – for example, requiring them to work an undesirable weekend shift.

### CO-WORKERS BEARING THE BRUNT

Co-workers could also be harmed in cases involving accommodation of religious expression. This is of particular concern in cases in which religious expression demeans LG-BTQ+ people.

In 2004, the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals determined that it would pose an undue hardship and be demeaning to co-workers for a religious employee to post in his cubicle the Bible verse "If a man also lie with mankind ... both of them have committed an abomination; they shall surely be put to death."

With the new ruling, employers might be required – by a civil rights law originally aimed at prohibiting employment discrimination – to accommodate religious expression that demeans LG-BTQ+ employees.

This all suggests religious employees' co-workers, not companies, could end up bearing the increased cost of accommodation.

At its heart, the case pits business rights versus religious rights. By making it easier to pass the costs onto workers, the ruling allows the Roberts court to maintain its reputation as being both the most pro-business and the most pro-religion court in recent memory.

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Letters To The Editor

Dear Editor, I have always thought that if you are on the planning side of development, especially when you can be there when, lets say, when corridors are being planned, you can put in the necessary preventions and or inducements to make the plan work for all and not just the few.

For several years, once Wake County Approved a broad Transit Plan, some of us in East Raleigh, fought tooth and nail to get S. Wilmington St, from downtown Raleigh to the Renaissance to be the first BRT corridor. SE Raleigh was chosen because we were the weakest of the other 4 proposed corridors. Just imagine if they had chosen a corridor like Glenwood Ave, they knew that the residences along that corridor had the wherewithal to control that effort rather than have staff call the shots (the missing middle lawsuit being evidence of that. (Wake-Stone).

Where was the help when East Raleigh was trying to preserve Dr. Poe's vision of the grand entrance into Raleigh with Crepe Myrtles and beautiful median from the east, or the natural occurring business incubators from Longview to Tarboro Rd, like the Carolinian? We were already the highest users of transit by 'need' riders; but then that was strategic because historically, from the Light Rail attempts, Raleigh residents, overall were not Transit riders. But that meant nothing to you and others. You all set on the sidelines as the "higher level" city planners and developers, to the exclusion of those of us from East Raleigh with the longitudinal and latitudinal knowledge base, developed the NBABRT -TOD Plan

I am not opposed to tracts in Historic Oakwood and the College Park NCOD (Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District) being preserved, but NBABRT has already destroyed the predictability, sustainability of the East Raleigh community that surrounds New Bern Ave from Downtown to Wake Med. The historical impact is on the level of what HWY 147 (Durham Expressway) did to the historical communities around NCCU and the built communities that connected to downtown Durham prior to 147.

When Oakwood did not want the East - West Blvd (Western Blvd/ MLK,Jr Blvd) to come through Historic Oakwood, did your predecessors settle for a compromise? Oh that's right the blvd went through east Raleigh (Apollo Heights) with insufficient right of way to insure that community would be sustainable.

Bottom line, if you are not going to participate in COR (City of Raleigh) future growth and expenditures from the beginning of the planning stage, then wading in once the bulk of the work has been completed, you are just another "johnny come late" to the outcome. It is not fair to the 'process' to tweak at the end rather than to roll up your sleeves and get into the mix from the beginning, but then, as I have already explained, COR deemed the local talent as being non-"higher level".

Daniel Coleman

Letters To The Editor

NC WARN says Duke Energy has been hiding aggressive plans to waste billions on new and expanded, high-voltage transmission corridors that would target vulnerable communities while limiting large and local solar power projects for years. If successful, Duke's scheme will further thwart state carbon reduction efforts by locking in a huge increase in the use of climate-wrecking fracked natural gas.

The Durham-based watchdog group has called on Governor Roy Cooper and Attorney General Josh Stein to investigate Duke Energy's plans - and actions quietly underway - for more than 900 miles of new and expanded or upgraded transmission corridors, mostly crisscrossing southeastern NC, and sweeping discrepancies in what Duke told regulators and investors about the price tag.

NC WARN says the NC Utilities Commission (NCUC) has enabled Duke to keep the scheme under wraps and to avoid even considering a proven alternative, based on local solar-plus-storage, that would be a far cheaper, faster and more equitable way to decarbonize the state.

We're gearing up to vigorously challenge Duke leaders' scheme in the legal arena, through a statewide ad campaign and by building alliances with targeted communities and climate justice allies. A key focus will be pressing Cooper and Stein to realize that Duke's multi-billion dollar plans totally collide with state climate goals and the physical and economic wellbeing of North Carolinians.

Fine print and a blurred map\* buried in the 16th appendix to Duke Energy's 2022 Carbon Plan admits the utility will face "right-of-way" challenges to build or expand hundreds of miles of transmission corridors up to 200 feet wide. Such land seizures became a central factor in the six-year fight over the Atlantic Coast (gas) Pipeline that Duke Energy and Dominion Energy tried to build. Rural farmers, communities and their allies blocked the unnecessary, \$8 billion pipeline in 2020 despite Cooper's support for the project.

The new high-voltage transmission scheme targets many of those same people, largely communities of color and low wealth in the Southeast, including Indigenous, who have for many years borne a disproportionate impact of climate disasters and pollution from Duke Energy and others.

NC WARN recently sent Cooper and Stein our new report, Moving North Carolina Forward: The Case for Local Solar-Plus-Storage. Using data from the National Renewable Energy Lab, engineer Bill Powers shows that North Carolina has over twice the space needed to meet state climate goals by putting solar power on roofs, parking areas and vacant lots. That buildout could be done quickly, inexpensively and equitably while benefiting solar power companies.

Since 2017, Duke Energy and its compliant NCUC have prevented debate over this approach. We're calling on Cooper and Stein to investigate Duke's true intentions.



FUNdraising Good Times By Mel & Pearl Shaw Saad & Shaw

HBCUS - A HISTORY OF OPEN-DOOR POLICY

While some institutions of higher education have had to work hard to create an inclusive culture that welcomes students of all racial and ethnic backgrounds, historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) have always had open doors.

In these times of uncertainty on the role and impact of institutions of higher education, HBCUs are continuing their long history of welcoming diverse students. Yes, these colleges and universities were established to educate formerly enslaved people following America's Civil War, and to offset the closed doors in the larger educational system. And their student bodies, faculty, and staff have always been diverse. Today they continue their focus on serving both the "haves" and the "have-nots."

Here are a few things to consider as shared by UNCF, the United Negro College Fund. "Though HBCUs make up only three percent of the country's colleges and universities, they enroll 10% of all African American students and produce almost 20% of all African American graduates. HBCUs actively work to address the financial obstacles Black students face. On average, the cost of attendance at an HBCU is 28% less than attending a comparable non-HBCU. Forty percent of HBCU students report feeling financially secure during college, as opposed to 29% of Black students at other schools.

"These students have an advantage long past graduation. A whopping 25% of African American graduates with STEM degrees come from HBCUs. Eight HBCUs were among the top 20 institutions to award the most science and engineering bachelor's degrees to Black graduates from 2008-2012. An HBCU graduate can expect to earn an additional \$927,000 in their lifetime, which is 56% more than they could expect to earn without their HBCU degrees or certificates. From start to finish, an HBCU education is a setup for success."

