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# HUD Helps Homeowners For The Holidays

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has extended its foreclosure moratoriums for FHA-insured single family home mortgages and home equity mortgages in federally declared major disaster areas to April 11, 2025.

The extension is intended to give borrowers affected by Hurricanes Helene and Milton additional time to access federal, state or local housing resources or to consult with HUD-approve housing counselors or to rebuild their homes.

"When disaster strikes, we know that families and communities need not only resources, but time to recover," HUD Agency Head Adrianne Todman said in a press release. "Today, by extending our foreclosure moratorium, we continue the Biden-Harris Administration's efforts to help those affected by the catastrophic Hurricanes Helene and Milton to repair and rebuild their homes, communities, and lives."

After the hurricanes struck, the FHA implemented automatic 90-day foreclosure moratoriums that required mortgage servicers to halt the initiation or completion of foreclosure actions in federally declared disaster areas on the date each disaster was declared.

"Because the consecutive Hurricanes Helene and Milton caused a great deal of damage and disruption, FHA believes it is appropriate to extend our foreclosure moratoriums by 120 days," said Federal Housing Commissioner Julia Gordon. "This extension will provide more time for homeowners to review a range of options with their mortgage servicer if they are unable to resume regular mortgage payments due to the impact of the disaster."

In North Carolina, President Biden declared a major disaster exists in Alexander, Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Buncombe, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba, Clay, Cleveland, Gaston, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Lincoln, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Transylvania, Watauga, Wilkes, and Yancey Counties and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians.

Borrowers with FHA-insured mortgages located in Hurricanes Helen and Milton disaster areas should contact their mortgage or loan servicer immediately for assistance. Multiple options are available for those who cannot resume their regular mortgage payments yet. Borrowers can also obtain additional assistance in the following ways:

Visit the FHA Disaster Relief site or call the FHA Resource Center at 1-800-304-9320 to learn more about disaster relief options.

Contact a HUD-approved housing counseling agency. These agencies have counselors available to assist those impacted by natural disasters in determining assistance needs and identifying available resources. Homeowners can find a HUD-approved housing counseling agency online or use HUD's telephone look-up tool by calling (800) 569-4287. The telephone look-up tool includes access to information in more than 250 different languages. Borrowers do not have to have an FHA-insured mortgage to meet with a HUD-approved housing counseling agency. There is never a fee for foreclosure prevention counseling.

For borrowers whose homes are destroyed or damaged to an extent that requires reconstruction or complete replacement, contact an FHA-approved lender about FHA's Section 203(h) program. This program provides 100 percent financing for eligible homeowners to rebuild their home or purchase a new one.

For borrowers seeking to purchase and/or repair a home that has been damaged, contact an FHA-approved lender about FHA's Section 203(k) loan program. This program allows individuals to finance the purchase or refinance of a house, as well as the costs of repair or renovation, through a single mortgage.

# They Are Still 'Doing The Most Good'

**Diane Winston**

*The Conversation*

Tinseled trees and snowy landscapes are not the only signs of the upcoming holiday season. Red kettles, staffed by men and women in street clothes, Santa suits and Salvation Army uniforms, also telegraph Christmastime.

William Booth, an English evangelist, founded the Salvation Army in 1878 as a religious outreach to London's poor. How a British evangelical church became an American icon is an ongoing interest of mine.

Booth, who called himself "The General," fashioned his army on Britain's military. From the start, his "soldiers" wore uniforms, and they described their mission in martial terms. Salvationists marched through the streets of London's East End, a neighborhood of poor immigrants, with brass bands and female preachers. Booth and his followers also pursued "sinners" and frequently preached in bars, brothels and theaters.

Booth's plan was to send his army worldwide, and his first stop was the United States. One of his early recruits had migrated to Philadelphia and wrote to Booth about the residents' need for salvation. In 1880, a small party of British Salvationists debarked at Castle Garden, New York's first immigration center. The group immediately started singing hymns set to popular melodies and marching through lower Manhattan.

During the next few days, the English "soldiers" tacked up posters, similar to ads for commercial entertainment, for a prayer service at Harry Hill's, a popular dance hall, theater and saloon. Not only was the venue thick with drunkards, prostitutes and pleasure seekers; its unlikeliness as a religious meeting place guaranteed press attention.

Such unexpected behavior did bring the Salvation Army to the public's attention. Their boisterousness, even in service of saving souls, was criticized by New York's clergy and ridiculed in newspapers and magazines. That the Salvation Army featured female preachers at a time when most Protestant groups did not ordain women only added to its notoriety.

But the army did not surrender. Pressing their "invasion" beyond New York City, the soldiers traveled first to Philadelphia and later nationwide. Their exuberance attracted young people and women to the cause.

Young people liked the notion of a military crusade for religious purposes, and women joined because the Salvation Army offered them positions of leadership and authority. In fact, William Booth's daughter-in-law, Maud Ballington, followed by his two daughters, Emma and Evangeline, headed the American Salvation Army from 1887 to 1950.

In both Britain and the U.S., Salvationists saw their mission as twofold: converting sinners and assisting the needy.

In the Salvation Army's perspective, the two went hand in hand, which is why members opened shelters for addicts, alcoholics and prostitutes. Yet they also sought to aid "down and outers," their name for the needy. Among their early outreaches were Christmas dinners for the urban poor. But finding funds for food and gifts was difficult.

By 1891, Salvationists had outposts nationwide. In San Francisco, Salvation Army Captain Joseph McFee was eager to serve a Christmas feast for a thousand of the city's poorest residents. Frustrated by his lack of success, he decided to improvise. Grabbing a crab pot from the local wharf, he hung it from a tripod at a busy intersection. Above the pot was a sign: "Fill the Pot for the Poor – Free Dinner on Christmas Day." McFee's campaign was a success.

Word spread and the kettles soon provided Christmas dinners for thousands nationwide.

The kettle also helped rehabilitate the Salvation Army's image. Instead of seeing Salvationists as an unruly pack of religious rebels, many Americans recognized their work with the poor. At a time when neither state nor federal governments provided a social safety net, the Salvation Army offered meals, beds, work and medical facilities to destitute men and women.

**Beta Phi Brothers Howard Fitts, Jr & Joseph Younge are acknowledged for obtaining 50 years of Omega Service at our chapter's Achievement Week Event on November 10, 2024**

# Update: Judge Wynn Rescinds Retirement

**By Cash Michaels**

*Contributing writer*

Sen. Thom Tillis (R-NC) is not pleased with U.S. Fourth Circuit Appeals Judge James Wynn these days.

Judge Wynn, 70, appointed to the Circuit Court by President Barack Obama in 2010, was all set to retire from the bench last month, until the election of Pres.-elect Donald Trump changed his plans. Outgoing Pres. Biden had already selected Judge Wynn's replacement on the Fourth Circuit, when all of a sudden, u.S. Senate Democrats and Republicans struck a deal that ultimately blocked the nomination on Wynn's replacement, substituting instead a judicial candidate of Pres.-elect Trump's.

Apparently in a move to stymie any deal that would have a Trump nominee replace him, Judge Wynn wrote a letter to Pres. Biden last month, telling the Democratic president, "I write to advise that after careful consideration, I have decided to continue in regular active service as a United States Circuit Judge for the Fourth Circuit."

(See ***WYNN RESCINDS,*** P. 7)

# Is Doom Scrolling Rotting Our Brains?

*The Guardian* - If you want to witness the last vestiges of human intellect swirling down the drain, hold your nose and type the words "skibidi toilet" into YouTube. The 11-second video features an animated human head protruding from a toilet bowl while singing the nonsensical lyrics "skibidi dop dop dop yes yes". The clip has been viewed more than 215m times, and spawned hundreds of millions of references on TikTok and other social media.

Fitting, then, that the Oxford word of the year has just been announced as "brain rot". As an abstract concept, brain rot is something we're all vaguely aware of. The dictionary defines it as "the supposed deterioration of a person's mental or intellectual state, especially viewed as the result of overconsumption of material (now particularly online content) considered to be trivial or unchallenging". But few people are aware of how literally technology is rotting our brains, and how decisively compulsive internet use is destroying our grey matter.

Brain rot was portended almost 20 years ago when scientists studied the effects of a new invention called "email", specifically the impact a relentless barrage of information would have on participants' brains. The results? Constant cognitive overload had a more negative effect than taking cannabis, with IQs of participants dropping an average of 10 points.

And this was prior to smartphones bringing the internet to our fingertips, which has resulted in the average UK adult now spending at least four hours a day online (with gen Z men spending five and a half hours a day online, and gen Z women six and a half).

In recent years, an abundance of academic research from institutions including Harvard medical school, the University of Oxford and King's College London found evidence that the internet is shrinking our grey matter, shortening attention spans, weakening memory and distorting our cognitive processes. The areas of the brain found to be affected included "attentional capacities, as the constantly evolving stream of online information encourages our divided attention across multiple media sources", "memory processes" and "social cognition".

Paper after paper spells out how vulnerable we are to internet-induced brain rot. "High levels of internet usage and heavy media multitasking are associated with decreased grey matter in prefrontal regions," finds one. People with internet addiction exhibit "structural brain changes" and "reduced grey matter". Too much technology during brain developmental years has even been referred to by some academics as risking "digital dementia".

In 2018, a decade of data analysed by leading memory psychologists at Stanford University found that people who frequently engaged with multiple online platforms have reduced memory and attention spans.

And yet we seem to be doing very little to stem the tide. Earl Miller, an MIT neuroscientist and world expert on divided attention, warned in 2022 that we are now living in "a perfect storm of cognitive degradation". Dr Gloria Mark, professor of informatics at the University of California and author of Attention Span, has found

(See ***DOOM SCROLLING*** P. 2)

## STATE NEWS BRIEFS

## NC Joins States Calling For A Constitutional Convention

**NC Newsline** - North Carolina legislators voted this month to ask Congress to call for convention of states to suggest changes to the U.S. Constitution. Some Republican legislators have been pushing to file an application for a constitutional convention for more than a decade.

North Carolina's resolution is added to the pile of requests for a convention that other states have approved and sent to Congress. Congress must call a convention once 34 states ask for one.

North Carolina's resolution says it wants a convention only to consider a constitutional amendment for congressional term limits. North Carolina's resolution says its application should be counted with other state applications for term limits toward the goal of 34, but should not be included in the count of state applications on other subjects.

But David A. Super, a constitutional scholar at Georgetown University Law Center, said it doesn't matter what North Carolina put in its resolution because Congress can count state applications however it wants.

"There's nothing in the Constitution that allows those limits," Super said in an interview. "It's up to Congress how to count."

U.S. Rep. Jodey Arrington, a Texas Republican and chairman of the House Budget Committee, wants Congress to call a convention and claims that the 34-state threshold has already been met.

Interest groups are engaged in a coordinated effort to have states adopt resolutions calling for a convention under Article V of the U.S. Constitution to suggest amendments. The convention method of amending the Constitution has never before been used.

Super calls the movement for an Article V convention dangerous because

(See ***NC JOINS STATES,*** P. 2)

# A Bitter Recount, Legal Battle Over Votes

**By: Jordan Meadows**

*Staff Writer*

The race for the North Carolina Supreme Court has entered a tense and legally complex phase, with Democratic Justice Allison Riggs narrowly edging out Republican challenger Jefferson Griffin by a mere 734 votes. However, Griffin is not backing down.

In an unprecedented move, Griffin has filed a legal challenge to the validity of 60,000 votes cast in the state, including those from military and overseas voters, as well as ballots with incomplete registration forms. This legal battle, now playing out in both state and federal courts, could have profound implications.

Griffin, a judge on the North Carolina Court of Appeals, initially held a lead after Election Day, but as provisional ballots were counted, Riggs surged ahead after counting more than 5 million ballots.

However, Griffin is not accepting the outcome. At the heart of Griffin's challenge is the claim that certain ballots should not count because they were cast by voters whose registration forms were incomplete. Specifically, Griffin is focusing on ballots where voters did not provide a Social Security number or state ID number, which federal law requires for voter registration. However, Griffin has disregarded other provisions of the law that allow voters to use alternative forms of identification, such as a voter ID number or a government-issued document, or providing the required materials when arriving to vote.

In his lawsuit, Griffin also challenges ballots cast by overseas and military voters, arguing that they should have provided a copy of their photo ID when voting via absentee ballots. While federal law protects the rights of overseas voters and does not require photo ID, Griffin's argument seeks to impose stricter requirements based on the state's voter-ID laws, which do not explicitly exempt these groups.

This challenge threatens to disenfranchise thousands of voters, including elected officials and even Riggs' own parents, who are among those on the list of challenged voters.

While Griffin is pushing his case in state courts, a federal lawsuit filed by the North Carolina Democratic Party seeks to protect the rights of these 60,000 voters. The party argues that accepting Griffin's challenge would violate the 14th Amendment and the Help America Vote Act, as it would deny voters the opportunity to have their ballots properly considered.

Federal judges have already ruled on many of the issues at play in this case. In the lead-up to the election, a federal judge appointed by President Donald Trump rejected similar arguments made by Griffin's allies, warning that such

(See ***A BITTER RECOUNT,*** P. 2)

## NC JOINS STATES

*Continued from page 1*

once it convenes, it can propose whatever constitutional amendments it wants. States won't necessarily be able to choose delegates to a constitutional convention, he wrote in a 2021 American Constitution Society issue brief.

Any proposed amendments coming out of a convention would need to be ratified by three-fourths of state legislatures.

States have been asking for a convention since the 1700s, desiring anti-polygamy amendments, prohibition's repeal, and the direct election of senators. Forty-five years ago, North Carolina was one of dozens of states backing a balanced budget constitutional amendment.

Today, the group Convention of States Action is leading one of the efforts for an Article V convention. Started by Mark Meckler, a Tea Party Patriots cofounder and Michael Farris, the founder of the Home School Legal Defense Association, Convention of State Action has an aggressive campaign to convince states to pass its resolution calling for a convention to consider amendments "that impose fiscal restraints on the federal government, limit the power and jurisdiction of the federal government, and limit the terms of office for its officials and for members of Congress."

Representatives have visited the North Carolina state government complex in recent years with a llama dressed in red, white, and blue. The group's senior advisor, former Republican U.S. Sen. Rick Santorum, held a press conference last year with House Speaker Tim Moore and other legislators calling for North Carolina to support its convention application.

Santorum was back in the state this year to speak at a rally for a constitutional convention.

Rick Santorum

Former U.S, Sen. Rick Santorum (file photo)

North Carolina Republicans in the House and Senate have filed bills since 2015 copying Convention of State Action's proposed resolution. The resolution almost passed in 2017 but was pulled from the House agenda as it was about to take a final vote.

The House passed the Convention of States Action's preferred resolution and the separate resolution limited to term limits in March 2023.

The Senate approved the term-limits resolution on Dec. 2 as one of its final votes of the session.

The group U.S. Term Limits supports a convention for an amendment on that single issue. It counts North Carolina as one of nine states that has passed the term limits resolution.

Asked whether the single-issue resolutions can be counted with resolutions mentioning other issues to reach the 34-state threshold, Stacey Selleck of U.S. Term Limits said in an email that the question "will likely be answered by the courts."

## Doom Scrolling —*CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1*

evidence of how drastically our ability to focus is waning. In 2004, her team of researchers found the average attention span on any screen to be two and a half minutes. In 2012, it was 75 seconds. Six years ago, it was down to 47 seconds. This "is something that I think we should be very concerned about as a society", she told a podcast in 2023.

But we're not entirely to blame if technology is making us less intelligent. After all, it was designed to captivate us totally. Silicon Valley's dirtiest design feature – which is everywhere once you spot it – is the infinite scroll, likened to the "bottomless soup bowl" experiment, in which participants will keep mindlessly eating from a soup bowl if it keeps refilling. An online feed that constantly "refills" manipulates the brain's dopaminergic reward system in a similar way. These powerful dopamine-driven loops of endless "seeking" can become addictive.

The Guardian view on 'words of the year': lexical snapshots of a moment in time

What will happen if we don't get a handle on our declining cognitive health? The former Google design ethicist Tristan Harris told US Congress in 2019 that billions of people – "a psychological footprint about the size of Christianity" – now receive their information from platforms whose business model "links their profit to how much attention they capture, creating a 'race to the bottom of the brain stem' to extract attention by hacking lower into our lizard brains – into dopamine, fear, outrage – to win".

His warnings are about as stark as they come. "Persuasive technology is a massively underestimated and powerful force shaping the world," he said. "It has taken control of the pen of human history, and will drive us to catastrophe if we don't take it back."

