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Class-Based Affirmative Action Was Supposed To Be The Next Big Thing.

By Ryan Teague Beckwith
Newsletter Editor

It was the turn of the millennium, and the schools in North Carolina's Wake County had a problem.

Like many other school systems in the South that started desegregation efforts in the 1970s, they had long bused students from their neighborhoods to schools around Raleigh, the state capital.

Race-based busing was unpopular. But the county remained stubbornly segregated by neighborhood, so ending the system entirely would have meant a return to unequal schools.

The solution was simple: use class instead of race. Wake County began assigning students to ensure that no school had more than 40% of students coming from a low-income neighborhood or more than 25% of students studying below grade level.

The innovation led to national news coverage, with The New York Times hailing it as "the next kind of integration." What's more, it worked. A 2021 study by scholars from the University of North Carolina School of Education found that reassigned students had higher math scores and were less likely to be suspended. There was no evidence of negative effects, which was reinforced by the fact that few parents opted out of the assignments, even though they had the choice.

When I lived in Raleigh from 2003 to 2008, it seemed like Wake County's system pointed a way forward, and not just for K-12 schools. The Supreme Court had already begun questioning strictly race-based affirmative action, striking down an undergraduate admissions policy at Columbia University in 2003 while narrowly upholding a separate admissions policy for its law school.

Class-based affirmative action would not only address the continuing effects of slavery and segregation, but also give a boost to other students facing economic struggles. It seemed like a solution that both liberals and conservatives could agree on, bypassing contentious arguments about race in order to focus on helping make America the land of opportunity that it always claims to be.

But in 2010, the Wake County school board overturned the income-based program amid conservative opposition. The school system now uses a hybrid model that assigns students to neighborhood schools while using special-interest magnet schools to draw them to other parts of the county. By emphasizing parental choice, the new system has ruffled fewer feathers.

At the time, I found it odd that the county's professional conservatives — many of whom I knew personally from covering state politics — expended so much energy to fight the program. Sure,

(See ***CLASS BASED*** P. 7)

Something To Bee Grateful For

Dix Park's five acres of sunflowers are visually spectacular and enormously beneficial. Birds, bees, and butterflies prosper. The air and soil are renewed. Because the City of Raleigh plants and cultivates nearly 200,000 sunflowers, thousands of people visit to enjoy, learn, take selfies, pose for family pictures, and make amazing memories every summer.

Since the City of Raleigh bought the property in 2015, many have wondered what the finished Dix Park will look like. Some of those questions might be answered at the YNPN Dix Park Breakfast at the Flower Cottage on Friday, Aug. 3 from 8 a.m. – 10 a.m. The free breakfast will feature a presentation by Kate Pearce, the Dix Park project manager for the City of Raleigh, who will discuss how the future of the park will incorporate the property's history as a mental hospital.
Steve Worthy Photos

Black Voices Are Training Big Tech. But Who's Protecting Them And Their Data?

By Dr. Janice Gassam Asare
Forbes

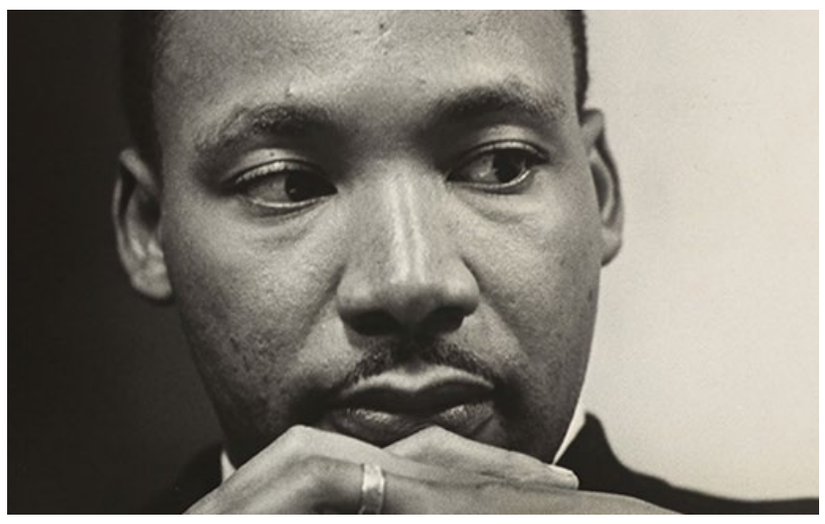
It was recently announced that Howard University and Google are partnering under the name Project Elevate Black Voices to release data that can be used by artificial intelligence to better understand African American English (AAE). A media release from Howard University explained that researchers traveled across the United States to capture different dialects used within the Black community, collecting 600 hours of vocal data across 32 states in different dialects, dictions and accents. The project's aim is to address the inherent bias baked into many artificial intelligence-driven tools we use to address difficulties interpreting and understanding Black users who have dialects and diction more common in the Black community. Howard University will own the dataset and licensing, making the data available to researchers and institutions at historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and will allow Google to use the dataset to improve its products.