InsideTrack, a nonprofit that provides individualized coaching to students at many HBCUs shares yet another definition of success in a recent article. "Yet these statistics, while impressive, only tell part of the HBCU story. Belonging, acceptance and inclusion are core strengths of HBCUs. These proud and storied institutions are rooted in faith, community and service. While HBCUs provide a stable and nurturing environment for all students, they are especially adept at supporting low-income, first-generation college students - the students most at risk of either not entering college at all or not completing their degree. Many of these students are academically underprepared for college, yet they're precisely the students the country needs to obtain college degrees."

HBCUs are a healthy choice, an alternative for all students to consider. Join the ranks of those who chose an HBCU: Martin Luther King, Jr., Vice President Kamala Harris, and artists/producers/influencers Wanda Sykes, Toni Braxton, Lionel Richie, Spike Lee, and Stephen A. Smith to name only a few.

A Different Voice By Dorothy Shaw Thompson

Years ago I read two books that increased my sanity and changed my life. Let me hasten to say that these are not the only books that have helped me, and reading books is not a good exchange for living life, but reading has been a blessed endeavor. Because I don't want other books to get jealous, let me share a few other titles for your consideration. Almost in the order of importance number one, "The Bible" number two, "The Course in Miracles", number three, "The Angry Book" by Theodore Reuben. For today, the books that have inspired this writing are "How To Say No Without Feeling Guilty" and "Givers and Takers". Sorry I don't remember the authors and I don't know if they are still in print.

My mother modeled my love for reading by reading to herself every Saturday. She, my sister, and I would walk to Richard B. Harrison library on Blount street. As I remember it, rain, sunshine or snow we each checked out three books to read and return the next week. I didn't read children's books, I read books like "A Tree Grows in Brooklyn", The novels of Taylor Caldwell and books from the "Negro Collection", such as "Up From Slavery" and "Mandingo." Mrs. Molly Lee, the librarian would often whisper to my mother, "should she be reading those books?" My mother would say "she reads them." So as you can imagine, I think banning books for children is a sin (and I don't say that lightly). The experience that inspired my reading of these two books was (one), a situation I'd often get myself in and (two) something I noticed and didn't understand.

I was a stay-at-home mother with two small children, but most of my friends worked. Often on days that they would stay home and need someone to keep their darlings while they shopped or had a doctor's appointment, they would ask if I could keep their children for a few hours and I'd always say yes. One day I looked around and I'd said yes to seven extra children. I told myself it was okay because my two loved the company, however, for nine children, there were diapers to change, lunches to prepare, disagreements to settle and a big disruption to my structure and schedule. At the end of that particular day, I had to look in the mir-

ror and question my sanity. One of the things I learned was that I was saying yes for some seriously mentally unhealthy reasons. I was trying to be nice, trying to help out my friend's, trying to be a good old Christian girl. I came to some pretty good conclusions. I am nice, I am a good friend and I am a good old Christian girl and none of those things had anything to do with being responsible for nine children, seven that were not mine. However, I still didn't have a strategy because I still didn't know how to say no without feeling guilty. The Bible says we all have a guardian angel, I know mine, for my angel directs me to what I need on a daily basis. One day during this time, I was in K-Mart and went by a table to discounted books. There on top of the books thrown haphazardly was the book titled, "How To Say No Without Feeling Guilty." I snatched it up for 20 cents and only had to read the first chapter. I was right there in the book with all of my foolish reasons. From that book I learned that you just say no, you don't give a reason. You don't say "I would, but today" or "I can't because..." If you do, the other person will change their date to accommodate your schedule. I now use it whenever I mean no. The two letters are easily understood and if the person gets angry, you get the benefit of losing someone who you really don't want in your life anyway. Recently, I heard of the word "volun-told". It's when someone volun-tells someone that you will do something you've not agreed to. I experienced that during my stay-at-home mother days... a person, not to be named "volun-told" someone that I would keep their children while they went on a job interview. They dropped their children off at 7 AM and didn't come back to pick them up until 8 PM. There were no cell phones then, but breakfast, lunch and dinner... actually, my youngest was about a month old. I don't get volun-told anymore. If you want to be generous, be generous with your own time and resources, not mine.

So what of the "Givers and the Takers"? I noticed that some people give to take. You can see it most plainly with those gifts we call presents. There are people who give things to you to control you. How could that be, and how can you tell? These are the people who give you a gift, and if you don't use it immediately, they get angry. They give you a print, for example, and expect you to get it framed and put it up in your house in a space they think it belongs. They actually don't like your taste in jewelry, perfume, clothes, or decoration. It's really funny if you are willing to ask for their reasoning, to hear them make up reasons, and expect you to agree. These people also don't like the gifts you give them, and you can tell because they will not open them in your presence. One friend told me that often when giving gifts to a particular friend, she'd often buy something for herself because the friend (she began to realize) wouldn't even realize what she'd been given and by whom. She noted that she would often see her give her a gift to someone else or give it back to her on a different occasion. I'd help my friend out by just stopping giving them gifts and instead, send them a card. When a true giver gives, there are no expectations. There are no gifts that have conditions and they don't mind if you say this is a great gift but I know I will not use it. The test is that the truth is received without candor, that's when you know you are truly dealing with a friend. They know you and you know them, neither of you have to be dishonest with the other. I am thankful to have these kinds of friends in my life. They are better than books, and they will never be banned. Those people who banned books and try to tell you how to live your life are manipulators and controllers. It's not enough that they don't want to read certain books, they don't want you to read them either. I saw a legislative panel recently where the legislator's question was, "Wouldn't it be better to teach children the song 'Jesus loves the little children - All the children of the world' than have them read books about slavery, segregation, racism, etc?" He didn't want them to, and he wanted a yes or no answer. That's control when the only answer you'll receive is the one you want. Here's the answer I'd give, "No". Singing that song doesn't change you now, does it? Because you are not concerned about the red, yellow, black & white. Your statement is only about the "white" and how the truth will make them feel. The Jesus I've read about didn't just come with a song, he came with an example for us to follow and I think he said, the truth will set you free.