The term brain rot was popularised online by young people who are most at risk of its effects. The fact that those who are most at risk have the most self-awareness of the problem is heartening news. The first step towards any change is understanding the problem. And there is cause to be hopeful. In recent years, anti-technology movements have gained traction, from teenagers turning to dumbphones to campaigns for a smartphone-free childhood; green shoots for a future in which we are able to reclaim our minds. So perhaps there's more poignant meaning to Skibidi Toilet, after all: an awareness of where human intelligence currently sits. It can now go in one of two directions: up, or round the U-bend.

## A Bitter Recount —*CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1*

a decision could "significantly alter the allocation of power ... away from a democratic form of government." The 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals upheld this decision, reinforcing the idea that voters' rights should not be lightly dismissed based on technicalities in the registration process.

Despite these rulings, Griffin is moving forward with his legal challenges in state court, hoping to gain a favorable outcome from the Republican-majority state courts.

The fact that many of the challenged voters are from historically marginalized communities, including military families, raises the stakes even higher. Griffin's challenge has been particularly criticized for disproportionately targeting Black voters, with democracy activists noting that his arguments are more likely to affect ballots cast by African American voters, who are already more vulnerable to disenfranchisement due to systemic barriers.

Moreover, the potential for partisan interference in the state courts could set a dangerous precedent, allowing future elections to be contested on similar grounds, even when no evidence of widespread fraud or ineligibility exists. This case could be a bellwether for how election disputes are handled in the future, with significant ramifications for both state and national elections.

Despite Griffin's objections, the North Carolina State Board of Elections voted unanimously to reject his challenges to the 60,000 contested ballots. The board, consisting of both Democratic and Republican members, determined that the voters in question had been properly registered and that no evidence of widespread fraud or ineligibility had been presented.

Griffin has vowed to continue his legal battle, with expectations that the case will move to Wake County Superior Court and potentially up to the state Supreme Court.

With the fate of 60,000 votes hanging in the balance, North Carolina's 2024 election season is shaping up to be one of the most contentious in the state's history. Whether or not Riggs' victory is upheld, the outcome of this legal fight will reverberate well beyond this one race, setting a precedent for future elections and shaping the ongoing debate over voting rights in the United States.

# What Is Rage-Baiting And Why Is It So Very Profitable?

*BBC*—"I get a lot of hate". The words of content creator Winta Zesu, who last year made $150,000 from posting on social media.

What separates Winta from other influencers? The people commenting on her posts and driving traffic to her videos are often doing so out of anger.

"Every single video of mine that has gained millions of views is because of hate comments," the 24-year-old explains.

In those videos, she documents the life of a New York City model, whose biggest problem is being too pretty. What some in the comments don't realise, is that Winta is playing a character.

"I get a lot of nasty comments, people say 'you're not the prettiest girl' or 'please bring yourself down, you have too much confidence'," she says to the BBC from her New York City apartment.

Winta is part of a growing group of online creators making 'rage bait' content, where the goal is simple: record videos, produce memes and write posts that make other users viscerally angry, then bask in the thousands, or even millions, of shares and likes.

It differs from its internet-cousin clickbait, where a headline is used to tempt a reader to click through to view a video or article.

As marketing podcaster Andrea Jones notes: "A hook reflects what's in that piece of content and comes from a place of trust, whereas rage-baiting content is designed to be manipulative."

But the grip negative content has on human psychology is something that is hardwired into us, according to Dr William Brady, who studies how the brain interacts with new technologies.

"In our past, this is the kind of content that we really needed to pay attention to," he explains, "so we have these biases built into our learning and our attention."

The growth in rage baiting content has coincided with the major social media platforms paying creators more for their content.

Winta Zesu has made a business out of rage-baiting

These creator programs - which reward users for likes, comments and shares, and allow them to post sponsored content - have been linked to its rise.

"If we see a cat, we're like 'oh, that's cute' and scroll on. But if we see someone doing something obscene, we may type in the comments 'this is terrible', and that sort of comment is seen as a higher quality engagement by the algorithm," explains marketing podcaster Andréa Jones.

"The more content a user creates the more engagement they get, the more that they get paid.

"And so, some creators will do anything to get more views, even if it is negative or inciting rage and anger in people," she says with a note of concern. "It leads to disengagement."

Rage bait content comes in many forms, from outrageous food recipes, to attacks on your favourite popstar. But in a year of global elections, particularly in the US, rage baiting has spread to politics too.

As Dr Brady observes: "There has been a spike in the build up to elections, because it's an effective way to mobilize your political group to potentially vote and take action."

He notes the American election was light on policy, and instead centred around outrage, adding, "it was hyper-focused on 'Trump is horrible for this reason' or 'Harris is horrible for that reason'."

An investigation from BBC social media investigations correspondent Marianna Spring found some users on X were being paid "thousands of dollars" by the social media site, for sharing content including misinformation, AI-generated images and unfounded conspiracy theories.

Some who study the trends are concerned that too much negative content can lead to the average person "switching off".

"It can be draining to have such high emotions all the time," says Ariel Hazel, assistant professor of communication and media at the University of Michigan.

"It turns them off the news environment and we're seeing increased amounts of active news avoidance around the world."

Others worry about normalising anger offline and the eroding effects on people's trust in the content they view.

"Algorithms amplify outrage, it makes people think it's more normal," says social psychologist Dr William Brady.

He adds: "What we know from certain platforms like X is that politically extreme content is actually produced by a very small fraction of the user base, but algorithms can amplify it as if they were more of a majority."

The BBC contacted the main social media platforms about rage bait on their sites, but had no responses.

In October 2024, Meta executive Adam Mosseri posted on Threads about "an increase in engagement-bait" on the platform, adding, "we're working to get it under control."

While Elon Musk's rival platform X, recently announced a change to its Creator Revenue Sharing Program which will see creators compensated based on engagement from the site's premium users - such as likes, replies, and reposts. Previously compensation was based on ads viewed by premium users.

TikTok and YouTube allow users to make money from their posts or to share sponsored content too, but have rules which allow them to demonetise or suspend profiles that post misinformation. X does not have guidelines on misinformation in the same way.

Back in Winta Zesu's New York City apartment, the conversation – which is taking place days before the US election - turns to politics.

"Yeah, I don't agree with people using rage bait for political reasons," the content creator says.

"If they're using it genuinely to educate and inform people, it's fine. But if they're using it to spread misinformation, I totally do not agree with that.

"It's not a joke anymore."




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## Biden Sets Record For Black Picks

NNPA NEWSWIRE - President Joe Biden's commitment to diversifying the federal judiciary has culminated in a historic achievement: appointing 40 Black women to lifetime judgeships, the most of any president in U.S. history. Biden has appointed 62 Black judges, cementing his presidency as one focused on promoting equity and representation on the federal bench.

His record surpasses previous efforts by his predecessors. President Jimmy Carter appointed 37 Black judges, including seven Black women. In stark contrast, Donald Trump's first term resulted in only two Black women appointed out of 234 lifetime judicial nominations.

The White House said Biden's efforts show a broader commitment to racial equity and justice.

Meanwhile, Trump has vowed to dismantle key civil rights protections, including the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division.

"Having the Black woman's experience on the federal bench is extremely important because there is a different kind of voice that can come from the Black female from the bench," Delores Jones- Brown, professor emeritus at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, told reporters.

Lena Zwarensteyn of the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights told reporters that these district court judges are often the first and sometimes the final arbiters in cases affecting health- care access, education equity, fair hiring practices, and voting rights.

"Those decisions are of- ten the very final decisions because very few cases actually get heard by the U.S. Supreme Court," Zwarensteyn explained.

Biden's nomination of Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson to the Supreme Court further reflects his commitment to judicial diversity. Jackson became the first Black woman to serve on the nation's highest court.

# Business & Finance

## Walmart's DEI Rollback Incites New Racial Equity Push

*The Guardian*—A year after the murder of George Floyd, Doug McMillon, CEO of Walmart had a warning for corporate America. The death of Floyd triggered a wave of protest over systemic racism and was "not an isolated event. We have a long history of racism, and we see unacceptable events continue."

Walmart and other large US corporations made pledges to address inequities within their business, ones many feared would be dropped once the focus on Floyd's killing and its aftermath faded. "We can't let that be the case," he wrote, outlining how the company was releasing its "diversity metrics twice a year" and calling on companies to "continue to address systemic racism and the structural inequities that are rooted in this nation's history of slavery and that persist today".

Times have changed. Last month Walmart became the latest corporation to cave to a rightwing campaign against diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) initiatives, announcing it would stop using the term DEI altogether, drop DEI trainings, no longer consider race and gender as a means to improve diversity when making offers to suppliers and would not renew a racial equity center committed to addressing "the root causes of gaps in outcomes experienced by Black and African American people".

For TaNeka Hightower the news was like a "slap in the face".

A Walmart employee for about seven years in Memphis, Tennessee, Hightower said: "I identify with all of the groups pretty much covered up under the DEI. I question, do I still want to work at Walmart because they don't acknowledge the safety concerns. They don't acknowledge, the livable wage concerns, and then now I'm being slapped in the face because the groups that I identify with are being told you are no longer protected by us."

Walmart's decision was celebrated by the conservative activist Robby Starbuck who has campaigned against similar initiatives at Ford, Harley-Davidson, Lowe's and others. However, it appears the company's plans to roll back its DEI policies were in the works before Starbuck's intervention.

Hightower said she found the reversal "very disturbing". She said there was no communication provided to workers about the changes, rather she found out about the rollbacks via the news.

"This just further confirms that we're no longer a part of the family. We never really were. We were invited to the table to assist, helping the table get prepared, but we weren't actually supposed to eat from said table," she said.

The union-backed Walmart workers group United for Respect has tried to introduce a shareholder proposal at Walmart's past two annual shareholder meetings for a third-party independent racial equity audit of the corporation.


The racial equity shareholder proposal has come up short of the 20% support it would need for Walmart to discuss it, receiving 18% in 2023 and just over 15% in 2024. Hightower said she planned on reintroducing it at the 2025 annual shareholder meeting in Arkansas.

The multibillionaire Walton family hold about 46% of Walmart's shares and about 35% of the company's shares are held by investment groups, banks, and other institutions including BlackRock. The shareholder proposal received 42% support from shareholders not part of the Walton family in 2023.

Hightower said she had been pushing for the audit "to see the disparities of how people of color are selected for those upper roles, how there's a difference in the pay, how there's a difference in the workload expectations based on race, color and gender".

Bianca Agustin, co-executive director at United for Respect said the DEI rollback policies came as a surprise to shareholders at Walmart and were concerning given Walmart is the largest private employer in the US overall and for Black Americans and women.

"Given Walmart's sheer size as the largest employer in the world, and the demographics of both their domestic workforce and their suppliers it was just very disappointing," Agustin said. "This is just a huge regression I think in response to the Trump administration."

Agustin said in Walmart's opposition to the racial equity shareholder proposal, they cited many of the DEI policies that the company has just rolled back, and claimed the company does internal racial equity audits but has never released the results of those audits.

"We're expecting a number of co-filers on this. I think a lot of investors were surprised, shocked and disappointed to see Walmart walk this back," Agustin said. "Walmart has a real responsibility, given its scale, to track this, disclose this, and live up to the mission that they intended when they started the racial equity center, which was to address the root causes of inequality. This is just such a slap in the face, I think to the employees and to stakeholders that care."

Walmart did not comment on the shareholder proposal or criticisms on the DEI policy rollbacks. A spokesperson said in a statement: "Our purpose, to help people save money and live better, has been at our core since our founding 62 years ago and continues to guide us today. We can deliver on it because we are willing to change alongside our associates and customers who represent all of America. We've been on a journey and know we aren't perfect, but every decision comes from a place of wanting to foster a sense of belonging, to open doors to opportunities for all our associates, customers and suppliers and to be a Walmart for everyone."

## Want To Fix Food Deserts And Lower Food Prices? Enforce Antitrust Law

*Ohio Capital Journal* —For now, anyway, grocery giants Kroger and Albertsons aren't going to merge into a single grocery megagiant to confront Walmart, another megagiant. But in many ways, the damage caused by 40 years of non-enforcement of relevant antitrust law is already done, said Stacy Mitchell, co-director of the Institute for Local Self Reliance and a prominent critic of anticompetitive practices.

Having already done extensive work critical of Amazon's conduct in the ecommerce space, Mitchell turned to groceries and found what she says is a direct link between non-enforcement of the 1936 Robinson-Patman Act starting in the early 1980s, the plummeting variety of grocers thereafter and the rise of "food deserts" — distressed neighborhoods lacking a place to get healthy food. She said she also found a less-direct link to more recent price spikes at the grocery stores that remain.

Causality

Writing this month in The Atlantic, Mitchell described how closely the decision not to enforce Robinson-Patman paralleled the decline of the competitive grocery marketplace.

The law forbids suppliers from cutting special deals with big grocers. But the Reagan administration abandoned enforcement when it embraced a controversial doctrine espoused by economists and lawyers at the University of Chicago.

It said the goal of antitrust law wasn't fairness, it was efficiency — and if a few big players were more efficient than many small ones, that was better for consumers. After more than four decades of lax antitrust enforcement by presidents of both parties, a growing number of economists and lawyers are saying the Chicago School's claims were wrong on both counts.

Without enforcement in the grocery space, competition declined, and grocers fled many neighborhoods altogether, creating food deserts, Mitchell wrote.

"I got very interested in the history of food deserts, but I was surprised myself how (non-enforcement was) very much causal," Mitchell said in an interview last week. "It wasn't just a factor amongst many, it was the factor."

The Atlantic article describes how Robinson-Patman was passed in the 1930s to stop A&P from forcing suppliers to sell to it at cheaper prices than A&P's smaller competitors. The law was so effective that the eight largest chains combined controlled just 25% of the marketplace from 1954 to 1982.

Kroger is headquartered in Cincinnati. In the 1970s, it had to compete even on its home turf with many others, including Thriftway, Marsh, A&P, Liberal and numerous independent IGAs. Those competitors have since been bought up or have gone out of business.

But when the Reagan administration stopped enforcing Robinson-Patman, and the biggest players started to demand special discounts from suppliers, the suppliers demanded more from smaller grocers to make up lost profits. That led to a "massive die-off" of small and medium-sized grocers and many communities were left stranded in food deserts, Mitchell wrote.

Fighting to get big

Perhaps predictably, research has shown that in 1970 "supermarkets were more likely to locate in urban areas with higher poverty and lower income" and that the trend had reversed by 1990 as grocers left those areas. Mitchell said the loss of competition sapped groceries of the imperative to serve individual communities, and serve them well.

"To have a grocery industry where there are lots and lots of independent grocery stores and also chains, that just seems much better than where we are now, where we have many, many communities where there are no grocery stores and many, many others where we have only one choice of a grocery store; where Walmart is the only choice unless you want to drive across the whole metro to another store," she said. "That's not viable for your day-to-day grocery shopping."

Mitchell said the big reason Kroger wanted to buy Albertsons was to keep up with Walmart. Kroger wanted "to try to gain the same level of buying power that Walmart has. And that's the main motivation for the merger."

Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost led several other state AGs in arguing for the merger, saying that it would actually increase competition in the grocery sector. In a court filing, they said such competition currently is robust because Kroger, Walmart and Albertsons compete against Dollar General, Family Dollar, Whole Foods, Aldi and others.

Speaking just before the courts nixed the proposed $25 billion merger, Mitchell predicted it would fail because of the case presented against it.

"The evidence is pretty overwhelming," she said. In documents entered into evidence, "the executives in the companies talked about their ability to raise prices in what one executive talked about as a 'no-comp' market, meaning the market had no competition."

High prices

Frustration over inflation — especially at the grocery — is thought to have played a big role in the outcome of the Nov. 5 election. Mitchell said a lack of antitrust enforcement also played a role there — albeit in not as straightforward a fashion as in the creation of food deserts.

She explained that the wave of mergers in the grocery industry spurred a similar wave of consolidation among the suppliers who had to bargain with the increasingly big companies.

"If they were going to have to sit across a negotiating table with these big retailers, they needed to get big too," she said. "And so we saw this huge merger wave among them.

"Today you've got a few big companies that dominate the consumer-packaged-goods market. You walk down the supermarket aisles and you see lots of different brands, but those brands are actually owned by very few companies. You've got PepsiCo. You've got General Mills. You've got Kraft Heinz. You know, there are just a few and at this point, those manufacturers face very little competition, because there's so few of them."

## Federal Crack Down on overdraft fees

NEW YORK (AP) — The Biden administration has finalized a rule limiting overdraft fees banks can charge, as part of the White House's campaign to reduce junk fees that hit consumers on everyday purchases, including banking services. President Joe Biden had called the fees, which can be as high as $35, "exploitative," while the banking industry has lobbied extensively to keep the existing fee structures in place.

Under the finalized rule announced Thursday, banks will be able to choose from three options: they may charge a flat overdraft fee of $5, they may charge a fee that covers their costs and losses, or they may charge any fee so long as they disclose the terms of the overdraft loan the way they would for any other loan, typically expressed as an annual percentage rate, or APR.