In an Instagram post made by pocintech about the project, there were many who were leery of the partnership stating it wasn't a good idea, with some wondering how this partnership would benefit the Black community. It's understandable for some to be suspicious about this type of partnership. There is a long history of tech being extractive, exploitative and harmful to the Black community. The erasure of Black creators who have started trends and viral dances yet are the least protected on social media, racial bias in facial recognition software used for policing and surveillance, and technology that is more likely to flag Black creator's content as "offensive," are just a few examples.

Though the backlash is warranted, we should also consider the different ways that a robust dataset containing different types of AAE can benefit Black workers and help create better technology. Many companies use tech tools like Zoom and Microsoft Teams auto-captioning, AI notetakers, and meeting recording summaries. Having more data about AAE will help to improve these

(See ***BLACK VOICES*** P. 8)

Trump Releases MLK Jr. Assassination Files



WASHINGTON, July 21 (Reuters) - The U.S. Justice Department on Monday released more than 240,000 pages of documents related to the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., including records from the FBI, which had surveilled the civil rights leader as part of an effort to discredit the Nobel Peace Prize winner and his civil rights movement.
Files were posted, opens new tab on the website of the National Archives, which said more would be released.

King died of an assassin's bullet in Memphis, Tennessee, on April 4, 1968, as he increasingly extended his attention from a nonviolent campaign for equal rights for African Americans to economic issues and calls for peace. His death shook the United States in a year that would also bring race riots, anti-Vietnam war demonstrations and the assassination of presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy.

Earlier this year, President Donald Trump's administration released thousands of pages of digital documents related to the assassinations of Robert Kennedy and former President John F. Kennedy, who was killed in 1963.

Trump promised on the campaign trail to provide more transparency about Kennedy's death. Upon taking office, he also ordered aides to present a plan for the release of records relating to the assassinations of Robert Kennedy and King.

The FBI kept files on King in the 1950s and 1960s - even wiretapping his phones - because of what the bureau falsely said at the time were his suspected ties to communism during the Cold War between the U.S. and Soviet Union. In recent years, the FBI has acknowledged that as an example of "abuse and overreach" in its history.

The civil rights leader's family asked those who engage with the files to "do so with empathy, restraint, and respect for our family's continuing grief," and condemned "any attempts to misuse these documents."
"Now more than ever, we must honor his sacrifice by committing ourselves to the realization of his dream – a society rooted in compassion, unity, and equality," they said in a statement.

"During our father's lifetime, he was relentlessly targeted by an invasive, predatory, and deeply disturbing disinformation and surveillance campaign orchestrated by J. Edgar Hoover through the Federal Bureau of Investigation," the family, including his two living children, Martin III, 67, and Bernice, 62, said, referring to the then-FBI director.

James Earl Ray, a segregationist and drifter, confessed to killing King but later recanted. He died in prison in 1998.

King's family said it had filed a wrongful death civil lawsuit in Tennessee in 1999 that led to a jury unanimously concluding "that our father was the victim of a conspiracy involving Loyd Jowers and unnamed co-conspirators, including government agencies as a part of a wider scheme. The verdict also affirmed that someone other than James Earl Ray was the shooter, and that Mr. Ray was set up to take the blame. Our family views that verdict as an affirmation of our long-held beliefs."

STATE NEWS BRIEFS

PASSAGE OF PROPERTY TAX RELIEF BILLS SEEMS UNLIKELY DESPITE BIPARTISAN SUPPORT

NC Newsline – Despite bipartisan support for bills to expand the state's property tax relief programs for elderly and disabled North Carolinians, there's unlikely to be movement on the legislation this year.

State lawmakers have gotten an earful from senior citizens and others on fixed incomes who worry that rising property taxes across the state will make it impossible for them to remain in their homes.

"I think that the concern that members are having is that if the General Assembly passes some large property tax relief exemption without providing any kind of corresponding source of revenues that counties are going to be facing budget shortfalls of their own and having to make rather drastic cuts for services," said Rep. Tim Longest (D-Wake), who supports additional property tax relief.