King Crossword

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down. Clues include: Across 1: Angel Cragal, 5: Witty one, 8: Intaluated, 12: cough, 13: Copper head?, 14: Akin or Aida, 15: Famed comic impresario, 17: A deadly sin, 18: Tuscan city, 19: Resolutions, 21: Cracking, 24: ... was say, 25: Pocket bread, 28: Chart toppers, 30: Gaps: gp, 33: Author Jan, 34: Highway div, 35: Helly volume, 36: City area, for, 37: Follow orders, 38: U.P. speed, 39: Stuffy, 40: College VIP, 41: East, howlit, 42: Gold War in, 43: Ch... arena, 46: Old hal, 50: Enormous bear, 51: Every year, 54: Blue malinga?, 55: Swiss cartoon, 56: Campus dips, 57: React in her, 58: For a magad-, 59: Squealer, 60: Mama Fillet, 61: Floor cleaners, 62: Con, 63: Judicial gaps, 64: Brian broke: ions, 65: Pailid, 66: Disb, 67: Jewels, 68: Grand parties, 69: Kitchen rol, 70: Shark tank network, 71: For a magad-, 72: Squealer, 73: Mama Fillet, 74: Spread ion, 75: Brahma's, 76: Staircase, 77: Little nasca, 78: Ear marm, 79: Casual tops, 80: Buddy, 81: Shark tank network, 82: Sol down, 83: Tile, 84: Godfather's, 85: Emulate, 86: Result, 87: Serial statu, 88: I callit, 89: Muppet, 90: Taper, 91: Uppy sort, 92: Footproof, 93: TV trophy, 94: Before, 95: Tease



# Classifieds

## DURHAM COUNTY

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DURHAM COUNTY

**NOTICE OF SERVICE  
OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION**  
In The General Court Of Justice  
Superior Court Division  
FILE NO. 23 SP 524

ROBERT E. LEVIN,  
Public Administrator of the  
Estate of DONNIE W. LASSITER,  
DECEASED

Petitioner,  
v.  
ALL PERSONS IN ESSE AND  
NOT IN ESSE WHO MAY CLAIM  
TO HAVE AN INTEREST IN THE  
ESTATE OF DONNIE W. LASSITER,  
DECEASED

Respondents.  
TO: All Persons In Esse And Not In  
Esse Who May Claim To Have An  
Interest In The Estate Of Donnie W.  
Lassiter, Deceased

Take notice that a pleading  
seeking relief against you has  
been filed in the above action. The  
nature of the relief being  
sought is as follows: Petitioner has  
filed a Petition to Sell Property and  
to Determine Heirs.

You are required to make  
defense to such pleading no later  
than the 8th day of August, 2023,  
which is 40 days from the first  
publication of this notice. Upon  
your failure to file a pleading by the  
above date, party seeking service  
against you will apply to the Court  
for the relief sought.

This the 29th day of June, 2023.  
Robert E. Levin  
Petitioner

HAYWOOD, DENNY & MILLER,  
L.L.P.

P.O. Box 51429  
Durham, NC 27717

Telephone: 919-403-0000  
6/29, 7/6, 7/13, and 7/20/23

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DURHAM COUNTY

**NOTICE OF SERVICE  
OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION**  
In The General Court Of Justice  
Superior Court Division  
Before the Clerk  
File Number 23-E-813

The Undersigned, having  
qualified as ADMINISTRATRIX of  
the Estate of GREGORY KEITH  
TAYLOR, late of Durham County,  
North Carolina, hereby wishes  
to notify all persons having  
claims against the Estate of said  
deceased to exhibit them to the  
undersigned at the below listed  
address on or before the 29th day  
of September 2023, or this notice  
will be pleaded in bar of their  
recovery.

All persons indebted to the  
Estate will please make immediate  
payment to the undersigned at the  
below listed address.

This the 29th day of June, 2023.

Joyce P. Price  
Administratrix

317 Crestview Drive  
Durham, NC 27712

6/29, 7/6, 7/13, and 7/20/23

NORTH CAROLINA  
DURHAM COUNTY

**NOTICE OF CREDITORS**

THE UNDERSIGNED, having  
qualified on the 16th day of June,  
2023, as Executor of the ESTATE  
OF NORMAN HERBERT KRAUSE,  
Deceased, of Durham County,  
North Carolina, does hereby notify  
all persons, firms and corporations  
having claims against said Estate  
to exhibit them to the undersigned  
on or before the 30th day of  
September, 2023, or this Notice will  
be pleaded in bar of their recovery.  
All persons indebted to said  
Estate will please make immediate  
payment to the undersigned.

This, the 29th day of June, 2023.

ALLIN H. PIERCE, JR.

EXECUTOR  
ESTATE OF NORMAN HERBERT  
KRAUSE

c/o Stephen C. Rhudy, Esq.

Walker Lambe, PLLC

Post Office Box 51549  
Durham, North Carolina 27717

6/29, 7/6, 7/13 and 7/20/23

NORTH CAROLINA  
DURHAM COUNTY

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**  
23 E 802

All persons, firms and  
corporations having claims against  
ALICE KECK ADAMS a/k/a ALICE  
JANE ADAMS deceased, are  
notified to exhibit them to Randall  
L. Baker and Cynthia B. Clark, Co-  
Executors of the decedent's estate  
on or before September 29, 2023,  
c/o Katherine T. Merritt, Attorney  
for the Estate, at P. O. Drawer 1529,  
Hillsborough, North Carolina 27278,  
or be forever barred from their  
recovery. Debtors of the decedent  
are asked to make immediate  
payment to the above named Co-  
Executors.

This the 29th day of June, 2023.  
Randall L. Baker and Cynthia B.  
Clark, Executor of the Estate of  
Alice Keck Adams  
c/o Coleman, Merritt, Murphy &  
Rainsford, P.C.  
Katherine T. Merritt,  
Attorney for Estate  
P.O. Drawer 1529  
Hillsborough, NC 27278  
(919) 732-2196

6/29, 7/6, 7/13, and 7/20/23  
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DURHAM COUNTY

**NOTICE OF SERVICE  
OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION**  
In The General Court Of Justice  
Superior Court Division  
Before the Clerk  
File Number 22-E-774

The Undersigned, having  
qualified as ADMINISTRATOR of  
the Estate of SHERRY RENE  
SADDLER, late of Durham County,  
North Carolina, hereby wishes  
to notify all persons having  
claims against the Estate of said  
deceased to exhibit them to the  
undersigned at the below listed  
address on or before the 29th day  
of September 2023, or this notice  
will be pleaded in bar of their  
recovery.

All persons indebted to the  
Estate will please make immediate  
payment to the undersigned at the  
below listed address.

This the 29th day of June, 2023.

William Christopher Saddler  
Administrator

1014 Rhode Island Ave

Kannapolis, NC 28083

6/29, 7/6, 7/13, and 7/20/23

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**  
FILE NO. 23 E 806

All persons, firms, and  
corporations having claims against  
the estate of KARIN JILL GLEITER  
deceased, of Durham County,  
North Carolina, are notified to  
present the same to the personal  
representative listed below on or  
before the 25th day of September,  
2023 or this Notice will be pleaded  
in bar of

their recovery. All debtors of the  
said estate are asked to please  
make immediate payment.

This the 29th day of June, 2023

SUSAN H. LEWIS  
Executrix

P.O. Drawer 4825  
Chapel Hill, NC 27515

6/29, 7/6, 7/13, and 7/20/23

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DURHAM COUNTY

**NOTICE OF SERVICE  
OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION**  
In The General Court Of Justice  
Superior Court Division  
Before the Clerk  
File Number 23-E-812

The Undersigned, having  
qualified as ADMINISTRATOR of  
the Estate of VAUGHN AVERY  
BOOKER, late of Durham County,  
North Carolina, hereby wishes  
to notify all persons having  
claims against the Estate of said  
deceased to exhibit them to the  
undersigned at the below listed  
address on or before the 29th day  
of September 2023, or this notice  
will be pleaded in bar of their  
recovery.