While banks have cut back on overdraft fees in the past decade, the nation's biggest banks still take in roughly $8 billion in the charges every year, according to data from the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and bank public records. Currently, there is no cap on the overdraft fees that banks can legally charge.

Right now, when a bank temporarily lends a consumer money when their account has reached a zero balance, the consumer is typically responsible for paying back both the overdrawn amount and an additional fee, which can be more than the original amount charged. In one example often cited by opponents of the fees, a $3 cup of coffee can end up costing someone more than $30.

The finalized rule is set to take effect in October 2025, but the incoming Trump administration has yet to tap anyone to lead the CFPB, and has mentioned the idea of eliminating the agency.

The finalized rule applies to banks and credit unions that have more than $10 billion in assets, which includes the nation's largest banks. Banks have previously sued the CFPB over these rules and caps on credit card late fees, and are likely to sue again. Congress also has the ability to challenge or overturn the rule.

Overdraft fees originated during a time when consumers wrote and cashed checks more frequently — so that the checks would clear instead of bouncing, if there was an issue of timing — but banks steadily increased the fees in the first two decades of the 2000s. The fees disproportionately affect banks' most cash-strapped consumers. A majority of overdrafts (70%) are charged to customers with average account balances between $237 and $439, according to the CFPB.

The agency estimates the new rule would save consumers about $5 billion in annual overdraft fees, or $225 per household that typically experiences the fees.

## Cooper & Stein File Lawsuit on Separation

NC Newsline - North Carolina Governor-elect Josh Stein and Gov. Roy Cooper filed a lawsuit Thursday to block a new Republican-led law shifting executive power in government.

Stein, who currently serves as attorney general, and Cooper argue that the portion of the law making the Highway Patrol its own department, with a commander appointed by the GOP-controlled legislature, is unconstitutional.

"Senate Bill 382 threatens the safety of North Carolinians by eliminating the Governor's powers of supervision and removal over the commander," attorneys for Stein and Cooper write in the lawsuit.

Currently, the Highway Patrol falls under the purview of the Department of Public Safety. The head of DPS is appointed by the governor, who also oversees the patrol. Under the new law, the governor would be unable to remove the commander, Stein and Cooper argue — "even if he were to commit serious criminal misconduct."

"The legislatively-appointed commander may feel empowered to delay, modify or flatly reject the direction that he receives from the governor, since he is legislatively mandated to serve until at least July 1, 2030," the lawsuit continues.

Republicans in the General Assembly overrode Cooper's veto earlier this week, cementing into law a litany of changes to executive power. Many of them redirect existing authority from offices soon to be held by Democrats, including Stein, to those that will be held by Republicans.

The new law's changes "undermine the results of the election" and "violate the separation of powers," Cooper and Stein argue in a news release.

Their lawsuit requests that the Highway Patrol language specifically be blocked from going into effect. Additional challenges to other provisions in the wide-ranging law could also be filed.

"It's fundamental to our constitution that the legislature can not both make the laws and then choose the leaders who enforce them," Cooper said. "Breaking the executive branch chain of command in law enforcement or any other executive branch agency is unconstitutional and it weakens our ability to respond to emergencies and keep the public safe."

Stein said Wednesday the law served as "a cloak for (Republicans') political pettiness."

House Speaker Tim Moore (R-Cleveland) told reporters Wednesday he had expected the law to be challenged.

"Oh, of course it's going to go to court," Moore said shortly after the House confirmed the veto override. "The lawsuit's probably already been filed while we've been sitting here or something. I mean, it always goes to court. That's just the way it is."

Moore, Senate President Pro Tem Phil Berger (R-Rockingham) and Freddy Johnson, commander of the Highway Patrol, are named as defendants in the lawsuit.

# Trump's DOJ Nomination Is Raising Civil Rights Fears

(AP) The history of the justice department's civil rights division is the product of lynchings, aged patients dying of neglect, and police officers murdering people in the street. It is the legacy of Matthew Shepard and Breonna Taylor and Emmett Till.

When local authorities would not investigate civil rights violations – or were violating rights themselves – communities have had to rely on federal investigators to fill the gap in justice. The question these communities will ask over the next four years is who the civil rights division under Donald Trump will protect.

Trump plans to tap a loyalist whose civil rights résumé largely consists of culture-war battles over campus free-speech issues and attacks on diversity initiatives to helm the justice department's civil rights division. The move puts at risk hundreds of active investigations, from police misconduct to employment and housing discrimination to abuses in jails and prisons.

Trump intends to replace the assistant attorney general, Kristen Clarke, the current chief of the civil rights division and the first Black woman to lead the division, with Harmeet Dhillon, a Maga darling and fixture in rightwing media.

"I talk to people who are depressed because the outcome of the election, and I have to remind them, this is not our first lynching," said the Rev Gerald Durley, a contemporary of Martin Luther King and pastor emeritus of Pastor of Providence Missionary Baptist church in Atlanta. "During the early days, when real lynches were occurring, we took the body down, we buried it, we kept on moving, and we kept on marching."

Since the start of the Biden administration, the civil rights division has charged more than 120 people in more than 110 cases under hate-crimes laws, from the prosecution of three men who killed Ahmaud Arbery, a Black jogger in Brunswick, Georgia, to the murderer of 10 Black people in a Buffalo supermarket, to the white nationalist who killed 23 people he perceived to be Hispanic immigrants at a Walmart in El Paso in 2019.

When Clarke testified before the Republican-controlled House judiciary subcommittee on the constitution and

limited government last year, conservative lawmakers pressed her on perceived biases in the department's investigations.

The Republican congressman Chip Roy lambasted Clarke for having only prosecuted a couple of cases of pro-choice protesters violating the Face Act, which protects access to abortion clinics and to pregnancy resource centers.

"Even under your watch, it's at least 35 to one or two," he said. "That is not even-handed. It's far from even-handed."

Left unsaid: crimes against abortion clinics and staff increased dramatically after the Dobbs decision stripped federal protection for abortion rights in 2022.

The civil rights division is the primary federal enforcer for over a dozen provisions of federal law including the Civil Rights Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Fair Housing Act, the Equal Credit Opportunity Act, the Uniformed Services Civil Relief Act, the Hate Crimes Prevention Act.

The division also enforces anti-discrimination laws for immigrants under the Immigration and Nationalization Act, eliciting settlements with companies – usually with fines for small companies of under $100,000. But the division has larger targets. Apple, Meta and Facebook each signed multimillion-dollar settlements over visa discrimination under the Biden administration.

The civil rights division has been investigating Elon Musk's aerospace and satellite firm SpaceX since 2020, alleging that SpaceX erroneously relied on export control laws to restrict its recruiting and hiring to US citizens and lawful permanent residents.

Disability rights have been core to the department over the last four years, particularly around how state hospitals treat mental health patients. The division opened an investigation into Michigan's state hospitals last month. Hospital care tends to be less politicized and perhaps less susceptible to partisan changes in administration, said Simon Zagata, director of the community and institutional rights team of Disability Rights Michigan.

"Our expectations are that [the investigation] will continue as it has started," he said. "It is harder to stop these things once they get started, and even though there will, of course, be changes in the Department of Justice, changes don't happen immediately and they don't happen all the way down the line."

The department's highest-profile civil rights investigations involve police misconduct. Since April 2021, the civil rights division has opened 11 investigations of law enforcement agencies. It has announced preliminary findings in five of those investigations, in Phoenix; Worcester, Massachusetts; Minneapolis; Mount Vernon, New York; and Memphis, Tennessee, the latter stemming from the killing of Tyre Nichols by Memphis police officers.

# Health and Wellness

## More Beans And Less Red Meat: Nutrition Experts Say

(AP News) Americans should eat more beans, peas and lentils and cut back on red and processed meats and starchy vegetables, all while continuing to limit added sugars, sodium and saturated fat.

That's the advice released Tuesday by a panel of nutrition experts charged with counseling the U.S. government about the 2025 edition of the dietary guidelines that will form the cornerstone of federal food programs and policy.

But the 20-member panel didn't weigh in on the growing role of ultra-processed foods that have been linked to health problems, saying there's not enough evidence to tell people to avoid them. And the group steered clear of updating controversial guidance on alcohol consumption, leaving that analysis to two outside reports expected to be released soon.

Overall, the recommendations for the 2025-2030 Dietary Guidelines for Americans sound familiar, said Marion Nestle, a food policy expert.

"This looks like every other set of dietary guidelines since 1980: eat your veggies and reduce consumption of foods high in salt, sugar and saturated fat," Nestle said in an email. "This particular statement says nothing about balancing calories, when overconsumption of calories, especially from ultra-processed foods, is the biggest challenge to the health of Americans."

What the scientific panel said about healthy diets

The nutrition panel concluded that a healthy diet for people aged 2 years and older is higher in vegetables, fruits, legumes, nuts, whole grains, fish and and vegetable oils that are higher in unsaturated fat.

It is lower in red and processed meats, sugar-sweetened foods and beverages, refined grains and saturated fat. It may also include fat-free or low-fat dairy and foods lower in sodium and may include plant-based foods.

The panel, which met for nearly two years, was the first to focus on the dietary needs of Americans through what they called a "health equity lens," said Dr. Fatima Cody Stanford, a Massachusetts General Hospital obesity expert who was part of the group. That meant considering factors such as household income, race, ethnicity and culture when recommending healthy diets. It will help ensure that the guidance "reflects and includes various population groups," she said in an email.

The panel didn't come to conclusions on ultraprocessed foods or alcohol

Ultraprocessed foods include the snacks, sugary cereals and frozen meals that make up about 60% of the American diet.

The panel considered more than 40 studies, including several that showed links between ultraprocessed foods and becoming overweight or developing obesity. But the nutrition experts had concerns with the quality of the research, leaving them to conclude that the evidence was too limited to make recommendations.

That decision is likely to bump up against the views of Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., the nominee to lead the U.S. Health and Human Services Department, who has questioned potential conflicts of interest among members of the dietary guidelines panel and vowed to crack down on ultraprocessed foods that contribute to chronic disease.

The panel also didn't revise recommendations that suggest limiting alcohol intake to two drinks or less a day for men and one drink or less a day for women.

In 2020, the last time the guidance was updated, the government rejected the advice of scientific advisers to recommend less alcohol consumption.

Two groups — the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine and a committee of the government agency that oversees substance abuse — are expected to release reports in the coming months on the effects of moderate alcohol use to inform the guidelines.

Do Americans follow dietary guidelines?

The advisory panel acknowledged that the diets of most Americans don't meet the current guidelines. More than half of all U.S. adults have one or more diet-related chronic health conditions and 18 million U.S. households have insecure sources of food, according to the report.

"Nutrition-related chronic health conditions and their precursors continue to threaten health through the lifespan," the report concludes. "Which does not bode well for the future of health in the United States."

What happens next?

The scientific report informs the dietary guidelines, which are updated every five years. Tuesday's recommendations now go to HHS and the Agriculture Department, where officials will draft the final guidance set for release next year.

Starting Wednesday, the public will have 60 days to comment on the guidance. HHS and USDA officials will hold a public meeting Jan. 16 to discuss the recommendations.

The new guidance, which will be finalized by the incoming Trump administration, is consistent with decades of federal efforts to reduce diet-related disease in the U.S., said Dr. Peter Lurie, president of the advocacy group Center for Science in the Public Interest.

"Broadly, I think these are well-formulated recommendations that the incoming administration would do well to adopt," Lurie said.

## The Golden Years

By Judykay Jefferson

**THE CLOCK IS TIK(ING)**

Love it or hate it, TikTok, the video-based social media app that has taken the world by storm, stands at a crossroads as it navigates through a landscape of uncertainty and innovation. With its easy access and growing cultural influence, TikTok has become a platform for creativity, activism, and community building. However, its future remains uncertain due to ongoing legal battles and concerns over national security.

One of the most pressing issues facing TikTok is the potential ban in the United States signed by President Joe Biden last spring. If ByteDance fails to divest by January 19, 2025, TikTok will be banned from U.S. app stores and internet service providers will be required to make the app inaccessible. TikTok and ByteDance have challenged the law, arguing that it violates the First Amendment and unfairly targets the company. The outcome of this legal battle will have significant implications for TikTok's future in the U.S.

A ban on TikTok would have a seismic impact on content creators and users who rely on the platform for income, entertainment, and connection. Many creators have built their careers on TikTok, using the platform to share their talents and connect with audiences around the world. The potential ban has led to uncertainty and anxiety among these creators, who are now exploring alternative platforms to continue their work.

For users, including many seniors, TikTok has become a source of entertainment, education, and community. A ban would disrupt the daily routines of millions of users who have come to rely on TikTok for their daily dose of creativity and connection.

The future of TikTok remains uncertain, but its impact on digital culture and social media is undeniable. As the platform continues to navigate legal battles and national security concerns, its ability to innovate and adapt will be key to its survival. Whether TikTok will remain a dominant force in the social media landscape or face significant challenges remains to be seen, but its influence on digital culture and community building is likely to endure.

Understanding this legal issue requires understanding the jargon, beginning with divesture. Divestiture refers to the process of a company selling off or disposing of a business unit, subsidiary, or asset. This can be done for various reasons, such as regulatory compliance, financial restructuring, or strategic realignment. In the context of TikTok, divestiture would involve ByteDance selling its stakes in TikTok to another entity.

Here are some key points on Divestiture:

Objective**: To separate the ownership of an asset or business unit from the parent company.

Regulatory Compliance**: Often used to address antitrust concerns or national security issues, as in TikTok's case.

Financial Reasons**: Companies may divest to raise capital, reduce debt, or focus on core operations.

Strategic Realignment**: Divesting non-core assets allows companies to streamline operations and concentrate on their primary business areas.

Potential Process:

1. Identification of Asset: The company identifies which assets or business units to divest.
2. Valuation The assets are evaluated to determine their worth.
3. Finding Buyers: Potential buyers are identified, and negotiations begin.
4. Due Diligence: Buyers conduct thorough checks to ensure the assets are as represented.
5. Transaction: The sale is completed, and ownership is transferred.

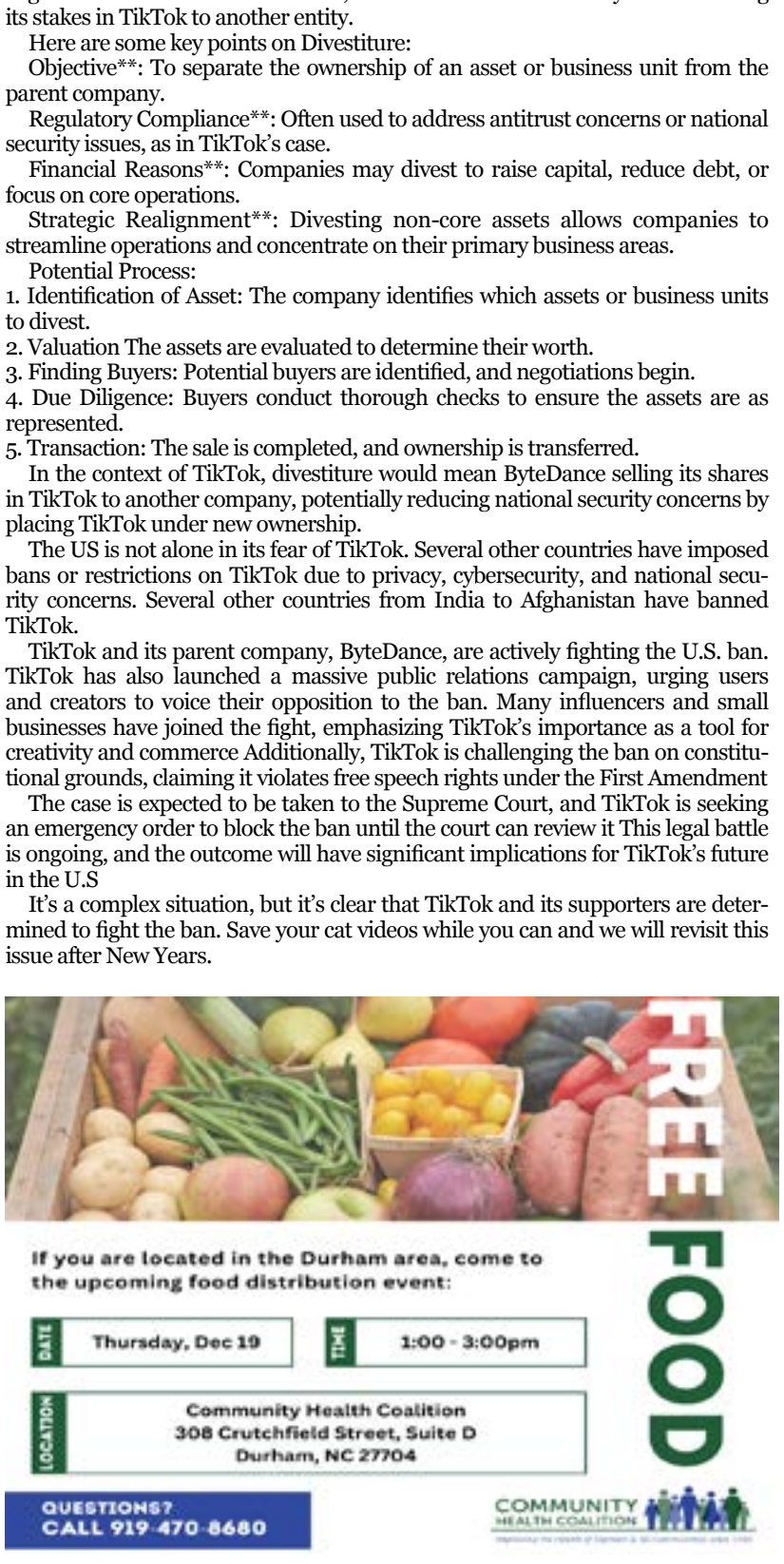
In the context of TikTok, divestiture would mean ByteDance selling its shares in TikTok to another company, potentially reducing national security concerns by placing TikTok under new ownership.