Longest noted that the House's version of the budget pauses scheduled income tax cuts, which he said would offset revenue counties would lose if eligibility for homestead exemption programs is expanded to allow more

(See ***PROPERTY TAX RELIEF*** P. 2)

NORTH CAROLINA GOVERNOR DOESN'T APPEAL RULING ON WHO GETS SAY OVER HIGHWAY PATROL COMMANDER

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — North Carolina's Democratic Gov. Josh Stein decided Wednesday against appealing a trial court ruling that did not go in his favor last month, securing a small victory for Republican lawmakers whom the governor was challenging.

The case focused on whether Stein has the authority to choose his own State Highway Patrol commander. The GOP-dominated legislature passed a law in December 2024 — just before Stein was sworn into office — that included a provision stating the governor was required to keep the current incumbent, Col. Freddy Johnson, in the position. Stein then sued.

After hearing arguments in court last month, a panel of Superior Court judges decided unanimously to dismiss the case, saying the provision wasn't unconstitutional.

Johnson, who was appointed by former Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper in 2021, was a defendant in the lawsuit. Cooper was also an original plaintiff. Stein believed the provision to be "ambiguous" on whether he would be allowed to remove Johnson from his position if necessary, which is why he initially challenged the provision, according to a Wednesday news release from the governor's office.
That ambiguity could have led to the interpretation that the commander

(See ***NC HIGHWAY PATROL COMMANDER*** P. 2)

Education Department Releases Some After-School Funds; Other Grants Remain Frozen

NC Newsline – The U.S. Department of Education said Friday it would release some frozen federal grant funds for after-school programs, following lawsuits from 24 states and pressure from 10 Republican senators.

The freeze, announced by the Trump administration earlier this month, affects programs like 21st Century Community Learning Centers, a federal program that supports afterschool programs for low-income students in North Carolina.

State education advocates had warned that about 11,000 students and 125 programs across North Carolina were at risk. The freeze on the $35 million grant, part of a broader $165 million allotment in congressionally approved education funds for North Carolina, threatened to eliminate academic enrichment, nutritional support, and safe, supervised environments for children while their parents are at work.

"This outcome was the result of a collective effort from parents, program leaders, youth advocates, and community champions that came together to speak up for what matters. It has shown us how many people across North Carolina and across the country support these important programs, and how important it will be to maintain and expand this funding moving forward into FY 26," said Elizabeth Anderson, director of the NC Center for Afterschool Programs — a project of the Public School Forum of North Carolina.

Anderson said the organization will wait until the funds are released on Monday to make a full statement.

"After a careful review of the circumstances, the Department has determined that it will release a portion of the impacted grant funds while the litigation proceeds," the department said in a statement reported by the Associated Press.

The rest of the withheld grants, close to $5 billion, which funds adult literacy and English language instruction, continues to be withheld.

North Carolina Attorney General Jeff Jackson, along with 24 other state attorneys general, sued the U.S. Department of Education this week over the withholding of the funds. The money, which was due to be delivered by July 1, was suddenly paused on the evening of June 30 with little explanation.

"In communities all across this country, people are tremendously relieved that the Trump Administration will release the FY25 afterschool and summer learning program funds it had withheld," said Jodi Grant, executive director of the Afterschool Alliance in a released statement. "Working parents in particular are breathing an enormous sigh of relief."

Civil Rights And Democracy Hits Put Black America In 'State Of Emergency,' The National Urban League Says

NC Newsline – Since taking office Jan. 20, President Donald Trump has issued executive orders that forced businesses, schools, universities and state and federal agencies to dismantle all diversity, equity and inclusion policies.

Describing Black America as in a "state of emergency," the National Urban League said the directives show the federal government is "determined to sacrifice its founding principles—equality, liberty, and justice—rather than accept the truth of a diversifying nation and deliver equitable opportunity for all."

The National Urban League, a civil rights and advocacy organization focused on economic empowerment of Black and other underserved communities, is scheduled to release its annual State of Black America 2025 report Thursday morning at 8:30 at its conference in Cleveland.

In an executive summary, it credits the Voting Rights Act of 1965 with the "true birth of American democracy." But the federal government under Trump has "set fire to policies and entire departments dedicated to protecting civil and human rights, providing access to an equal education, fair housing, safe and effective healthcare, and ensuring that our democratic process is adhered to across the nation," the executive summary said.