All persons indebted to the  
Estate will please make immediate  
payment to the undersigned at the  
below listed address.

This the 29th day of June, 2023.

Vaughn Booker  
Administrator

c/o Bagwell Holt Smith, PA

111 Cloister Court, STE 200

Chapel Hill, NC 27514

6/29, 7/6, 7/13, and 7/20/23

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DURHAM COUNTY

**NOTICE OF SERVICE  
OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION**  
In The General Court Of Justice  
Superior Court Division  
Before the Clerk  
File Number 23-E-329

The Undersigned, having  
qualified as EXECUTOR of the  
Estate of SHIRLEY GRAY  
FERRELL, late of Durham County,  
North Carolina, hereby wishes  
to notify all persons having  
claims against the Estate of said  
deceased to exhibit them to the  
undersigned at the below listed  
address on or before the 29th day  
of September 2023, or this notice  
will be pleaded in bar of their  
recovery.

All persons indebted to the  
Estate will please make immediate  
payment to the undersigned at the  
below listed address.

This the 29th day of June, 2023.

Aileen Thomas  
Executor

2113 Eastwood Drive  
Durham, NC 27703

6/29, 7/6, 7/13, and 7/20/23

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**  
ESTATE OF BARBARA C.  
CLARKE

Barbara C. Clarke died on

February 27, 2023, in Durham,  
NC. John G. Clarke qualified as  
her Executor with Durham  
County, NC Clerk of Superior  
Court file 23 E 612. All persons,  
firms or corporations indebted  
to Barbara C. Clarke will please  
make immediate payment. This  
is to notify all persons, firms,  
and corporations having claims  
against Barbara C. Clarke to present  
them before October 13, 2023, or  
this Notice may be pleaded to bar  
their claim. Claims and payments  
may be filed with Deborah H. Shartel,  
Attorney for the estate at Argles  
Law Firm, 3200 Croasdale Drive,  
Suite 706, Durham, NC 27705.  
07/06, 07/13, 07/20, 07/27/2023.

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**

The undersigned having qualified  
as Executrix of the Estate of  
RUFUS A. DENSON a/k/a RUFUS  
ATKINS DENSON, Deceased, late  
of Durham County, North Carolina,  
this is to notify all persons, firms  
and corporations having claims  
against the Estate to exhibit them  
to the undersigned at the office of  
IDOL LAW, PLLC, PO Box 51759,  
Durham, North Carolina 27717, on  
or before the 9th day of October,  
2023, or this Notice will be in bar  
of their recovery. All persons  
indebted to the Estate will please  
make immediate payment.

This is the 6th day of July, 2023.

Judy Dillard, Executrix

Estate of Rufus A. Denson a/k/a

RUFUS ATKINS DENSON

c/o Robert A. Idol, Esquire

IDOL LAW, PLLC

Attorney at Law

PO Box 51759

Durham, NC 27717

(919) 401.5151

7/6, 7/13, 7/20 and 7/27/23

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DURHAM COUNTY

**NOTICE OF SERVICE  
OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION**  
In The General Court Of Justice,  
District Court Division  
Before the Clerk  
File No:20 CVD 141

[CHILD CUSTODY PROCEEDING],  
QUANDA NEWELL, Plaintiff  
v.

SHERNERIA MCLEAN &  
NATHANIEL NEWELL, Defendants.

To the parents of A. McLean, a  
female child born on 4/25/2012.  
TAKE NOTICE that a pleading  
seeking relief against you has  
been filed in the above-entitled  
action. The nature of the relief  
sought against you is an award  
of permanent legal custody of the  
aforementioned child to Quanda  
Newell. You are required to make  
defense to such pleading with the  
Durham County Clerk of Court no  
later than 8/16/2023, said date  
being forty (40) days from the first  
publication of this notice. Upon  
your failure to do so, the parties  
seeking relief against you will apply  
to the Court for the relief sought.

This, the 6th day of July, 2023.

Katherine S. Moye, JusticeMatters,  
Inc., Attorney for Plaintiff,

P.O. Box 58058

Raleigh, NC, 27658

919/794-7511 Ext. 9.

7/6, 7/13, and 7/20/23

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS AND  
DEBTORS OF ALFRED LEBEAU**

All persons, firms and  
corporations having claims  
against ALFRED LEBEAU, late of  
Durham County, North Carolina,  
are notified to exhibit them to  
Dorothy K. Lebeau as Executor of  
the decedent's estate on or before  
October 7, 2023, c/o Gregory  
Herman-Giddens, Attorney at  
Law, 1414 Raleigh Rd., Ste. 203,  
Chapel Hill, NC 27517, or be barred  
from their recovery. Debtors of  
the decedent are asked to make  
immediate payment to the above  
named Executor.

This the 6th day of July, 2023.

Dorothy K. Lebeau, Executor  
c/o Gregory Herman-Giddens, Atty.  
TrustCounsel

1414 Raleigh Rd., Ste. 203

Chapel Hill, NC 27517

7/6, 7/13, 7/20, and 7/27/23

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DURHAM COUNTY

**NOTICE OF SERVICE  
OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION**  
In The General Court Of Justice  
Superior Court Division  
Before the Clerk  
File Number 23-E-740

The Undersigned, having  
qualified as TESTAMATRIX of the  
Estate of MARY LOUISE JONES,  
late of Durham County, North  
Carolina, hereby wishes to notify  
all persons having claims against  
the Estate of said deceased to exhibit  
them to the undersigned at the  
below listed address on or before  
the 6th day of October 2023, or  
this notice will be pleaded in bar of  
their recovery.

All persons indebted to the  
Estate will please make immediate

payment to the undersigned at the  
below listed address.

This the 6th day of July, 2023.

Shelia V Jones  
Testamentrix

6036 Framingham Road

Raspeburg, MD 21206

7/6, 7/13, 7/20, and 7/27/23

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**

Having qualified as Executrix  
of the ESTATE OF LLOYD  
HUMPHREY, deceased, of Durham  
County, N.C., the undersigned does  
hereby notify all persons, firms,  
and corporations having claims  
against said estate to exhibit them  
at the office of the attorney for the  
estate on or before the 12th day of  
October 2023, or this Notice will  
be pleaded in bar of their recovery.  
Debtors of the decedent are asked  
to make immediate payment.

This 13th day of July 2023.

Eileen Worley Humphrey, Executrix,  
c/o David B. Alexander, Attorney  
for the estate, The Law Firm of  
David B. Alexander, P.C., 5003  
Southpark Drive, STE 230, Durham,  
NC 27713

7/13, 7/20, 7/27, and 8/3/2023

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DURHAM COUNTY

**NOTICE OF SERVICE  
OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION**  
In The General Court Of Justice  
Superior Court Division  
Before the Clerk  
File Number 23 E 878

The Undersigned, having  
qualified as ADMINISTRATOR of  
the Estate of MCOR EISEL  
GRADIN, late of Durham County,  
North Carolina, hereby wishes  
to notify all persons having  
claims against the Estate of said  
deceased to exhibit them to the  
undersigned at the below listed  
address on or before the 13th day  
of October 2023, or this notice will  
be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to the  
Estate will please make immediate  
payment to the undersigned at the  
below listed address.