The US is not alone in its fear of TikTok. Several other countries have imposed bans or restrictions on TikTok due to privacy, cybersecurity, and national security concerns. Several other countries from India to Afghanistan have banned TikTok.

TikTok and its parent company, ByteDance, are actively fighting the U.S. ban. TikTok has also launched a massive public relations campaign, urging users and creators to voice their opposition to the ban. Many influencers and small businesses have joined the fight, emphasizing TikTok's importance as a tool for creativity and commerce Additionally, TikTok is challenging the ban on constitutional grounds, claiming it violates free speech rights under the First Amendment

The case is expected to be taken to the Supreme Court, and TikTok is seeking an emergency order to block the ban until the court can review it This legal battle is ongoing, and the outcome will have significant implications for TikTok's future in the U.S

It's a complex situation, but it's clear that TikTok and its supporters are determined to fight the ban. Save your cat videos while you can and we will revisit this issue after New Years.



# Arts & Culture

## Onesimus: The African Who Helped Defeat Smallpox

By: Jordan Meadows
*Staff Writer*

The story of Onesimus, an enslaved African man in 18th-century Boston, is one of perseverance and quiet revolution—whose ripples are still felt today in the global fight against infectious diseases. His knowledge of smallpox inoculation, passed down through generations of Africans, played a pivotal role in introducing the practice of variolation to America. This intervention not only saved lives during a devastating smallpox outbreak in 1721 but also laid the groundwork for the eventual development of vaccines.

Born in Africa—most likely in modern-day Ghana—his exact birthplace and name are unknown. What is clear is that by 1706, he had been forcibly brought to the American colonies as an enslaved person. He was given as a gift to Cotton Mather, a prominent Puritan minister of the North Church in Boston. Mather, a key figure in the Salem Witch Trials, renamed him Onesimus, a name derived from the New Testament, meaning "useful" or "profitable."

Despite his status as a slave, Onesimus was considered by Whites to be highly intelligent. Mather educated him in reading and writing, skills that were rare among enslaved people at the time.

In 1716, Onesimus shared with Mather a practice from his homeland: inoculation. He explained how he had been deliberately exposed to smallpox in a controlled way, a procedure that would provide lifelong immunity to the disease. The technique, which involved introducing a small amount of infected material into the skin, was already a common practice in many parts of Africa.

At the time, smallpox was one of the deadliest diseases in the world, with no effective treatment. The disease was especially devastating in colonial America, where it ravaged both the settler population and Indigenous communities. Onesimus's description of the practice struck a chord with Mather, who, despite his deeply ingrained prejudices, recognized its potential.

Mather had learned that the practice of variolation—deliberately infecting a healthy person with a mild case of smallpox to prevent a more serious infection—was not limited to Africa. It had been used in Asia and parts of the Ottoman Empire

for centuries.

In 1721, a smallpox epidemic swept through Boston. The disease spread rapidly, killing hundreds and overwhelming the medical community. Mather, having been persuaded by Onesimus's knowledge, began to advocate for inoculation. However, his efforts were met with intense resistance. Many of Boston's residents, especially the medical and religious authorities, viewed the practice with skepticism. Some dismissed it as "witchcraft" or "African superstition," while others saw it as an affront to God's will, fearing that interfering with divine providence would bring misfortune.

Despite the opposition, Mather persisted in promoting inoculation, enlisting the support of a local physician, Zabdiel Boylston. In 1721, Boylston began the first trial of inoculation in Boston, using the method described by Onesimus. He first inoculated his son and a few enslaved individuals, and then extended the practice to other willing participants.

The results were remarkable. Of the 242 people inoculated, only six died—just 2.5% of those infected. In contrast, the mortality rate among those who were not inoculated was around 14%. Onesimus's knowledge proved to be a turning point in the battle against smallpox in the colonies.

Although the practice of variolation did not immediately gain widespread acceptance, it ultimately became a vital tool in combating smallpox. The inoculation trials in Boston were followed by similar efforts in other colonies, and by the late 18th century, the method had gained enough traction to influence the development of vaccines. In 1764, John Adams, the future second President of the United States underwent the inoculation. Edward Jenner would later pioneer the smallpox vaccine using cowpox, a much safer alternative to variolation. Over time, the smallpox vaccine became a cornerstone of global immunization efforts.

In 1980, the World Health Organization declared smallpox eradicated—a historic achievement that remains the only instance of the complete eradication of a human infectious disease. The foundation for this victory was laid by Onesimus's knowledge and the efforts of individuals who believed in him.

While Onesimus's role in the smallpox inoculation trials is well-documented, little is known about his life after the 1721 outbreak. It is believed that he eventually bought his freedom from Mather. There is no record of Onesimus's later years, and his ultimate fate remains uncertain. Some historians speculate that he may have left Boston, while others suggest that he continued to work for Mather in some capacity.

Despite the challenges he faced, including personal tragedy (his two young children died before the age of ten), Onesimus's legacy endured. In 2016, he was posthumously recognized by Boston Magazine as one of the "100 Best Bostonians of All Time".

Onesimus's story is a powerful reminder of the often-overlooked contributions of enslaved people to the advancement of science and society. His knowledge of inoculation, passed down through generations of African medical traditions, saved countless lives during a pivotal time in world history and contributed to the eventual eradication of one of the deadliest diseases.

## Citizen Spotlight: Mr. White Our Barber & Business Man

**By: Jheri Worldwide**
*Staff Writer*

In 1940, when Sylvester White Jr. was born in St Agnes hospital in Raleigh, North Carolina the local population was 46,000 people. Around 40% of the population were living in poverty on the heels of the great depression, folks grew their own food, and the southside of Raleigh was a tightknit church going community. Mr. White shared a vivid image of the time, "You know, early years, people didn't have a lot of money. The average person only had about $45, at the most, $60 coming to the household per week. I remember seeing my dad's paycheck. Paycheck less than $39 to $42 a week. My mother didn't work, so whatever he brought in, that's what we had to live off of, and that's what we did. She stayed home. Never worked, and nursed all ten of us and it created a bond that still remains. All ten of us are still alive, and we love and care about each other. We take care of each other, because that's the way we were brought up. But the neighborhood now has changed, I might say for the better as far as the value of the properties and upgrading the community. But at the same time, for some people a little burden, because the tax values of the property went up. Across the street there's houses worth $400,000 that was not there three years ago. That means your property value goes up to. So for some people, it probably has been somewhat of a burden. But, you know, if you're going to have things you got to make some sacrifices, in order to achieve, in order to have some things. So let it pitch in and work together."

"I lived at Hill street and across from my house was a church. It is still a church and that church had two services every Sunday. Now you only have one service per Sunday. We had service at 11:00AM and they had another service at 5:00PM or 6:00PM and didn't have air conditioning, but the windows open. You could stand outside and listen to the message and listen to the singing, listen to the sermon because everything was open. But now we've got air conditioning and nice soft seats and church is half full half of the time. And so those things we are lost because the community now is diverse. There are more white families in our community than black families. Therefore the church didn't have the people and the population that they used to have. Therefore the church is thriving, but not like it used to thrive. My parents, you know, we didn't have a choice. I didn't have the option to say that I'm not going to Sunday school. It was just something that you got to do. Then during the week, there was a lady

in the community that would have a little youth meeting. She take us in the home and she would teach us about the bible give us a little snack. Boy, we look forward to the snack!"

"My mother was from Oberlin, about Cameron Village. They had their own little school. I remember seeing a picture of her class, some of her classmates, and some of the kids were in the classroom on that picture had no shoes on. They went to school barefoot. They couldn't afford shoes, but they went to school. She came from that area, and married my dad. They moved over here in the house my grandfather built. A lot of black families own property in Oberlin, close to Cameron Village. Over the years other people moved in and started buying a house here and buying a house there. Buying a house here, tear the house down and put a three story house where it used to be." I interjected reference the Washington Terrance neighborhood, "It's exactly what's happening here."

Mr. White continued, "Yeah, so what happens? Many times the heirs of the property have moved out and moved away. When a realtor called and said, I got a deal for you for the property that you own, they live in another place. Everybody don't care. It's a lot of money coming in. So they sold out. Next year our Property will be 100 years old."

Revisiting memories of Oberlin Village Mr. White shared, "One thing about it that I remember, the little white boys that lived out there used to play with us. We go in their yard and play around and have a good time together. We didn't see, you know, little difference in one another. So as we got older, things kind of changed. I went to high school at John W. Ligon, and white kids in that neighborhood went to school at Needham Broughton." Mr. White explained that to get to Ligon they had to walk past all white Broughton which became dangerous, "The town fathers decided they don't want us to walk, they hired a city bus to pick up all the black kids five days a week and transport us from Oberlin to, Ligon, pick us up in the afternoon and take us back to Oberlin. We realized then that, you know, things were not equal."

Mr. White shared more insight about downtown Raleigh, "I used to go into Hudson Belk Store on Fayetteville Street. There were two fountains, a white fountain and a black fountain. Bathroom's the same, separate, and the bus station downtown used to be on Morgan street. They had a white side and a black side. The white people eat on

(See ***CITIZEN SPOTLIGHT,*** P. 7)

## Pharrell Williams Is Named A UNESCO Ambassador

PARIS (AP) — Pop star and fashion designer Pharrell Williams was named UNESCO's goodwill ambassador for artistic education and entrepreneurship on Tuesday in Paris, continuing his cultural dominance of the French capital as Louis Vuitton menswear artistic director and performer at Notre Dame Cathedral's reopening earlier this month.

Williams said he hoped to "deepen that sense of unity and togetherness" in work that "evens the odds for marginalized communities."

He also spoke about his impoverished youth, adding: "Growing up in Virginia, never in my wildest dreams did I think I would be given an opportunity like this one."

The role of goodwill ambassador for the Paris-based U.N. cultural agency involves promoting its initiatives that include protecting Indigenous cultures, advancing education and health care for women, raising awareness about genocide prevention and safeguarding cultural heritage.

The U.N. agency said Williams will be "a mentor and role model for young creators, particularly in Africa, where UNESCO supports the development of cultural industries."


Williams joins a list of goodwill ambassadors that includes U.S. jazz musician Herbie Hancock, Brazilian artist Vik Muniz and Japanese filmmaker Naomi Kawase.

Williams has been particularly visible in Paris this year. Shortly before the Paris Olympics, his role as Louis Vuitton menswear designer took center stage during a star-studded event at UNESCO's headquarters. The show, celebrating the beauty of human skin, featured models wearing garments in shades representing the diverse hues of humanity.

UNESCO leaders hope that Williams' global influence and deep connections to fashion and music will draw fresh attention to the agency's work.

Williams is American, and his selection as goodwill ambassador also may be highlighting the readmission of the United States to UNESCO last year.

The U.S. exit under President Donald Trump cited alleged anti-Israel bias within the agency. The decision followed a 2011 decision by UNESCO to include Palestine as a member state, which led the U.S. and Israel to cease financing for the agency.

The U.S. return under President Joe Biden was marked by a flag-raising ceremony attended by U.S. First Lady Jill Biden.

**On Sunday November 10, 2024, The Beta Phi Chapter held its annual Achievement Week Event at Orange Grove Missionary Baptist Church in Durham, N.C. The Master of Ceremony was John Clark, Co-Anchor of ABC 11 News. L-R: Bro Bryan Patton-Superior Service Award, Bro. Cory Rawlinson-Citizen of the Year, Star Studded Awards- Bro Phillip Harrington, Bro John Ervin, Bro Phillip Terry-Omega Man of the Year Award, Bro Derrick Glypm- Brigadier General Charles Young Military Award & Bro Curtis Lawson- Founders Award. Not pictured is Bro Noel Brooks-Basileus Award & Maya Roseboro-Beta Phi High School Essay Winner N.C. School of Science & Math. *(M.O.I. Photo)***

## *SECU Annouces Mentorship*

RALEIGH, N.C. – SECU Foundation has announced a $300,000 grant to the North Carolina Museum of Art (NCMA) Foundation to help expand its Artist Innovation Mentorship (AIM) program for midde school youth in rural and underserved areas of North Carolina. With the expansion, the AIM program can reach 1,200 youth annually and by 2028 can serve 50 counties.

Established as a pilot in 2021, AIM connects local artists from universities, community colleges, fellowships, and art organizations with students to provide positive role models and foster creative thinking strategies through artmaking. The students' work is featured in local community galleries, parades, and exhibitions. In the pilot phase, more than 350 students received over 12,700 hours of learning through the program.

"We are pleased to support the expansion of the Artist Innovation Mentorship program and the work that is benefiting so many of our North Carolina youth," said SECU Foundation Executive Director Jama Campbell. "This program is another example of NCMA's outstanding art education outreach and speaks to the broader impact this program can make in school districts and communities that have limited resources for arts education. We look forward to seeing the continued positive impact of art on students' lives."

"It is an honor for the North Carolina Museum of Art and our Artist Innovation Mentorship program to have a place among the other incredible projects the SECU Foundation funds, and that vote of confidence in the work we are doing is greatly appreciated," said NCMA Director and CEO Dr. Valerie Hillings. "We are incredibly thankful to have SECU Foundation's support and are excited to put grant funds to work bringing AIM to more communities across North Carolina."

# Community

## Empowering Women Through Firearms Training, Safety

**By: Jordan Meadows**
*Staff Writer*

Dr. Joy Allen's journey from clinical research executive to firearms trainer and community advocate is defined by a passion for empowerment and a commitment to creating safe spaces for women in the world of firearms education.

Based in Raleigh, North Carolina, Allen founded InHER Piece, a pioneering business that offers inclusive and accessible firearms training, personal protection education, and community-building opportunities for women from all walks of life.

Allen's relationship with firearms began at a crossroads in her life. When she turned 40, she wanted to tick an item off her bucket list: learning to shoot.

"It was honestly just a bucket list type thing– I thought it'd be fun. I wasn't necessarily a fan of guns but I wasn't really against them either, I was just kind of impartial," Allen said.

However, as she began attending more classes, she noticed gaps in the training landscape—particularly for women and people of color. The high costs of training, the discomfort of often being the only woman (and woman of color) in rural, male-dominated spaces, and the overall lack of inclusive, affordable options led Allen to create a solution.

This was the seed that would grow into E3 Personal Defense and later, InHER Piece. In 2020, in the midst of a politically charged election year and the uncertainties brought by the COVID-19 pandemic, Allen saw an opportunity to create something different.

There was a growing sense of fear in the community, especially among women and women of color, who felt their safety was increasingly at risk and were unsure where to turn for help. Allen saw this as a chance to create a space where women could not only learn about firearm safety but also gain confidence and camaraderie.

InHER Piece was born. It started with a simple idea: hold an event at a shooting range to bring women together for a day of empowerment. To Allen's surprise, the turnout was overwhelming—over 65 women came to the event during a time of widespread quarantine.

"From there it just kinda grew. The ladies were really hungry to learn, so we started spreading out doing more events and classes across North Carolina and started working with other organizations to go to conventions, meetings…at the time we were the first in the area," Allen said.

What sets InHER Piece apart is its dedication to inclusivity. Allen's approach is simple but powerful: treat everyone with respect, smile, and prioritize safety. The focus is not just on learning how to shoot, but on creating an environment where women from all backgrounds—regardless of race, socioeconomic status, or experience

level—feel comfortable, supported, and valued.

"At the end of the day, everybody has a right to vote. Everybody has a right to free speech. But for some reason, even though we all have a right to bear arms… unfortunately, that right is challenged just by not having enough money or because someone disagrees with your lifestyle," Allen said.

One of the innovative features of InHER Piece is its Pistol Qualification Program. Designed for women to track their progress and measure their skills, the program is voluntary and open to everyone—whether they're just starting out or looking to challenge themselves further. Participants receive a button, patch, certificate, and a congratulatory letter upon completion, creating a sense of accomplishment and confidence.

Allen emphasizes that InHER Piece is not just about firearms. It's about building confidence. "At the end of the day, this isn't really about a firearm. It's fun and it's something to focus our attention onto, but ultimately InHER Piece is about building confidence because of whatever situation people may be in," Allen said.

In addition to training, InHER Piece partners with local community organizations to extend its reach. By supporting mentorship programs and offering discounted training to those in need, InHER Piece is empowering women not just to protect themselves but to become leaders in their own communities.

"If we're not sharing that confidence with others it's not worth much at the end of the day," Allen says, stressing the importance of community support.

Allen is also focused on addressing common misconceptions about firearms. For starters, the belief that guns are inherently dangerous if you have children in the home, according to Allen, is simply not true.

"Children are creatures of habit and curiosity, so if you teach them the safety around firearms, most of the time they won't touch them. You get rid of the intrigue, you educate them, and they're gonna be fine," Allen said.

Another misconception is that simply owning a firearm automatically makes you safe. Allen challenges this notion, emphasizing that without proper training and a solid understanding of firearm safety, owning a gun does not guarantee protection. She points out that many women purchase firearms for self-defense, but without the necessary education, they may end up being victimized by those very firearms.

One of Allen's proudest achievements is her role in diversifying the firearms instruction community. When she started InHER Piece, there were only three Black female firearms instructors in all of North Carolina—Allen was the only one with multiple certifications. By the end of InHER Piece's first year, every Black instructor in the state had gone through InHER Piece's programs.

As InHER Piece continues to grow, Allen has her sights set on the future—particularly on reaching younger generations and ensuring they understand both firearm safety and the importance of the Second Amendment. She believes in making firearm training accessible and affordable to all, regardless of their background or financial situation.

"The biggest accomplishment: when I started InHER Piece, there were three Black female instructors of firearms in the entire state. Of those three, I was the only one to have more than one certification. By the time InHER Piece finished its first year, every single Black instructor in the state of North Carolina came through InHER Piece. We were able to diversify the instructor pool.

Allen's journey from a curious beginner to a leader in the firearms training community represents her belief in empowerment, inclusivity, and self-confidence. Through InHER Piece, she has created a supportive space where women can challenge themselves, grow in their skills, and build lasting relationships.

For Allen, it's not just about firearms—it's about ensuring that every woman who walks through the doors of InHER Piece leaves feeling stronger, more confident, and supported in her journey of self-empowerment.

## Citizen Spotlight—*CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6*

this side and we eat on the other side. We couldn't eat together. You get on the bus, you go to the back. They stay up front. If the bus was full, you could sit in the front, or near the front. But if some white got on. They want you to get up."

A fascinating story about a bus trip, "I remember in 1960, I caught a bus to Los Angeles, California. It cost $105 dollars round trip. I had 52 rest stops, 12 bus drivers between here and California. When I got on the bus in Raleigh, we went to South Carolina. Pulled up into the little station, and first thing you saw was the bathroom on the outside for blacks, as well as the kitchen. We couldn't eat in the restaurant. We had to go in the kitchen and get our food. That was an experience that I never forget. All the way from here to Dallas, Texas. All the blacks went to the kitchen, went to the back doors to get food until we got to Dallas, Texas, and then we all ate together. "Really?!" I exclaimed, I was surprised that the tides turned in Texas. Mr. White continued, "Yeah. That's what I remember in Texas, blacks and white came together. The United States army used to be segregated. We could fight together, but we couldn't fellowship together. The sergeant told us distinctly. He said, 'y'all can hold hands on the base, when you go downtown I don't be down there hanging out together.' White folks don't want black and whites going into clubs together or walking together or fellowshiping together off the base."

An important question I asked was whom do you admire? "Well, as a young man, I observed my grandfather being an entrepreneur. My grandfather did the landscape for Cameron Village. He worked for Mr. Willie York, who was the owner, builder, and founder of Cameron Village and also the builder of Washington Terrace, which was an all black neighborhood. Pretty good people. Really are, and my grandfather worked for him. My grandfather had a crew of people working for him, on my mother's side, and my grandfather on my father's side was also entrepreneur. He had a career. He did landscaping, too. So I saw leadership and entrepreneurship. Working just in our DNA. You got to work in order to have some rights. One of the things that my grandparents did was to acquire property. Way back early years ago, I was told that my grandfather who built the house, which still stands on Hill street, built a shack on the end of the lot. He and my grandma stayed in the shack until they got the house completed. In every neighborhood it was always two or three corner stores ran by the black man. Two black stores, barbershop and beauty shop. There was stores owned by blacks in every street. Now, I don't know no black owned stores in Raleigh at all. You know, small shops. My father ran a store, a small store. And the building stands there still standing down the corner now. In 1962, the owner of the store had gotten old and wanted to retire. I went to him and his wife and I said, I want to buy that business from you. His wife called me and said, 'I've been knowing since you were a child, if you want to buy this business, we'll sell it to you.' Other people wanted it. I bought it and the all the stuff from him in 1962. My brother and I ran it for a while. Then I thought about it, I said, wow, this is what you've been dreaming about. My father worked for a meat-packing company hauling half a hog and half a cows. He come home sometimes so tired. I wanted to do something to help my dad. When I got that business, I told him, I said, 'dad, you can have this business, it's yours. You can take it just like it is."

Mr. White expressed the importance of business ownership and entrepreneurship, "I got drafted in 1963. I came back in 1967 and he was still running the store. I came back here with I think $600 in my pocket. We have lost so much over the years, it's a national trend that I've noticed. I used to go to 14th street in Washington D.C. it was all black community, all black neighborhood. A lot of businesses, a lot of things going on. On 116th street in New York City, a lot of black owned businesses and black churches no longer there. Hargett Street, in downtown Raleigh used to be a thriving business. Our Black Wall street in Raleigh. All up an down the street we owned barbershop, beauty shop, had a hotel, had a jewelry shop, a drugstore. All this was black owned, black operated. Even had one man to own a hardware store. I seen us trying to be successful, but we just went beyond by the wayside. We no longer own anything like that anymore."

## Wynn Rescinds—*CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1*

'I respectfully withdraw my letter to you from January 4, 2024. I apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused."

So why is Sen. Thom Tillis upset?

Tillis, who sits on the Senate Judiciary Committee, was looking forward to replacing Judge Wynn with a Trump nominee. Both he and North Carolina's junior Sen. Tedd Budd (R-NC) had already planned to block the nomination of North Carolina Solicitor General Ryan Park to the Wynn seat. Tillis charged that Park was a "partisan" who shouldn't be allowed to serve as a judge. Sen. Tillis even threatened the Senate Judiciary Committee last month that if Park's nomination was allowed to reach the Senate floor for approval, "there would be consequences."

Democrats on the committee called Tillis' bluff. But before Parks' name could reach the Senate floor, Senate Democrats and Republicans reached a deal to kill four of the Biden Administration's appellate nominations, in return for Republicans easing up on their opposition.

That's when Judge Wynn decided to make his move, and rescinded his announced retirement from the Fourth Circuit bench.

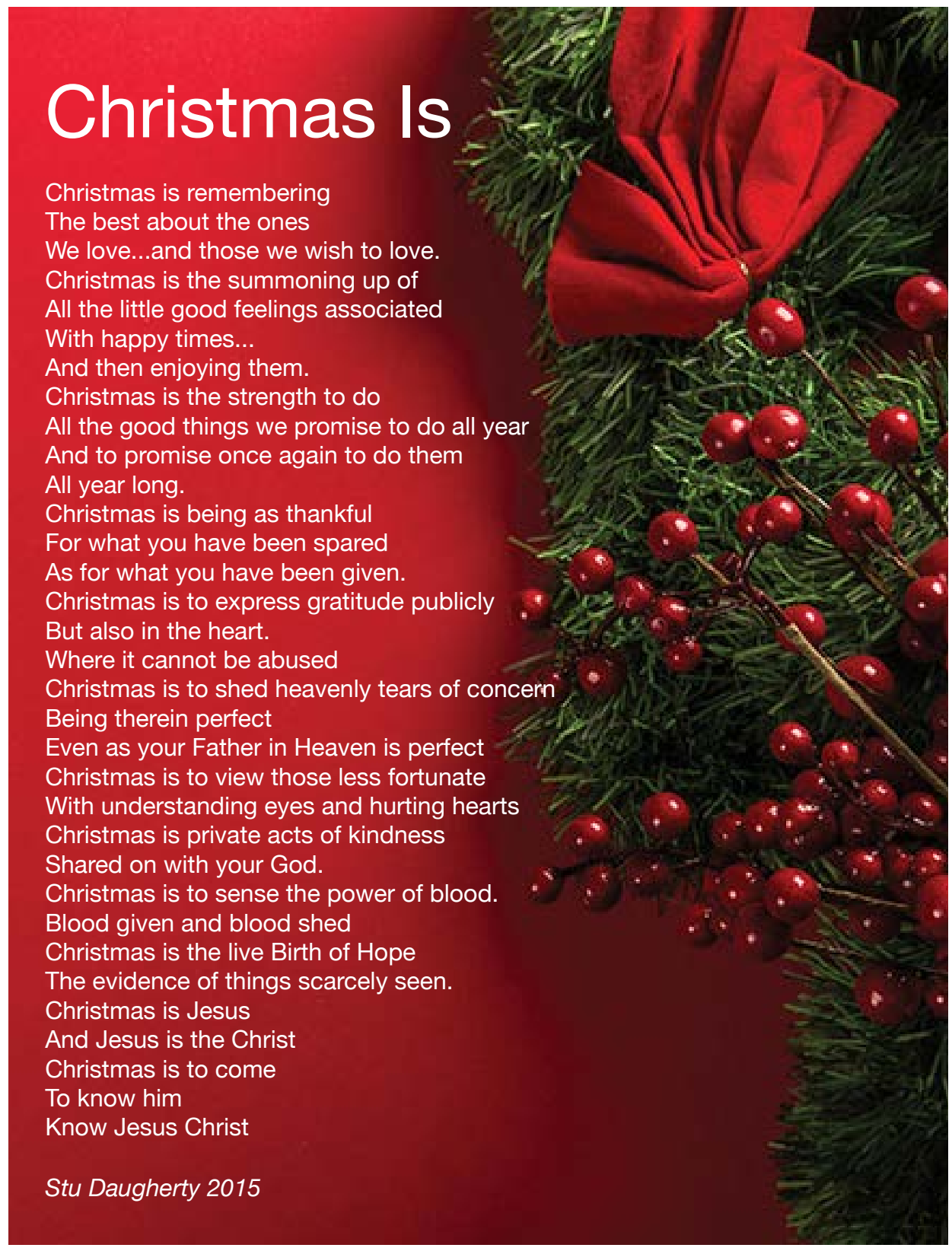
Tillis was furious, noting that Judge Wynn was among several federal judges who had rescinded their announced retirements as to put a halt to Trump getting any more Republican judges to fill the federal bench.

"Judge Wynn clearly takes issue with the fact that Donald Trump was just elected President, and this decision is a slap in the face to the U.S. Senate, which came to a bipartisan agreement to hold off on confirming his replacement until the next Congress is sworn-in in January," Tillis wrote, adding that Wynn's move was "brazenly partisan" and "Judge Wynn's brazenly partisan decision to rescind his retirement is an unprecedented move that demonstrates some judges are nothing more than politicians in robes."

"The Senate Judiciary Committee should hold a hearing on his blatant attempt to turn the judicial retirement system into a partisan game, and he deserves the ethics complaints and recusal demands from the Department of Justice heading his way," Tillis continued.

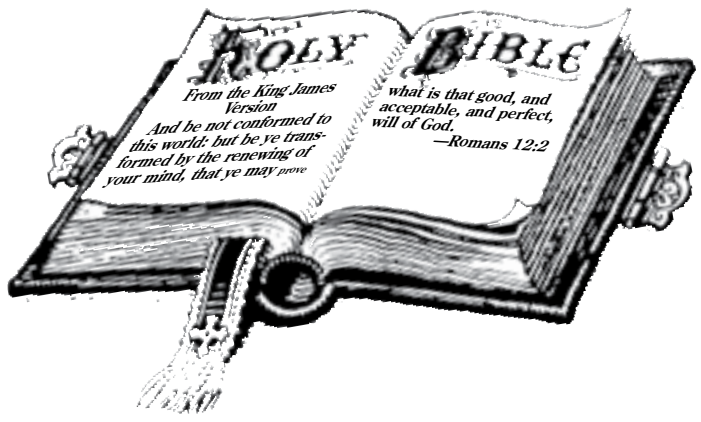
Prior to serving on the U.S. Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals, Judge Wynn served on the NC. Court of appeals from 1990 to 1998, and from 1999 to 2010. Wynn served on the state Supreme Court for three months in 1998.

In the meantime, Solicitor Parks withdrew his name from consideration for the Fourth Circuit Court.



# Church

## SERMON of the WEEK




**THE MARATHON CONTINUES**

By Elder Demetrius Hunter

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." - Hebrews 12:1-2 KJV

The hip-hop artist Nipsey Hussle once penned these words as a reminder to himself to keep pushing forward. He even named his store and clothing brand "The Marathon Continues." After his tragic death, young people around the world adopted his motto, and the hashtag #TheMarathonContinues went viral. Many in the entertainment industry followed his lead, committing to invest back into black communities and promote financial responsibility.

The attention his death brought led me to reflect on his life and mission. While his journey was full of contradictions, I can understand why he had such a strong impact on youth. He urged them to reach for something greater, blending stories of gang culture with encouragement. In many ways, his message was similar to what the church did for me. The more I thought about his impact, the more I realized how the saints who came before us displayed the same "can't stop, won't stop" attitude. Their unwavering dedication, despite sickness, pain, and trials, should inspire our own commitment. Today, I want to explore how these verses from Hebrews can help us reignite that same passion while inspiring today's youth.

1. Hustle – Pay the Price

The writer of Hebrews tells us that we are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses, and we must lay aside every weight and sin. Success in any area of life requires an investment. To earn a paycheck, you must invest time and effort. The same is true for our spiritual lives. Salvation is free, but it's not cheap. Many claim to have a "grind," but when faced with something inconvenient, their true commitment is revealed. We must understand that to get something from God, we must invest. Some of us are willing to give up sin, but the weights we carry are harder to release. We must let go of things we hold dear, trusting God to replace them with something better. Let go of worry, and let God give you peace. Let go of hate, and let God fill you with love. Let go of hurt and let God replace it with grace.

2. The Devil is a Liar

We must stop believing lies. Too often, we accept falsehoods over the truth. Jeremiah 29:11 reminds us, "For I know the plans that I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not harm you..." A lie circulating today is that the church doesn't care about the community or that God has forgotten about us. But we've come too far to turn back, especially because of a lie.

There are forces trying to tear down what God has built and lead our youth—and even some adults—away from the church. But the devil is a liar. God has a plan for our lives and He has not forgotten about us.