This the 13th day of July, 2023.

Robert J. Mermelstein  
Executrix

3808 Evander Way

Raleigh, NC 27613

7/13, 7/20, 7/27, and 8/3/2023

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DURHAM COUNTY

**NOTICE OF SERVICE  
OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION**  
In The General Court Of Justice  
Superior Court Division  
Before the Clerk  
File Number 23-E-868

The Undersigned, having  
qualified as ADMINISTRATOR CTA  
of the Estate of CONSTANCE  
DENISE JACKLEY, late of Durham  
County, North Carolina, hereby  
wishes to notify all persons having  
claims against the Estate of said  
deceased to exhibit them to the  
undersigned at the below listed  
address on or before the 13th day  
of October 2023, or this notice will  
be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to the  
Estate will please make immediate  
payment to the undersigned at the  
below listed address.

This the 13th day of July, 2023.

Ka-Quana Jackley  
Administrator CTA

4801 Danube Lane, Apt. 1403  
Durham, NC 27704

7/13, 7/20, 7/27, and 8/3/2023

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DURHAM COUNTY

**NOTICE OF SERVICE  
OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION**  
In The General Court Of Justice  
Superior Court Division  
Before the Clerk  
File Number 23-E-810

The Undersigned, having  
qualified as EXECUTOR of the  
Estate of ROSALIE S. MANDEL  
A/K/A ROSALIE IRMA MANDEL,  
late of Durham County, North  
Carolina, hereby wishes to notify  
all persons having claims against  
the Estate of said deceased to exhibit  
them to the undersigned at the  
below listed address on or before  
the 13th day of October 2023, or  
this notice will be pleaded in bar of  
their recovery.

All persons indebted to the  
Estate will please make immediate  
payment to the undersigned at the  
below listed address.

This the 13th day of July, 2023.

Marcia A. Mandel, Executrix  
c/o Marion Law Office, PLLC

2741 University Drive  
Durham, NC 27707

7/13, 7/20, 7/27, and 8/3/2023

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DURHAM COUNTY

**NOTICE OF SERVICE  
OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION**  
In The General Court Of Justice  
Superior Court Division  
Before the Clerk  
File Number 23-E-632

The Undersigned, having  
qualified as EXECUTOR of the

Estate of BERYL ROSSER WALP,  
late of Durham County, North  
Carolina, hereby wishes to notify  
all persons having claims against  
the Estate of said deceased to exhibit  
them to the undersigned at the  
below listed address on or before  
the 13th day of October 2023, or  
this notice will be pleaded in bar  
of their recovery.

All persons indebted to the  
Estate will please make immediate  
payment to the undersigned at the  
below listed address.

This the 13th day of July, 2023.

Allison Walp Dimsdale  
Executrix

4 Ontario Court  
Durham, NC 27713

7/13, 7/20, 7/27, and 8/3/2023

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
COUNTY OF DURHAM

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**

THE UNDERSIGNED, having  
qualified on the 9th day of May,  
2023, as Executor of the ESTATE  
OF SHIRLEY MORGAN RIGSBEE,  
Deceased, of Durham County,  
North Carolina, does hereby notify  
all persons, firms and corporations  
having claims against said Estate  
to exhibit them to the undersigned  
on or before the 16th day of  
October, 2023 or this Notice will  
be pleaded in bar of their recovery.  
All persons indebted to said  
Estate will please make immediate  
payment to the undersigned.

This, the 13th day of July, 2023.

STEPHEN R. RIGSBEE  
EXECUTOR

ESTATE OF SHIRLEY MORGAN  
RIGSBEE

c/o Richard G. Long III, Attorney

Walker Lambe, PLLC

Post Office Box 51549

Durham, North Carolina 27717

7/13, 7/20, 7/27, and 8/3/2023

NORTH CAROLINA  
DURHAM COUNTY

**NOTICE OF SERVICE  
OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION**  
In The General Court Of Justice  
District Court Division  
File No. 23 CVD 598

[CHILD CUSTODY AND DIVORCE  
PROCEEDING]

Claudia Reyes Vega, Plaintiff v.  
Jose Flores Bueso, Defendant.

To Jose Flores Bueso, father of  
Carla Jasury Flores Reyes, born  
December 16, 2008 in Honduras.

Take notice that a pleading  
seeking relief against you has been  
filed in the above-entitled action.  
The nature of the relief being  
sought is as follows: absolute  
divorce and that permanent legal  
custody of the aforementioned  
child be granted to Claudia Reyes  
Vega. You are required to make  
defense to such pleading not later  
than 22nd of August, 2023, said  
date being forty (40) days from  
the first publication of this notice,  
and upon your failure to do so the  
party seeking service against you  
will apply to the court for the relief  
sought.

This, the 13th day of July, 2023.

Mary Elizabeth Reed, JusticeMatters,  
Inc. Attorney for the Plaintiff

P.O. Box 199

Durham, NC 27702

(919) 794-7511

7/13, 7/20, and 7/27/23

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DURHAM COUNTY

**NOTICE OF SERVICE  
OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION**  
In The General Court Of Justice  
Superior Court Division  
Before the Clerk  
File Number 23-E-886

The Undersigned, having  
qualified as ADMINISTRATRIX of  
the Estate of PERCELL MCNAIR,  
late of Durham County, North  
Carolina, hereby wishes to notify  
all



# Classifieds

below listed address on or before the 29th day of September 2023, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to the Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned at the below listed address.

This the 29th day of June, 2023.  
Margaret Foggie Kimber  
Administrator  
221 South Selma Road  
Wendell, NC 27591  
6/29, 7/6, 7/13, and 7/20/23  
NORTH CAROLINA  
WAKE COUNTY

**NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION**  
In The General Court Of Justice  
District Court Division  
File No. 23CV009929-910  
Sheila Avery, Plaintiff V.  
Marcus Avery, Defendant

To The Defendant: Take notice that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above entitled action. The nature of the relief being sought is as follows: The Plaintiff has filed a Complaint for Judgment for Absolute Divorce. You are required to make defense to such pleading no later than August 15, 2023, forty (40) days from the first date of the publication of this Notice, and upon your failure to do so the party seeking service against you will apply to the court for the relief sought.

This, the 6th day of July 2023.  
Sheila Avery, Plaintiff  
107 Rubin Ct, Apt C1  
Cary, NC 27610  
7/6, 7/13, and 7/20/23  
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
WAKE COUNTY

**NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION**  
In The General Court Of Justice  
Superior Court Division  
Before the Clerk  
File Number 23E001557-910

The Undersigned, having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of JOHN SANDERS, JR., late of Wake County, North Carolina, hereby wishes to notify all persons having claims against the Estate of said deceased to exhibit them to the undersigned at the below listed address on or before the 13th day of October 2023, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to the Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned at the below listed address.

This the 13th day of July, 2023.  
Karen Sanders  
Executor  
106 New Rand Rd.  
Garner, NC 27529  
7/13, 7/20, 7/27, and 8/3/2023  
NORTH CAROLINA  
WAKE COUNTY

**NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION**  
In The General Court Of Justice  
District Court Division  
File No. 23CV017612-910

Timothy Lee Johnson, Plaintiff  
VS. Charlene Johnson, Defendant  
To The Defendant: Take notice that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above entitled action. The nature of the relief being sought is as follows: The Plaintiff has filed a Complaint for Judgment for Absolute Divorce. You are required to make defense to such pleading no later than August 22, 2023, forty (40) days from the first date of the publication of this Notice, and upon your failure to do so the party seeking service against you will apply to the court for the relief sought.

This, the 13th day of July 2023.  
Timothy Lee Johnson, Plaintiff  
1521 Rose Lane  
Raleigh, North Carolina 27610  
7/13, 7/20, and 7/27/23  
NORTH CAROLINA  
WAKE COUNTY

**NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION**  
In The General Court Of Justice  
District Court Division  
File No. 22CVD016047-910  
Fariha Nashik, Plaintiff VS.  
MD Mobinur Rahman, Defendant

To The Defendant: Take notice that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above entitled action. The nature of the relief being sought is as follows: The Plaintiff has filed a Complaint for Judgment for Absolute Divorce. You are required to make defense to such pleading no later than August 22, 2023, forty (40) days from the first date of the publication of this Notice, and upon your failure to do so the party seeking service against you will apply to the court for the relief sought.

This, the 13th day of July 2023.  
Fariha Nashik, Plaintiff

100 White Bluff Lane, Apt 1E  
Cary, NC 27513  
7/13, 7/20, and 7/27/23  
WAKE COUNTY

**COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA WASHINGTON JDR - JUVENILE AND DOMESTIC RELATIONS DISTRICT COURT CASE NO. JJ015059-07-00 NOTICE OF TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS**

IN RE: JOSHUA LEVI HUTSLAR  
To: CHRISTINA HUTSLAR, Defendant. The attached petition seeks to terminate the parental rights of the parents of the above-named child. "Residual parental rights and responsibilities" mean all rights and responsibilities remaining with the parent after the transfer of legal custody or guardianship of the person, including but not limited to the right of visitation, consent to adoption, the right to determine religious affiliation and the responsibility for support.

It is ordered that the defendant is to appear at the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court 187 E. Main Street, Abingdon, VA 24210, on or before September 20, 2023 at 1:00 PM.

This, the 20th of July 2023.  
By Order of the Court  
Publication date: 7/20, 7/27, 8/3, and 8/10/2023  
NORTH CAROLINA  
WAKE COUNTY

**NOTICE OF SERVICE PROCESS BY PUBLICATION**  
IN THE GENERAL COURT OF JUSTICE SUPERIOR COURT DIVISION BEFORE THE CLERK  
FILE NO. 23 SP 1704  
ASHLEY BRADFORD & DAVID BRADFORD, Petitioners  
IN RE: THE ADOPTION OF ELIJAH CARTER BRADFORD,  
TO: UNKNOWN BIOLOGICAL FATHER, RESPONDENT

TAKE NOTICE that a Special Proceeding has been commenced in the above referenced court and file. Petitioners are seeking to adopt ELIJAH CARTER RHYNE, who was born on August 22, 2017, in Cleveland County, North Carolina of Shelbi Denise Rhyne, Biological Mother.

YOU ARE REQUIRED to make defense to such pleading not later than September 5, 2023, said date being 40 days from the first publication of this Notice, and upon your failure to do so, the party seeking service against you will apply to the court for the relief sought.

HEREBY TAKE NOTICE that a hearing will be held in the above-captioned matter before the Clerk of Court of Wake County, North Carolina, for the Adoption of ELIJAH CARTER RHYNE.

This the 20th day of July, 2023.  
L. Ashley Johnson, Esquire  
Breedon Law Office  
P.O. Box 967  
Clayton, NC 27528  
(919) 661-4970  
7/20, 7/27, and 8/3/2023  
NORTH CAROLINA  
WAKE COUNTY

**NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION**  
In The General Court of Justice  
District Court Division  
File No. 23CVD001155-910  
MONICA L. RODRIQUEZ, PLAINTIFF VS.  
COURI D. RUSSELL, DEFENDANT

TO THE DEFENDANT: Take notice that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above-entitled action. The nature of the relief being sought is for child custody. You are required to make defense to such pleading no later than August 29, 2023 said date being at least forty (40) days from the first publication of this Notice, and upon your failure to do so, the Plaintiff, MONICA L. RODRIQUEZ, will apply to the court for the relief sought.

This, the 20th day of July, 2023  
Monica L. Rodriguez, Plaintiff  
6330 Piedra Drive, Apt 201  
Raleigh, NC 27616  
7/20, 7/27, and 8/3/23

## CHATHAM COUNTY

**NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION**  
In The General Court of Justice  
District Court Division  
File No. 23-CVD-514

To: LUDY SUKEYLY ORTIZ UR-BINA, Defendant.

Take notice that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above-entitled action. The nature of the relief being sought is for child custody.

You are required to make defense to such pleading no later than August 22, 2023 said date being at least forty (40) days from the first publication of this Notice, and upon your failure to do so, the Plaintiff, HERRY DAVID CASTILLO SANCHEZ, will apply to the court for the relief sought.

This, the 13th day of July, 2023  
Aneta Paval  
Paval Law Offices, PLLC  
7404 Chapel Hill Rd, Suite M  
Raleigh NC 27607  
Telephone: (919) 410-6690  
7/13, 7/20, and 7/27/23

**NORTH CAROLINA CHATHAM COUNTY NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION**  
In The General Court of Justice  
District Court Division  
File No. 23-CVD-513

To: JOSE LUIS MAZARIEGOS VASQUEZ, Defendant.

Take notice that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above-entitled action. The nature of the relief being sought is for child custody. You are required to make defense to such pleading no later than August 22, 2023 said date being at least forty (40) days from the first publication of this Notice, and upon your failure to do so, the Plaintiff, MARITZA NOEMI MARTINEZ CRUZ DE MAZARIEGOS, will apply to the court for the relief sought.

This, the 13th day of July, 2023  
Aneta Paval  
Paval Law Offices, PLLC  
7404 Chapel Hill Rd, Suite M  
Raleigh NC 27607  
Telephone: (919) 410-6690  
7/13, 7/20, and 7/27/23

## JOHNSTON CO. AUTO

NORTH CAROLINA JOHNSTON COUNTY  
In The General Court Of Justice  
District Court Division  
Small Claims

File No. 23CV003301-500  
AMEND COMPLAINT TO ENFORCE POSSESSORY LIEN ON MOTOR VEHICLE

DEIDA'S AUTO BODY  
11 Sadisco Rd.  
Clayton, NC 27527  
c/o PO Box 46882  
Raleigh, NC 27620

vs. Unknown Owner,  
TO: Unknown Owner

TAKE NOTICE the petitioner has filed with the clerk a petition in proper form indicating that the petitioner has a valid lien against a 1972 Toyota/Corolla Vin No. TE21602116 and that the petitioner shall have the right to sell to the highest bidder the motor vehicle listed on August 22, 2023 at WCCH, 207 E Johnston St, Smithfield, NC 27577 in the Civil Magistrates Courtroom. You are required to make a defense to such pleading before such date and time.