3. Time to Go Higher

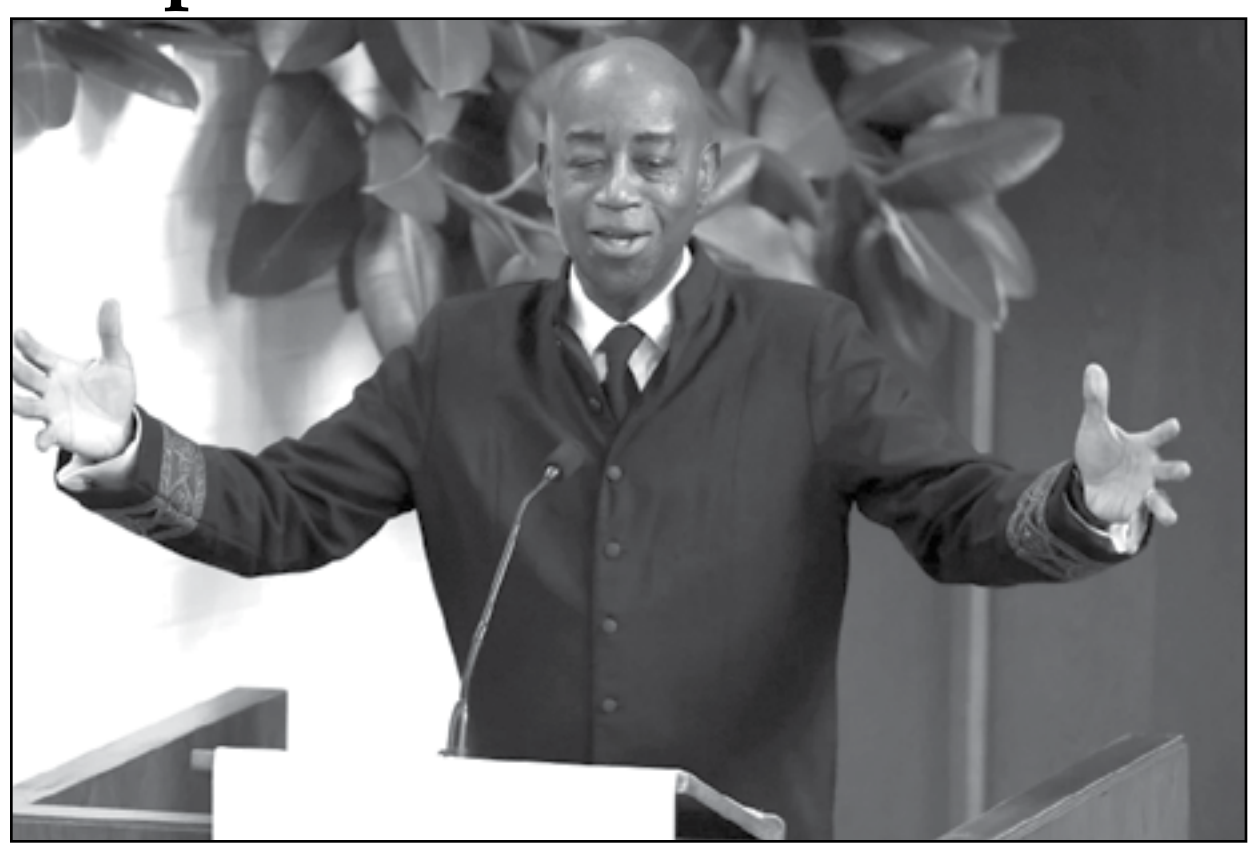
After laying aside weight and sin and declaring the devil a liar, it's time to go higher. As long as you're running your race, there is always another level to reach. Don't stop moving. Don't stop climbing. Keep pushing. It may seem tough, but remember: the marathon continues. We must keep going higher.

Some may think you're down and out, but higher is coming. People may rely on their own plans, but we know the just shall live by faith. It's only by God's grace that we keep moving forward. Like the church of old, it's time to go higher. Though you may not see it now, in due season, higher is coming.

Keep your head up. Stay in the fight because your breakthrough is on the way. The marathon continues, and so does your journey. Keep pushing forward. Higher is coming!

Please visit our website at https://www.lincolnparkchurch.com/ for sermons and other information regarding our ministry and community service.

## US Senate Chaplain Barry Black Hospitalized After Brain Bleed



WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. Senate Chaplain Barry Black has been hospitalized after suffering a bleed on his brain and is expected to have a "smooth recovery," his office said.

Black, 76, suffered a subdural hematoma earlier this week and is at a local hospital and under the care of the Capitol's physician, said Rev. Lisa Schultz, Black's chief of staff. A subdural hematoma is when blood builds up between the skull and the surface of the brain, increasing pressure on the brain.

A familiar bow-tied presence in the hallways of the Senate, Black has been the chaplain since 2003. He opens the proceedings each day with a prayer and counsels senators and staff through prayer groups and one-on-one meetings. He was previously the chief of the Navy's chaplains.

Black is well known for his booming voice and his often prescient and timely opening prayers in times of political tension. During an extended government shutdown in 2013, he prayed to "deliver us from the hypocrisy of attempting to sound reasonable while being unreasonable." During former President Donald Trump's first impeachment in 2019, he asked in a prayer that "our senators not permit fatigue or cynicism to jeopardize friendships that have existed for years."

In the early morning of Jan. 7, 2021, after supporters of Trump had attacked the Capitol and Congress had certified Democrat Joe Biden's victory, he closed a joint session in the middle of the night with a call for unity.

"We deplore the desecration of the United States Capitol building, the shedding of innocent blood, the loss of life, and the quagmire of dysfunction that threaten our democracy," he prayed.



## Practical Biblical Principles

**WHAT GIFTS DO YOU BRING?**

Read: Isaiah 60:1-7

By John L. Caldwell, Pastor
New Jerusalem Baptist Cathedral

Having a relationship with God is not a one-way street. Your prayers and the answer to your prayers do not travel in the same lane. A prayer request goes up on one channel and the answer to your prayer comes down on another.

The point to be made here is that our upward request for a gift from heaven is different from a gift coming down from heaven. God gives to us as He has promised. The point to be here is what is it that we give back to God. God gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life. God is a giver. God is a good giver. God is the greatest giver of all times.

What is it that you, as a saved sinner by repentance, can or will give back to God? The question is: Do you think you owe God anything? Anything at all for all that He has done for you? If you have concluded or decided that you owe God and He is due a gift from you, what is the gift you have for Him? Will the gift be equal in value as the one He has given you? Is it your attitude that since God is bigger and richer than you are, your gift doesn't have to be as valuable as the one He gave to you? How much thought have you given to the value and requirement God expected of His Son when He sent Him to the cross?

The Gentile wise men of Babylon traveled west some 800 miles across a hot desert to bear gifts to a baby king that was not of their own ethnicity. The gifts were valuable and fit for a king, so to speak. The gifts consisted of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Though Christ was born a Jew, no Jewish person ever presented Christ with a gift of any kind. The only thing the Jewish-people offered Jesus was the cross of crucifixion. This was a gift not under the tree, but a gift hanging on the tree.

For those who see and believe Christ is a non-entity in their personal lives they will see no need to give a gift to someone they do not know. Do you know Christ? Or is it you only that knows or heard about Him?

The Book of Revelation states what the biggest issue will be for those standing in front of the Great White Throne of Judgement. That issue will be, "Why didn't you know My Son personally? Did you ever accept Him as your Lord and Savior? If your answer is "No" then you will be ushered in front of the Great White Throne of Judgement. At the Great White Throne there will be no lawyers, no arguments, no excuses, no eternal life! God offers the gift of eternal life to those who believes in His Son.

You give gifts to those you love and cherish. God so love the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believes in Him shall never perish but have eternal life (John 3:16).

Isaiah tells of a future time when those Gentiles who fought against God and His people will soon come to God and bring Him great gifts, offerings and sacrifices from all over, as they give honor and praise to the God Almighty (Isaiah 60:6). What will your gift to God be? If you wish to give God something of great value to equal what He has given to you, it should be your very life. God's greatest gift to each of us is our life. What good we make of our lives should be our gift back to God!

## Editorial Policy

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

# Editorials

### WHAT ARE THE IMPACTS OF TARIFFS?

I was introduced to the concept of tariffs over half a century ago when I took my first undergraduate economics class. While I remembered the definition for the next test, to be honest, I didn't find tariffs all that interesting or important.

Who would have thought that 55 years later, tariffs would be one of the top topics of discussion? I've answered several media inquiries about them. I've talked about tariffs in my various public presentations, and attendees listen. Even people at the gym have asked me what I think about tariffs. Usually something only economists talk about now seems to be the "talk of the town."

First, what are tariffs? They are a fee — some call them a tax — the federal government charges on a product or service imported from another country. The domestic company importing the foreign product or service is responsible for paying the tariff.

Why are tariffs used? There are numerous potential answers. One is to raise revenue for the federal government. In fact, for the first 150 years of our country, tariffs were the major source of revenue for the federal government.

Using tariffs can help shield domestic producers from foreign competition, and thereby encourage domestic companies to expand. Our first treasury secretary, Alexander Hamilton, promoted tariffs to build up U.S. industry. A modern version of this goal is using tariffs to make imports more expensive so as to encourage "reshoring" of U.S. firms that moved to foreign countries.

A more modern reason for applying tariffs is to express displeasure — some say "punish" — a foreign country, for actions the importing country doesn't like. For example, tariffs have been used by the U.S. against China for allegedly subsidizing companies that sell products to the U.S., thereby making foreign trade unfair.

Also, recently President-elect Donald Trump has threatened to impose tariffs on Canada and Mexico if the countries don't comply with some of his demands. Last is the notion of fairness. Some argue that since most countries use tariffs, the U.S. should also. Interestingly, among the countries with tariffs, tariffs used by the U.S. are some of the lowest.

My profession — economics — has long argued against tariffs. Economists' point is simple: If a foreign country can make and sell a product to us at a lower price than required for that product to be made in the U.S., then why would we refuse that trade? Buying a foreign-made product at a lower price would leave consumers with more money to spend on other things, many of which would be made in our country.

While as a professional economist, I understand this logic, I also understand some counterpoints. Many people worry that in a world of free trade, the good-paying jobs may be taken by foreign countries, leaving mostly lower-paying jobs for U.S. workers. There's also a viewpoint that our country should be self-sufficient for national security purposes in producing the basics of life.

There are other important questions about tariffs. One is, who ultimately pays the tariff? Although initially the payment is made by the company importing the product, the issue is whether that company passes that cost on to other entities. Indeed, research shows importers do attempt to make others pay at least some of the tariff. One is the ultimate consumer of the product, who faces a higher retail price to help compensate for the importer's tariff payment. Another is the importer's workers or other workers along the supply chain, who endure cost-cutting measures to offset the tariff's cost.

A key second question is whether tariffs result in making U.S. manufacturing stronger and more competitive. The existing research suggests the answer is perhaps not. Recent analysis looked both at the "heyday" of U.S. tariffs in the late 19th century and recently imposed tariffs. In both cases, the results showed that domestic manufacturing did not prosper under the tariffs. However, questions may be raised about the recent research because it examined a period that was still impacted by the pandemic.

Yet the research does raise a concern about how foreign countries react to new U.S. tariffs. If, for example, foreign countries increase their tariffs and curtail buying U.S. exported products and services, there can be significant damage to the U.S. economy. U.S. exports account for over $3 trillion of revenue annually for U.S. companies, equal to 10% of total economic activity.

Some analysts argue that decision-makers are aware of the potential problems with tariffs, implying the threats to impose tariffs may be a bargaining chip in trade and other negotiations. For example, the agreement governing trade between the U.S., Mexico and Canada is set to be reviewed in 2026. Some experts think the incoming Trump administration is using talk about new tariffs as a tactic to be used in negotiations. Others have interpreted the tariff talk as leverage for making an agreement with Mexico and Canada over immigration.

Tariffs are a controversial economic tool with supporters and opponents, and pluses and minuses. Tariff talk has increased in recent months, and the talk will likely continue into next year. Watch for the details and attempt to read the nuances so you can decide where you stand on this long-used and debated economic tactic.

*Mike Walden is a William Neal Reynolds Distinguished Professor Emeritus at North Carolina State University.*

## Talk To Us

***Stimulating a lively discussion of issues that concern the community is one of our main tasks at* The Carolinian*. We want to know what you think. This issue's topic:***

**With over 80 school shootings in 2024, and what seems to be a complete disregard for human life across the board, do you think that a ban on guns would solve some of these problems?**

**When the citizens are not armed and have no way of fighting back their overreaching government, does that result in a widespread dictatorship, or could you still consider that a democracy?**


## Guest Columnist

*Armstrong Williams*

### THE PRICE OF PROFITS PAID IN BLOOD

In the early morning hours in midtown Manhattan, New York City, Brian Thompson, CEO of UnitedHealthcare, the nation's largest health insurer, and a father of two, was assassinated. The assassin fired his gun at point-blank range, using bullets inscribed with the words "Deny," "Depose" and "Defend." The masked assailant swiftly escaped on a bicycle and discarded his backpack in Central Park. Two days later, law enforcement discovered the backpack, which was filled with Monopoly money. Just a few days after that, the alleged shooter, a 26-year-old activist, was apprehended in a McDonald's in Pennsylvania.

The public expressed little sympathy following Thompson's demise. Indeed, most of the public's reaction consisted of mockery toward Thompson and celebration for the assassin.

The response to the CEO's assassination is anything but surprising. The health care system in the United States is frequently criticized for its inefficiencies and its prioritization of profits over patient welfare. As with any industry, there exist both respectable and unscrupulous insurers; however, UnitedHealthcare is regarded as one of the worst among patients.

Following the assassination, numerous accounts from frustrated UnitedHealthcare customers emerged online, detailing instances where UnitedHealthcare denied basic coverage for essential medications, procedures and medical devices, despite the patients' doctors explicitly establishing their medical necessity, with UnitedHealthcare asserting they were, in fact, not medically necessary. Although no legislation mandates health care providers to disclose their claim denial rates, a study on in-network data plans revealed that UnitedHealthcare denies 32% — nearly one-third — of all claims, significantly exceeding the industry average of 16%.

UnitedHealthcare encountered condemnation and now ongoing litigation when, from 2020 to 2022, its post-acute care denial rate — pertaining to the care for transitioning individuals from hospitals to their homes — increased from 10.9% to 22.7% following the implementation of an artificial intelligence system that autonomously made determinations on insurance claims without human oversight. One of the lawsuits revealed that 90% of the denials were overturned on appeal, indicating a 90% error rate.

This brings us to our current position. When someone dies or endures suffering due to their health insurer's denial of claims, can you necessarily blame them for expressing some sense of satisfaction at the demise of the person who made a significant contribution to that suffering, mirroring the fate of themselves, their family member or even their child?

Many Americans have major concerns with our health care system; nevertheless, I believe these issues are often misdirected. If insurers did not deny coverage to the extent that they currently do, and if hospitals and pharmaceutical companies didn't charge the exorbitant rates they do for their products, the United States would have the strongest health care system in the world. Socializing medicine is unnecessary to achieve that outcome, as is price-fixing. The only thing that we need to consider is the only thing that matters in business: Are Americans being ripped off when paying for medical products and services?

UnitedHealthcare reported $16.4 billion in operating earnings last year. This profit comes not from inventive, groundbreaking medical technology but from accumulating substantial insurance premiums and subsequently failing to provide the promised benefits when customers seek to redeem those benefits. Why should a customer who spends $10,000 annually on health insurance be denied medication or a medical treatment deemed medically necessary by their physician simply because the insurer disagrees with the physician's assessment? Why should they have to fight tooth and nail to get the health insurance company to pay for it? Even if they could postpone for alternative options with a low but not negligible risk to their health, or attempt different medications first, when their suffering could be alleviated immediately, why shouldn't they be able to fix what is making them suffer? Isn't that what they have paid for? Are we OK with millions of Americans medically suffering just so health care companies can add a few extra dollars to their profits? How many days of work? How many hours of productivity are lost to companies across the United States because employees are suffering? The losses don't end with the patient; $16.4 billion is a lot of money, and I would think insurers, whose entire business model is minimizing risk by spreading it through millions of others through the accumulation of large sums of money, could use that extra money to help their customers.

And what accounts for the $10,000 charges that people receive for a single night in a hospital room, independent of any additional services? Why do lifesaving drugs like EpiPens, for example, which only cost several dollars to make, cost $600? Why do drugs cost 10 times more in the United States than they do in other developed nations? Why do the most basic medical services cost so much money?

The health care system in the United States does not need to be the way it is. It need not necessarily be an ineffective system either. It can actually be the best system globally. Hospitals impose excessive charges, and insurers reject an absurd number of claims, enabling both to achieve unprecedented profits at the expensive of people's health. Consequently, today, health care CEOs are meticulously cleansing their online presence to achieve anonymity. The UnitedHealthcare CEO appears to have been a casualty of the health care system, and perhaps the killer had nothing to lose when he discharged those bullets at Thompson at around 6:45 a.m. in midtown Manhattan.

The assassination of Thompson is a tragedy for his family and is, in general, a reprehensible act of violence. Cold-blooded murder is abhorrent, and decisions of whether men should live or die as a result of their acts should be left to juries or people facing imminent death, not vigilantes seeking justice for political causes. Whether one believes Thompson was a good man or not is not the point. Whether his business decisions directly caused the suffering of millions of UnitedHealthcare customers is not the point. The decision of whether he should have lived or died, or been free or imprisoned for his actions, should not have been left to a 26-year-old activist.

Yet regardless of your abhorrence toward the act of cold-blooded murder, it is also undeniable that this killing was inevitable. These health care companies have accumulated a long list of enemies, such that any one of the countless Americans who have suffered as a result of their conduct or lost a loved one could possess a motive to harm them. Tragically, it was only a matter of time.

# Classifieds

## DURHAM COUNTY

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**
**In the General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division**
**Before the Clerk**
**File Number 24E002552-310**

The Undersigned, having qualified as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of ANTONIO WILLIAMS A/K/A ANTONIA WILLIAMS 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 20th day of March 2025, 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 19th day of December 2024.
Broneicia Mason, Administrator
12935 Hill Pine Rd.
Midland, NC 28107
12/19/24, 12/26/24, 1/2/25, & 1/9/25

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**
**In the General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division**
**Before the Clerk**
**File Number 24E002562-310**

The Undersigned, having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of CATHERINE INGRAM FOGEL, 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 20th day of March 2025, 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 19th day of December 2024.
Richard Neill Watson, Executor of the Estate of Catherine Ingram Fogel, c/o The Law Office of Anne Page Watson, PLLC, 3400 Croasdaile Drive, Suite 205, Durham, NC 27705
12/19/24, 12/26/24, 1/2/25, & 1/9/25

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**
**File Number 24E002487-310**

Having qualified as Administrator of the Estate of HAROLD CALVIN HEDGEPETH, deceased, this is to notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the Estate of Harold Calvin Hedgepeth to present them to the undersigned within three months from the date of the first date of publication of this Notice or same will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons, firms, and corporations indebted to said Estate, please make immediate payment.

This the 19th day of December, 2024.
Courtney James Elliott, Administrator
c\o John W. Perry, Attorney for the Estate
Post Office Drawer 2051
Durham, North Carolina 27702
Telephone: (919) 683-8685
12/19/24, 12/26/24, 1/2/25, & 1/9/25

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**
**ESTATE OF MURRY RAYMOND HANDLER**
**File Number 24E002177-310**

All persons, firms and corporations having claims against Murry Raymond Handler, deceased, of Durham County, N.C., are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before March 24th, 2024, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment.

This the 19th day of December, 2024.
Evan Elliot Handler, Executor
C/O W.G. Alexander & Associates, PLLC
3717 Benson Dr.
Raleigh, NC 27609
Durham, North Carolina 27717
12/19/24, 12/26/24, 1/2/25, & 1/9/25

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**
**File Number 24E001718-310**

THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 7th day of June 2024, as Administrator CTA of the ESTATE OF LARRY BASDEN, 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 20th day of March, 2025 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 19th day of December, 2024.
Ashton Myers
Administrator CTA
ESTATE OF LARRY BASDEN
c/o Jennifer Dalman, Attorney
Walker Lambe, PLLC
Post Office Box 51549
Durham, North Carolina 27717
12/19/24, 12/26/24, 1/2/25, & 1/9/25

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**
**In the General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division**
**Before the Clerk**
**File Number 24E002484-310**

The Undersigned, having qualified as CO-EXECUTORS of the Estate of DOROTHY GRAHAM ALLEN 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 19th day of March 2025, 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 19th day of December 2024.
Ervin L Allen Jr and Tami A Love, Co-Executors
c/o Marion Law Office, PLLC
2741 University Drive
Durham, NC 27707
12/19/24, 12/26/24, 1/2/25, & 1/9/25

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**
**In the General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division**
**Before the Clerk**
**File Number 24E002532-310**

The Undersigned, having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of KARL KURT HEINZ FREUNDT, 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 12th day of March 2025, 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 12th day of December 2024.
Marion F. Carden, Executor of the Estate of Karl Kurt Heinz Freundt, c/o The Law Office of Anne Page Watson, PLLC, 3400 Croasdaile Drive, Suite 205, Durham, NC 27705.
12/12, 12/19, 12/26/2024 & 1/2/2025

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**
**In the General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division**
**Before the Clerk**
**File Number 24E002431-310**

The Undersigned, having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of MARY IRENE GILL DUNBAR, 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 12th day of March 2025, 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 12th day of December 2024.
Robert Joseph Dunbar, Executor
1671 Gallup Road
Chapel Hill, NC 27517
12/12/24, 12/19/24, 12/26/24, and 1/2/2025

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**
**In the General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division**
**Before the Clerk**
**File Number 24E002385-310**

The Undersigned, having qualified as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of YORK DEWITT PHELPS, 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 12th day of March 2025, 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 12th day of December 2024.
Nathasha Marina Nazareth, Administrator
213 Beckwith St.
Gaithersburg, MD 20878
12/12, 12/19, 12/26/2024 & 1/2/2025

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**
**In the General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division**
**Before the Clerk**
**File Number 24E002232-310**

The Undersigned, having qualified as CO-ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of KENNETH PAUL GRISSOM SR. a/k/a PAUL KENNETH GRISSOM SR. 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 12th day of March 2025, 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 12th day of December 2024.
Heather Grissom, Co-Administrator
7108 Whitney Rd.
Graham, NC 27253
Tara Grissom, Co-Administrator
4407 Hopson Rd., Apt 9102
Morrisville, NC 27560
12/12, 12/19, 12/26/2024 & 1/2/2025

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
**NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION**
**In the Durham County General Court of Justice**
**District Court Division**
**File No. 24CV009993-310**

Shorok Olaya v. Mohammed Abdullatif Ali Thabit Al-Moualad

To: MOHAMMED ABDULLATIF ALI THABIT AL-MOUALAD

TAKE NOTICE That a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above-entitled action. The nature of the relief sought is as follows: Absolute Divorce.

You are required to make a defense to such pleading not later than January 21, 2025 which is forty-days (40) from the first publication of this notice. Upon your failure to do so, the party seeking service against you will apply to the court for the relief sought. N.C.G.S. 1A-4.

This the 12th day of December, 2024.
Robin Strickland
Triangle Divorce Lawyers
109 N. Boylan Avenue
Raleigh, North Carolina 27603
919-303-2020
12/12, 12/19, and 12/26/2024

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**
**In the General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division**
**Before the Clerk**
**File Number 24E002453-310**

The Undersigned, having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of CLAIRE S. NORMAN 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 5th day of March 2025, 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 5th day of December 2024.
Shelley Theye, Executor
1065 Boothe Hill Rd.
Chapel Hill, NC 27517
12/5, 12/12, 12/19, and 12/26/2024

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**
**In the General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division**
**Before the Clerk**
**File Number 24E002232-310**

The Undersigned, having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of CLAIRE S. NORMAL 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 5th day of March 2025, 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 5th day of December 2024.
James William Bradley, Executor
306 Circle Park Pl.
Chapel Hill, NC 27517
12/5, 12/12, 12/19, and 12/26/2024

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**

Having qualified before the Clerk of Superior Court of Durham County as Public Administrator of the Estate of David Monroe Smeltz, this is to notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the Estate to send them, duly itemized and verified, to P.O. Box 51429, Durham, NC 27717, on or before the 5th of March, 2025 (three months after the date of this Notice) or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons, firms, and corporations indebted to the Estate are requested to make prompt settlement with the undersigned.

This the 5th day of December, 2024.
Robert E. Levin, Public Administrator of the Estate of David Monroe Smeltz, Deceased
P.O. Box 51429
Durham, NC 27717
12/5, 12/12, 12/19, and 12/26/2024

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**
**File Number 24E002500-310**

The undersigned having qualified as Executor of the Estate of GRACE W. McFADDEN, a/k/a GRACE WILLIAMS McFADDEN, a/k/a GRACE LOUISE McFADDEN, a/k/a GRACIE W. McFADDEN, 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 8th day of March, 2025, or this Notice will be in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to the Estate will please make immediate payment.

This is the 5th day of December, 2024.
Patricia McFadden Belle, Executor, Estate of Grace W. McFadden, a/k/a Grace Williams McFadden, a/k/a Grace Louise McFadden, a/k/a Gracie W. McFadden, Deceased
Robert A. Idol, Esquire
IDOL LAW, PLLC
Attorney at Law
PO Box 51759
Durham, NC 27717
(919)401.5151
12/5, 12/12, 12/19, and 12/26/2024

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**
**In the General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division**
**Before the Clerk**
**File Number 24E002512-310**

The Undersigned, having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of RUTH MARIE KUHN, 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 5th day of March 2025, 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 5th day of December 2024.
David John Kuhn III, Executor
6507 Curry Manor Court
Bethesda MD 20817
12/5, 12/12, 12/19, and 12/26/2024

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**
**In the General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division**
**Before the Clerk**
**File Number 24E002476-310**

The Undersigned, having qualified as CO-ADMINISTRATORS of the Estate of JACQUELINE DENISE MARSH, 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 28th day of February 2025, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to the

## WAKE COUNTY

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY
**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**
**Estate of Vester Wade Walker, Jr**
**File Number 24E002659-910**

All person, firms and corporations having claims against VESTER WADE WALKER, JR, deceased, of Wake County, NC, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before March 12, 2025, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This the 5th day of December, 2024. Omeba Davis Walker, Executor, c/o Blue LLP, 205 Fayetteville St, Suite 300, Raleigh, NC 27601. The Carolinian, Dec 12, 19, 26, 2024 and Jan 2, 2025.

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY
**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**
**In the General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division**
**Before the Clerk**
**File Number 24E004453-910**

The Undersigned, having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of MARGARET CATHERINE SESSOMS, 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 12th day of March 2025, 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 12th day of December 2024.
Stuart E. Sessoms, Executor
2808 New Hope Church Rd.
Raleigh, NC 27604
12/12, 12/19, 12/26/2024 & 1/2/2025

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY

To all persons claiming an interest in: 1996-22-FIBERGLASS-MITCHELL MFG-MVO21B02E696-NC6489CS 1999-125HP-MERCURY-0G838184 MATTHEW JOHNSON will apply to SCDNR for title on watercraft/outboard motor. If you have any claim to the watercraft/outboard motor, contact SCDNR at 803-734-3699. Upon thirty days after the date of the last advertisement if no claim of interest is made and the watercraft/outboard motor has not been reported stolen SCDNR shall issue clear title. Case No: 20240816950578
12/5, 12/12, and 12/19/2024

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY

To all persons claiming an interest in: 1996-17'-ALUMINUM-SPECTRUM-FMCU65SVK596-NC3988CN 1996-40HP-FORCE-0E174105 MATTHEW JOHNSON will apply to SCDNR for title on watercraft/outboard motor. If you have any claim to the watercraft/outboard motor, contact SCDNR at 803-734-3699. Upon thirty days after the date of the last advertisement if no claim of interest is made and the watercraft/outboard motor has not been reported stolen SCDNR shall issue clear title. Case No: 20240816950579
12/5, 12/12, and 12/19/2024

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY
**NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION**
**In the General Court of Justice, District Court Division**
**File No. 24CV030976-910**

TIFFANY BUTLER, Plaintiff v. BOBBY BUTLER, Defendant

TO BOBBY BUTLER:

TAKE NOTICE that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above-entitled action, by the Plaintiff herein, the nature which is as follows: COMPLAINT FOR ABSOLUTE DIVORCE. You are required by law to appear and make defense to such pleading no later than 30 days after the first publication of this notice. If you fail to do so, Plaintiff will seek the relief sought herein, and a Judgment for Absolute Divorce may be entered.

This, the 5th day of December, 2024.
Tiffany Butler, Plaintiff
41 Two Belles Ct.
Angier, NC 27501
12/5, 12/12, and 12/19/2024



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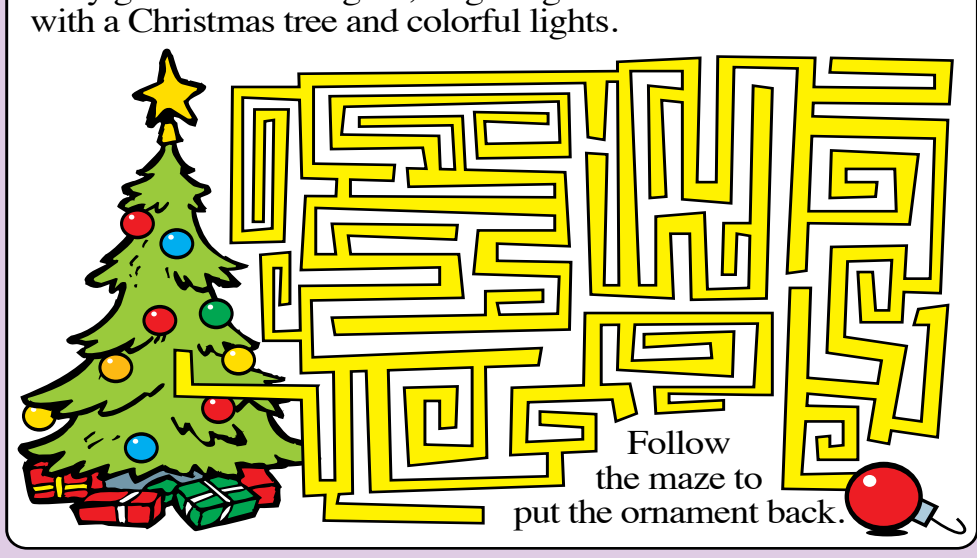
 Vol. 39, No. 2

# HOLIDAY HIGH-RISE

Welcome to Holiday Towers, an apartment building in the big city. Take a look at how the celebrations of these neighbors are alike and different.

## APT. 15C: THE ANDERSONS

The Anderson family celebrates the birth of Jesus on Christmas. They give each other gifts, sing songs and decorate their home with a Christmas tree and colorful lights.

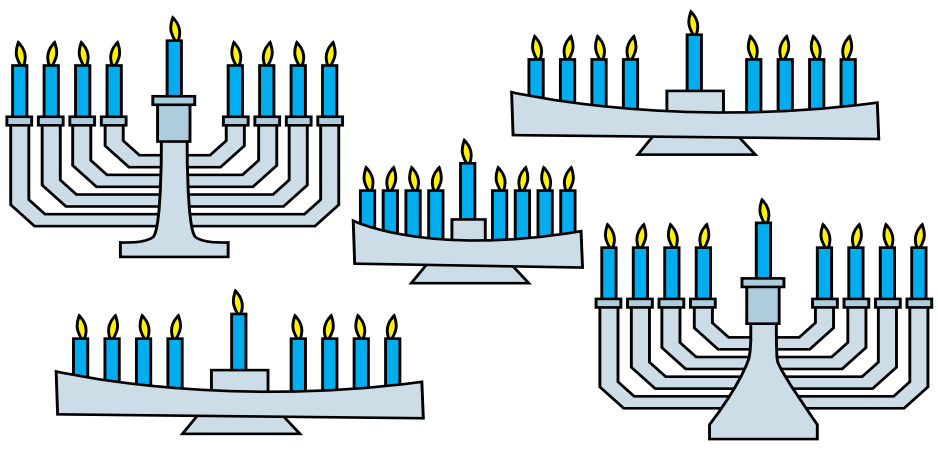


Follow the maze to put the ornament back.

## APT. 15B: THE WALDS

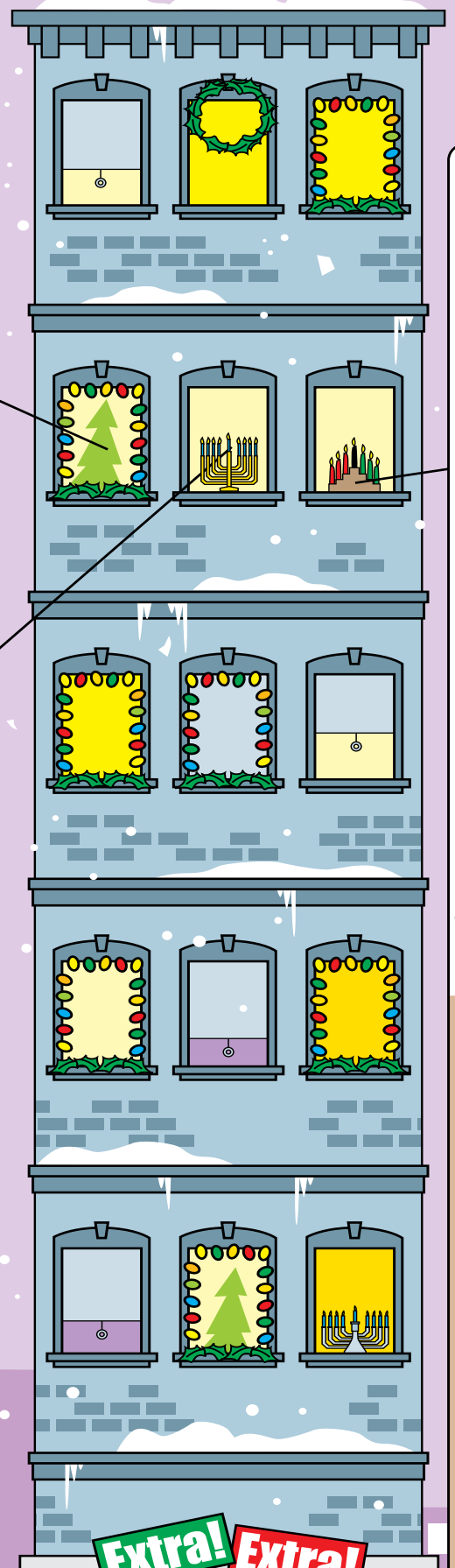
The Wald family celebrates Hannukah, a Jewish festival of light. They light a candle on a **menorah** each night for eight nights. They exchange small gifts each evening, sing songs and eat delicious foods. They display their menorah in their window.