This, the 20th day of July, 2023.

DEIDA'S AUTO BODY  
c/o PO Box 46882  
Raleigh, NC 27620  
7/20, 7/27, and 8/3/2023

## D/M/WBE

### SUBCONTRACTORS/SUPPLIERS WANTED

Pipeline Utilities, Inc. (NC General Contractor License No. 325) is seeking certified DBE, MBE, and WBE subcontractors and suppliers for the Stormwater Infrastructure Repairs, SD-2023-04 project for the City of Durham which bids July 25, 2023, at 3:00 PM. Plans and specifications for this project are available at the following locations: Pipeline Utilities, Inc.; 2204-F Associate Drive; Raleigh, NC 27603.

Potential subcontracting opportunities include but are not limited to surveying, clear and grubbing, hauling, asphalt paving, striping, traffic control, erosion control, seeding, sodding, landscaping, linework, bypass pumping, and flatwork. Please contact Dustin Downie (ddownie@taloving.com) if you are interested in submitting a proposal on any portion(s) of this project. Contact via phone 919-734-8400; fax: 919-736-2148; or email. All quotations will be accepted up to bid closing time of the bid date. Pipeline Utilities, Inc. is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer.

Please advise if assistance is needed with obtaining necessary equipment, supplies, materials, or insurance/bonding to satisfy the work requirements. We are willing to accept quotations for all or partial quantities and items of work. We can offer 2-party check payments and quick payment agreements, but the agreements need to be negotiated prior to the bid date.

## NOTICE TO SUBCONTRACTOR

### ADVERTISEMENT TO BID FOR THE RALEIGH-DURHAM AIRPORT AUTHORITY AIRPORT OPERATIONS CENTER

Owner: The Raleigh-Durham International Airport Authority Morrisville, North Carolina

ADVERTISEMENT FOR BID: Sealed proposals will be received by Right Build International, from prequalified subcontractors for the Raleigh Durham International Airport's: Airport Operations Center at 2:00pm on Thursday, September 26, 2023 (Refer to Bid Manual for specific bidding procedures). Bids not meeting these requirements will not be accepted. Bids will be opened and read at the RDU Maintenance Facility at 200 Hales Branch Rd, Cary, NC 27513. A pre-bid conference for GMP #2 will be held from 2:00pm - 4:00pm Tuesday, August 16th, 2023 at the RDU Maintenance Facility at 200 Hales Branch Rd, Cary, NC 27513. copies of project documents are available through Accent Imaging production@accentimaging.com. Please contact Dayshon Bynum dbynum@rightbuildint.com to obtain a digital copy of project documents.

## FORECLOSURE

NORTH CAROLINA DURHAM COUNTY  
NOTICE OF FORECLOSURE SALE  
23 SP 393

Under and by virtue of a Power of Sale contained in that certain Deed of Trust executed Sarah Blakenship, which was dated June 22, 2016 and recorded on June 22, 2016 in Book 7959, Page 260, Durham County Registry, North Carolina.

Default having been made of the note thereby secured by the said Deed of Trust and the undersigned, Satterfield Law, PLLC, having been substituted as Trustee in said Deed of Trust, and the holder of the note evidencing said default having directed that the Deed of Trust be foreclosed, the undersigned Substitute Trustee will offer for sale at the courthouse door of the county courthouse where the property is located, or the usual and customary location at the county courthouse for conduction the sale on July 27, 2023 at 10:00 AM, and will sell to the highest bidder for cash the following described property situated in Durham County, North Carolina, to wit:

Being all of Lot 20 as shown on plat entitled "Jubilee Land Subdivision", recorded in Plat Book 143, Page 124, Durham County Registry, to which plat reference is hereby made for a more particular description. See also plat book 139, Page 170, Durham County Registry.

This property is commonly known as 2804 Jubilee Lane, Durham, NC 27707

Third party purchasers must pay the excise tax, and the court costs of Forty-Five Cents (\$0.45) per One Hundred Dollars (\$100.00) pursuant to NCGS 7A-308(a)(1). A cash deposit (no personal checks) of five percent (5%) of the purchase price, or Seven Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$750.00), whichever is greater, will be required at the time of the sale. Following the expiration of the statutory upset bid period, all the remaining amounts are immediately due and owing.

Said property to be offered pursuant to this Notice of Sale is being offered for sale, transfer

## D/M/WBE

### SUBCONTRACTORS/SUPPLIERS WANTED

T. A. Loving Company (NC General Contractor License No. 325) is seeking certified DBE, MBE, and WBE subcontractors and suppliers for the Northern Regional Pump Station and Force Main Upgrades - Phase B project for the Cape Fear Public Utility Authority which bids August 8, 2023, at 11:00 AM. Plans and specifications for this project are available at the following locations: TA Loving Company, 400 Pate-town Road, Goldsboro, NC 27530 \* Cape Fear Public Utility Authority; 235 Government Drive; Wilmington, NC 28403 \* Carolinas AGC Website \* Dodge Data and Analytics website \* ConstructConnect website \* Construction Journal website \* North American Procurement Council website \* The Blue Book Building and Construction Network website.

Potential subcontracting opportunities include but are not limited to surveying, demolition, clearing and grubbing, hauling, asphalt paving, striping, traffic control, earthwork, erosion control, seeding, sodding, electrical, linework, jack & bore, directional drilling, bypass pumping, masonry, roofing, HVAC, roll up doors, insulation, flatwork, CIPC, concrete forms, concrete rebar, painting, plumbing, and fencing. Please contact Jeff Price (jprice@taloving.com) if you are interested in submitting a proposal on any portion(s) of this project. Contact via phone 919-734-8400; fax 919-736-2148; or email. All quotations will be accepted up to bid closing time of the bid date. TA Loving Company is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer.

Please advise if assistance is needed with obtaining necessary equipment, supplies, materials, or insurance/bonding to satisfy the work requirements. We are willing to accept quotations for all or partial quantities and items of work. We can offer 2-party check payments and quick payment agreements, but the agreements need to be negotiated prior to the bid date.

# Opportunities Live In The Pages Of The Carolinian

since 1940





# Classifieds

Answers

Solution time: 24 mins.

M	A	R	C		W	A	G		G	A	G	A	
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Just Like Cats & Dogs by Dave T. Phipps



A JOINT VENTURE

**PREQUALIFICATION NOTICE**

Clancy & Theys Construction Co. – The Daniele Company – A Joint Venture – (421 N. Harrington Street Suite 200 Raleigh NC 27603, 919-834-3601) is soliciting subcontractors to submit Prequalifications for E-53 Pleasant Plains Elementary School with WCPSS for Bid Packages: Release 1 – 0500-Struct/Misc Steel, 1410-Elevators, 2200-Plumbing, 2300-HVAC, 2600-Electrical, 3100-Turnkey Site, 3110-Grading, 3210-Asphalt Paving, 3300-Site Utilities; Release 2 – 0210-Bldg. Cleaning, 0300-Turnkey Concrete, 0400-Masonry, 0710-Wtrproofing/Sealants, 0740-Wall Panels, 0750-Roofing, 0810-D/F/H, 0840-Alum/Glass, 0920-Dry-wall, 0930-Hard Tile, 0940-Terrazzo, 0950-ACT, 0960-Res.&Carpet, 0990-Painting, 1000-Specialties, 1010-Markerboards/Visual Displays, 1020-Signage, 1030-Operable Partitions, 1070-Prefab Canopies, 1140-Food Svc. Equip, 1220-Window Trtments, 1230-Educational Casework, 1280-Media Ctr Furnishings, 2100-Fire Prot., 2310-Bldg Automation/Controls, 3190-Offsite, 3240-Fencing, 3270-Site Concrete, 3290-Landscaping. Project includes new construction of an approximately 140,000 gsf elementary school building, parking lots, paved access drives, and site retaining walls. Prequalification forms for Release 1 are due by 9/11/2023 and Release 2 by 10/23/2023.

Prequalification forms & bid package descriptions are available by emailing Jessica Bates @ jessicabates@clancytheys.com.

An Information Session is scheduled for August 10th, 2023 from 5:30-7pm at Dix Park Chapel in Raleigh. For more information regarding the Information Session & M/WBE opportunity please contact Lisa Horton @ Lisahorton@clancytheys.com.

For second tier and supplier opportunities please contact Lisa Horton at Clancy & Theys. WCPSS and Clancy & Theys have an affirmative policy of fostering, promoting, and conducting business with minority owned enterprises. Minority contractors are encouraged to participate in the subcontractor qualification process.

**WANTED WBE, MBE & DBE BIDS**

Branch Civil, Inc., is currently soliciting quotes for the following Design-Build project located in Wake, NC:

**R-2829B NC 540 (TRIANGLE EXPRESSWAY SOUTHEAST EXTENSION)**

From South of SR 2542 (Rock Quarry Road) to I-87/US 64/ US 264

Contract ID.: C204825

We are soliciting quotes for the following selected items of work:

Roadway Design: New Alignment Six Lanes divided by 70 FT Median; Structure Design; Permit Application/Modification; Hydraulic Design; Subgrade Stabilization; Foundation Design for Structures and Roadway; Geotechnical Engineering; Geoenvironmental; Erosion and Sedimentation Control Design and Implementation; Transportation Management Plan Design and Implementation; Pavement Marking Design; Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Design and Installation; All Electronic Tolling Infrastructure; Sign Design and Installation; Traffic Signals and Signal Communications; Construction; Project Management; Design and Construction Management; Utility Construction; R/W Utilities, Conflicts and/or Construction; Construction Surveying; Location and Surveys; Lighting (Construction Only); Right of Way Acquisition; Public Involvement and Information;

All quotes must be received by: August 15, 2023 @ 4:30 p.m. EST

We encourage Minority, Women and Disadvantaged Businesses to participate.

Contact our Estimating Department 919-410-4561 for further information. Quotes may be submitted by email to BClestimating@branchcivil.com or US Mail to P.O. Box 40004, Roanoke, VA 24022.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER M/F/H/V

## Sports

### The Ultimate Women's World Cup Underdog

By Henry Bushnell

yahoo sports

Passion poured out of Haitian players on the eve of the games that meant everything. Two dozen of them had piled into one hotel room on Feb. 17. They sank onto beds, into one another's laps, onto the floor. They locked eyes in this intimate environment and spoke from their souls about an opportunity they'd earned: Two qualifiers that offered a route to the 2023 Women's World Cup, which would be Haiti's first.

But they hardly spoke about soccer that night. For roughly an hour, they preached about their collective purpose. They'd all seen the images and followed the news; they knew their country had descended into violent, ungovernable chaos. They knew it endangered their families. "That's hurt us a lot," midfielder Ruthny Mathurin said.

They also knew, though, that they could uplift millions of hurting countrymen and amplify an increasingly desperate message.

They can't provide tangible aid or prevent gangs from ravaging neighborhoods. Over the past two years, ever since the July 2021 assassination of President Jovenel Moise, those gangs have tightened their grip on a country long plagued by colonial legacies and natural disasters, and dragged it down into an even deeper despair. They have gutted the government — there are currently no elected lawmakers in office — and kidnapped, raped or murdered citizens. They have burned buildings

and homes, mostly in the capital. Their terror has shut down schools and shut off access to basic necessities. Well-intentioned humanitarians have fled out of fear for personal safety and cried out to foreign governments for help. When Volker Türk, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, visited in February, one week before the qualifying playoffs, he called it all "a living hell." And soccer, of course, won't remedy any of it.

But to the Haitian players, all of it imbues soccer with meaning. In their captain's hotel room on Feb. 17, they spoke in their native Creole about this bigger picture, about uniting for this common cause. "The passion," defender Claire Constant said, "just covered every scared feeling," replacing nerves with confidence. And 20 hours later, it spilled onto a field.

Haiti beat Senegal in a semifinal, then Chile three days later to secure an improbable World Cup berth. Many of those same players are now in Australia, where they'll meet mighty England on Saturday. And they've vowed that their remarkable story isn't finished. "If we're here, it's to do something," Mathurin said. And to keep transmitting that broader message, even 9,000 miles from home, even though significant chunks of their country lack internet access and electricity.

They can't restore it, but they want Haiti "to know that some people like the country still," Mathurin said. "Some people fight for it."

Haiti's history and culture include soccer


Haiti's present despair can trace its roots all the way back to the Caribbean state's triumphant beginnings. Its origin story is well-known: In 1791, slaves revolted, overthrew their French masters and won independence. But history largely buried what followed. France, backed by warships, without regard for its own heinous role in the revolution — enslaving Africans and transporting them to the colony in the first place — demanded the equivalent of hundreds of millions of dollars in reparations. Haiti ultimately agreed to pay a majority of the ransom, reportedly 112 million French francs, which, as The New York Times laid out last year, has crippled the Haitian economy ever since.

The United States and others also played roles in inscribing what became cyclical poverty. Haiti entered the 21st century as the poorest country west of Africa. And its location, on a fault line between two of Earth's massive tectonic plates, kept the vicious cycle churning. A 2010 earthquake killed over 100,000 Haitians and affected millions of the nation's then-10 million people. After-effects and other disasters have, in many ways, defined the country ever since.

They've also skewed Western perceptions. An internet search for "Haiti" nowadays often returns reports of starvation and violence. In a way, all the dire news dehumanized a people who also share a vibrant culture that persists despite what history has thrown at it.


"I promise you there's a thousand amazing things about Haiti that the media does not show," said Lara Larco,

a Haiti women's national team goalkeeper whose family migrated to Florida when she was 4 after kidnapping attempts on her mom and grandfather. And soccer, just like griyo or kompa, is part of that culture.



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**We've Got All Your Favorite Snacks!**



NC Courage U23's Hanna Jibril (17) holds off Eagle FC's Jeena Pressley (24) for control of the ball in the second half in the USL-W National Semifinal at WakeMed Soccer Park in Cary, N.C on July 14, 2023. The Courage will take on the Indy Eleven for the Championship in Indianapolis, IN on July 22nd. Steve Worthy Photo