Menorahs come in many different designs. Find the two identical menorahs.



People from different cultures have a wide variety of winter celebrations, many more than can fit on this page. How does your family celebrate in December? Draw it here.

**Standards Link:** Social Studies: Students know how traditions and celebrations of other cultures compare.



Extra! Extra!

## Holiday Dot-to-Dot

Find the letters that spell each of the following words on one page of the newspaper. Use different color crayons to connect the letters in order to spell each word.

**CANDLES**
**FEAST**
**LIGHTS**
**FAMILY**
**CELEBRATE**

**Standards Link:** Spelling: Spell grade-level appropriate words correctly.

## APT. 15A: THE MILLERS

The Miller family celebrates Kwanzaa, a week-long celebration honoring African culture.

They light red, green and black candles in a **kinara** and have a feast at the end of Kwanzaa. They also give each other small gifts.

**Mrs. Miller wears a kaftan during Kwanzaa. Hold this page up to a mirror to find out what this is.**

**A KAFTAN IS A COLORFUL, PULL-OVER ROBE**

**List three ways these celebrations are alike.**

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

## Kid Scoop Together: Proof It!

*Are you an eagle-eyed reader? Read the articles below and correct the **seven spelling and grammar errors** you find. The first one is done for you.*

### Birds Counting Brids

Every yeer for over a century, Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs) have been run acrost America during the holiday season. Counting the birds every year at the same time and in the same location gives scientists important information about burds and the environment.

In 2007, Tom Rusert of Sonoma, CA had the idea to include kidz in this important "citizen science" effort.

He launched the first Audubon CBC for Kids. It was so successful that now organizations around the country are started their own CBCs for Kids programs, following Rusert's model.

This is a wonderfully simple, healthy, hollyday celebration for almost any school, youth group or community organization.

**Standards Link:** Civics: Students understand the importance for individuals and society of commonly-held responsibilities such as being attentive to public issues.

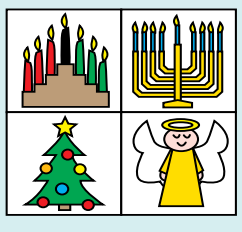
## Kid Scoo-doku™

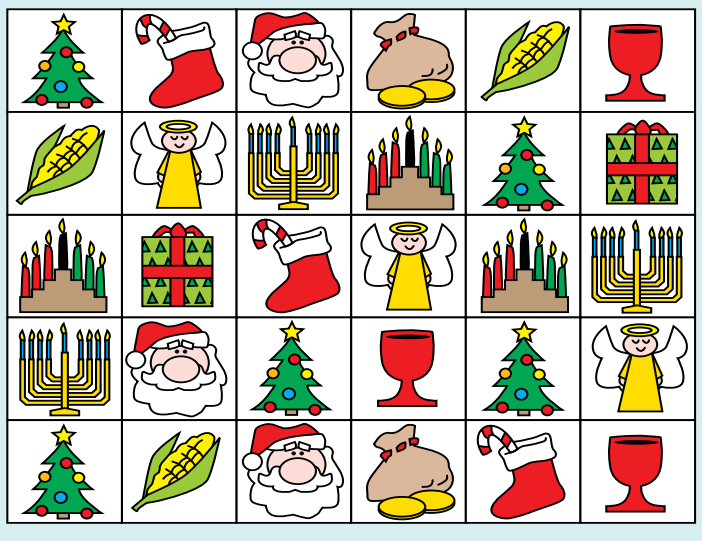
*Complete the grid by using all the letters in the word GIFTS in each vertical and horizontal row. Each letter should only be used once in each row. Some spaces have been filled in for you.*

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| T | | G | | I |
| | G | I | | |
| | | F | | G |
| | S | T | G | |
| G | | S | | |

## Kid Scoop Puzzler

Can you find these four squares in this order on the larger grid?





**Standards Link:** Investigation: Find identical patterns.

## Double Double Word Search

NEIGHBORS
APARTMENT
DECORATE
MENORAHS
KWANZAA
KAFTAN
SYMBOLS
EXCHANGE
FEAST
SONGS
TREE
HOME
FAMILY
GIVE
RED

Find the words in the puzzle. How many of them can you find on this page?

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| T | R | K | S | G | N | O | S | D | N |
| S | N | F | A | M | I | L | Y | E | E |
| H | E | E | J | F | O | V | I | C | G |
| A | F | O | M | B | T | G | E | O | N |
| R | I | E | M | T | H | A | H | R | A |
| O | E | Y | A | B | R | O | N | A | H |
| N | S | D | O | S | M | A | C | T | C |
| E | T | R | E | E | T | E | P | E | X |
| M | S | K | W | A | N | Z | A | A | E |

**Standards Link:** Letter sequencing. Recognize identical words. Skim and scan reading. Recall spelling patterns.

## Kid Scoop VOCABULARY BUILDERS

**This week's word:**
**CULTURE**

The noun **culture** means the language, customs, art and practices of a group of people.

Our teacher explained some ways our **culture** is similar to that of other countries.

Try to use the word **culture** in a sentence today when talking with your friends and family members.

## FROM THE Kid Scoop® LESSON LIBRARY

### Holiday Images

Look through the newspaper for words or pictures related to the holidays. Cut and paste these onto a sheet of construction paper to make a collage poster.

**Standards Link:** Visual Arts: Use a variety of media to convey meaning.

## What does a snowman eat for breakfast?

**ANSWER:** Frosted flakes. (Joke by Kid Scoop reader, Rayne.)

## Write On!

### The Greatest Gift

What is the greatest gift you could give that doesn't cost money?

# Sports

## HBCU Star Travis Hunter Wins Heisman Trophy, MVP

NEW YORK (AP) — Travis Hunter turned every play into prime time — on both sides of the ball — and ultimately took home the Heisman Trophy.

Now he's got a leg up on his celebrity coach at Colorado.

The two-way star won college football's most prestigious award Saturday night, punctuating a tireless performance all season by a dynamic player with a unique combination of skills.

"Never thought I would be in this position," a tearful Hunter said as he thanked everyone from his fiancée to family members and former and current coaches. "It's crazy. Belief takes you a long way."

While posing for countless photos with the iconic statue over the past two days, Hunter made a point not to put his hands on the Heisman. He said he didn't want to touch it unless it was his.

Once it finally was, he grabbed the trophy hard with two hands and let loose a happy scream: "Let's go!"

Next stop, a local spot he reserved to celebrate with teammates.

"I don't like to be out late, but I'm going to be out late tonight," Hunter said, smiling.

A big-play wide receiver and lockdown cornerback, Hunter dominated on offense and defense for coach Deion Sanders and the Buffaloes, joining late running back Rashaan Salaam in 1994 as the only Heisman winners in school history.

Hunter received 552 first-place votes and 2,231 points in a comfortable victory. Boise State running back Ashton Jeanty was the runner-up with 309 first-place votes and 2,017 points, the closest margin since 2009.

Hunter garnered 80.14% of possible points, the 11th-highest in Heisman Trophy history, and joined Michigan cornerback Charles Woodson (1997) as the only full-time defensive players to claim the prize. Woodson also made some big plays at wideout, but didn't spend nearly as much time on offense as Hunter.

Oregon quarterback Dillon Gabriel came in third and Miami quarterback Cam Ward finished fourth in balloting for the 90th Heisman Trophy, presented annually since 1935 to the nation's most outstanding player. This year's ceremony was held at Jazz at Lincoln Center in Manhattan, where Sanders was in attendance.

It marked only the fifth time this century a quarterback didn't win. The last time no signal-caller placed in the top two was 2015, when running backs Derrick Henry of Alabama and Christian McCaffrey ran 1-2 in voting.

Hunter also won The Associated Press player of the year among a string of other individual awards this week. He helped spark an impressive turnaround at Colorado, from 4-8 in 2023 when he missed 3 1/2 games because of injuries to 9-3 this year in


Sanders' second season. The 20th-ranked Buffaloes got their first bowl bid in four years and will face No. 17 BYU (10-2) in the Alamo Bowl on Dec. 28.

Hunter has pledged to play, rather than skip the game to prepare for the NFL draft and prevent any possible injury as many top prospects do. The 6-foot-1, 185-pound junior from Suwanee, Georgia, plans to pass up his senior season in Boulder and is expected to be a top-five pick by the pros — perhaps even No. 1 overall.

"He wants to be great at everything," Sanders said. "He wants to have a commitment to excellence in everything he does — including fishing."

Showcasing his blazing speed and explosive playmaking, Hunter rarely came off the field this year — making him an every-down throwback to generations gone by and the first full-time, true two-way star in decades.

On offense, he had 92 catches for 1,152 yards and 14 touchdowns, plus a rushing score. On defense, he made four interceptions, 32 tackles, broke up 11 passes and forced a critical fumble that secured an overtime victory against Baylor.

With the Buffaloes winning games and challenging for a Big 12 title, he soared from a long-shot underdog in Heisman futures last summer to a heavy betting favorite this week.

All the while, striking the Heisman pose with teammates to celebrate big plays as it became more and more clear Hunter was the man to beat.

"I definitely can kick, (too). I've just got to practice," he said. "I can't stop moving when I'm not on the field."

Hunter played nearly 700 snaps each on offense and defense — the only Power Four conference player with 30-plus snaps on both sides of the ball, according to Colorado research.

It would seem an overly exhausting workload for any player these days, both mentally and physically, but not Hunter.

"I think I laid the ground for more people to come in and go two ways," he said Friday. "It starts with your mindset. If you believe you can do it, then you'll be able to do it. And also, I do a lot of treatment. I keep up with my body. I get a lot of recovery."

Rated the country's top recruit in the 2022 class, Hunter stunned many observers when he committed to play for Sanders at Jackson State, an HBCU that competes in the lower-level FCS, with the promise of playing both offense and defense.

"A lot of people told me I couldn't do it," said Hunter, wearing white shoes and a light blue suit — his favorite color. "I always say I'm going to prove them wrong and I'm going to prove myself right."

After one season, Hunter followed Sanders to Colorado and was a consensus All-America selection as an all-purpose player last year despite sitting out three games with a lacerated liver caused by a late hit.

Following his recovery, a healthy Hunter finished strong in 2023 and then really took off this season, catching passes from Shedeur Sanders, the coach's son, and becoming Colorado's first Heisman Trophy finalist in 30 years.

The 21-year-old Hunter, who plans to get married in May, is the sixth transfer to take the award over the past eight years and the first winner to begin his career in the FCS.

"Look where I'm at. It paid off," Hunter said.

"I wanted to be different," he added later. "Me being different makes me feel more comfortable than doing the norm."

Deion Sanders, nicknamed Prime Time during his playing days — seemingly by himself — was a two-time All-America defensive back at Florida State and finished eighth in 1988 Heisman voting.

An electrifying kick returner, who also played major league baseball by the way, Neon Deion went on to a Hall of Fame career as an NFL cornerback but mostly just dabbled on offense besides a 36-catch season with the 1996 Dallas Cowboys.

Nothing quite like Hunter, who now has Heisman bragging rights on Coach Prime forever.

## Woman Admits She Lied About Rape Sixteen Years Ago

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — The woman who in 2006 falsely accused three Duke University lacrosse players of raping her — making national headlines that stirred tensions about race, class and the privilege of college athletes — has admitted publicly for the first time that she made up the story.

Crystal Mangum, who is Black, said in an interview with the "Let's Talk with Kat" podcast that she "made up a story that wasn't true" about the white players who attended a party where she was hired to perform as a stripper "because I wanted validation from people and not from God."

"I testified falsely against them by saying that they raped me when they didn't and that was wrong," Mangum, 46, said in the interview, which was released Monday. The interview was recorded last month at the North Carolina Correctional Institution for Women, where Mangum is incarcerated for fatally stabbing her boyfriend in 2011.

The former Duke players were declared innocent in 2007 after Mangum's story fell apart under legal scrutiny. The state attorney general's office concluded there was no credible evidence an attack ever occurred, and its investigation found no DNA, witness or other evidence to confirm Mangum's story.


Steve Worthy Photo

Despite their names being cleared, Jim Cooney, one of the former players' lawyers at the time, told The Associated Press that Mangum's allegations caused an "enormous tornado of destruction" for countless people involved, including the accused men. They were wrongfully vilified nationally as "racially motivated rapists," Cooney said.

The Durham prosecutor who championed Mangum's case was disbarred for lying and misconduct. Prosecutors at the time declined to press charges against Mangum for the false accusations.

The former lacrosse players reached an undisclosed settlement with Duke University in 2007 after suing it for the handling of the rape allegations.

Mangum, who was convicted of second-degree murder in 2013 and is eligible to be released from prison as early as 2026, told the podcast interviewer that she hopes the three falsely accused men can forgive her.

"I want them to know that I love them and they didn't deserve that," she said.

Durham-based podcaster Kat DePasquale said she wrote to Mangum because she was curious about the case that got so much attention, and that Mangum wrote back saying she wanted to talk.

Mangum's apology struck Cooney as sincere and "a good first step," but he said the decision to forgive her is ultimately up to the three former lacrosse players.

"It's going to be a part of their biography for the rest of their lives and part of their obituaries," Cooney said of the three men.

## Michael Vick Accepts Head Coaching Job At Norfolk State, An HBCU In VA

NORFOLK, Va. (AP) — Michael Vick has agreed to become the head coach at Norfolk State in a return to football for the former NFL star, who has never coached at any level.

The 44-year-old Vick announced on his Facebook page on Tuesday night that he has accepted the job. Norfolk State did not immediately confirm the hiring of Vick, who grew up in nearby Newport News.

"Looking forward to coming back home," Vick said in his social media post.

Vick starred in college at Virginia Tech and was a four-time Pro Bowler in 13 seasons for Atlanta, Philadelphia, the New York Jets and Pittsburgh. He helped launch an era of quarterbacks who were threats both running and throwing the ball.

Vick served 18 months in federal prison in the prime of his career after pleading guilty to his role in a dogfighting ring. After his release in 2009, he returned to the NFL and won AP Comeback Player of the Year with the Eagles in 2010, but his best years were behind him.

He retired in 2017 and has advocated against animal cruelty while also working as an NFL analyst for Fox Sports.

Vick's hiring by Norfolk State was first reported Tuesday by the Virginian-Pilot.

Norfolk State fired coach Dawson Odums in November after a 4-8 season. The historically Black school plays in the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference. The Spartans have made one appearance in the FCS playoffs, losing in the first round to in-state rival Old Dominion in 2011.

Before accepting the Norfolk State job, Vick also spoke to Sacramento State about its open head coaching position.




## The Darker Side Of The Rise Of Women's Professional Sports

NEW YORK (AP) — For Djaniele Taylor, attending WNBA games was the perfect way to rediscover a sense of community coming out of the long slog of pandemic-era lockdowns.

The 38-year-old Evanston, Illinois, resident has regularly attended Chicago Sky games for the last three seasons, after she watched the team win its first championship in 2021. As a queer Black fan, she felt the games were a supportive and safe sporting environment.

"I was hooked and I loved the atmosphere — it was very queer-friendly, very family-oriented, very diverse," she said.

As the popularity of the WNBA skyrocketed this year, Taylor watched the price of her season tickets more than double since 2022. With the growth, she noted a "darker vibe shift," too: What always felt like a positive setting started to take a more hostile turn at times.

As women's sports set new records for attendance and viewership, Taylor and other longtime fans watched with optimism — and unease. It's a cycle female athletes and fans of women's sports have come to recognize: With the increased and sought-after visibility also comes added scrutiny — as well as harassment and online abuse toward some players.

This year, fresh off the NCAA spotlight, former college basketball stars Caitlin Clark and Angel Reese made their WNBA debut for the Indiana Fever and the Chicago Sky, catapulting their personal brands as well as the popularity of the league among viewers.

Fans are tuning in for the love of the sport, as they always have, said Amira Rose Davis, assistant professor in the Department of African and African Diaspora Studies at the University of Texas-Austin. But they're also drawn by the dynamics between players like Clark and Reese, who faced each other in the 2023 NCAA championship between the University of Iowa and Louisiana State University.

While both deny there's any bad blood between them, tension has been drummed up by fans and increased media attention. Beneath it are racial undertones that originated while the two played in college — with predominantly white Iowa pitted against predominantly Black LSU, and Clark and Reese "emerging as these kind of archetypes that people can run with," Davis said.

"That really raises the engagement and just the raw numbers of viewership. And then it also solidifies those narratives," she said.

It's also led to harassment and abuse — much of it racially motivated and directed at players of color across the league and the wider sports landscape.