Yet despite those actions, Americans bolstered by the civil rights community are pushing back. The group pointed to lawsuits filed across the country by state attorneys general, governors and civil rights groups, including the National Urban League, NAACP Legal Defense Funds and Lambda Legal. As of May 23, 247 cases challenging Trump administration policies had been filed in federal courts.

"There is a state of emergency in Black America, and our report this year is a warning and rallying cry as civil rights protections are being unraveled," said Marc Morial, National Urban League president and CEO, during a briefing ahead of the report's release. "Democracy is under siege. What began as what we thought were fringe attacks on racial equity has now become national policy."

Since 2013, U.S. Supreme Court decisions have struck down portions of the Voting Rights Act that required federal preclearance in communities with a history of racial discrimination before making changes to voting practices, the report notes. And after a 2023 decision that declared affirmative action unconstitutional in college admissions, the National Urban League said the ruling threatens the ability to sue over racial discrimination in voting and to challenge district maps. Other voting-related practices from mail-in ballots and early voting to requirements to provide voting materials in languages other than English are at risk, the group said.

The U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division, once a protection against discriminatory practices, is now seen as a threat to enforcement of civil rights laws that could become a "tool of retribution," the report summary said. Harmeet Dhillon, a Trump attorney and election denier, was confirmed by the U.S. Senate in April to serve as assistant attorney general of the Civil Rights Division, one of the largest at Justice. Dhillon also opposed the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Act Amendment in an op-ed which would have restored the landmark law, the executive summary said.

The group defended the value of diversity, equity and inclusion, saying that it "protects and advances democratic ideals." But the Trump administration has targeted colleges, universities and businesses "for simply having the words diversity and inclusion as part of their mission," adding that Michigan and Columbia universities were forced to end their programs.

"In short, DEI policies don't just level the playing field in education and employment; they fortify democracy itself. By expanding opportunities, ensuring equitable access to information, and creating leadership pipelines, DEI helps guarantee that every American—not just the privileged few— can contribute to the nation's future," the group said in the summary.

'Dividing America'

The report also notes how hate and extremist views are more prevalent on social media that began to increase after the COVID-19 pandemic and the acquisition of Twitter (now X) in 2022 by billionaire Elon Musk. The summary said that a day later, right-wing accounts on the platform jumped while those with progressive views dropped. And two years later during the election, accounts of progressive candidates were "banned without explanation."

A study published in February by researchers from the University of Southern California's Viterbi Information Sciences Institute showed that general hate speech increased by 50% and transphobic slurs increased by 260%. The study analyzed posts between January 2022 and June 2023.

"People have become very adept at misinformation, disinformation. But my mother called it something different: She said it was lying," Morial said.

PROPERTY TAX RELIEF

Continued from page 1

people to qualify.

"We can't cut our way to revenue, and if we want to ensure fairness for older people and people with disabilities, people that can't afford their homes, then we need to make sure that that loss of revenue is offset somewhere else," Longest said.

The N.C. Association of County Commissioners (NCACC), a nonpartisan organization that serves as the official voice of the state's 100 counties, opposes property tax relief legislation, citing concerns about revenue losses for counties.

In a March letter to the General Assembly, Kevin Leonard, the NCACC's executive director, wrote that local leaders agree that relief is needed but that mandating property tax exemptions at the state level is not the answer.

"If these bills pass as currently drafted, they would create an unfunded mandate on counties," Leonard said. "Because counties have limited options to generate revenue — primarily relying on property and sales taxes — the revenue lost due to these exemptions would have to be offset through other means."

Counties would be forced to raise taxes on property owners or cut critical services such as public safety, social services or disaster recovery efforts, Leonard said.

"While all counties would face these decisions, the impact would be more severe for counties affected by Tropical Storm Helene," Leonard said. "These counties already face reduced property tax revenue for FY 2025-26 and beyond because real property that was damaged and not repaired or replaced as of January 1, 2025, will be excluded from the tax base for the upcoming year."

Rising property tax rates in the state's urban areas such as Mecklenburg, Wake, Durham and Orange counties are a big concern for senior citizens fighting to stay in their homes amid rising tax bills.

Rep. Erin Paré (R-Wake) said she believes the General Assembly still has an appetite to provide relief for citizens struggling to pay high property taxes.

"I'm still waiting to see if the finance chairs are going to take a vote on any piece of legislation dealing with this issue in the House, but it's my understanding that that this is widely supported among the members of the House to do something about the issue," Paré said.

Paré is a sponsor of House Bill 59, which would expand homestead exclusions for the elderly and disabled. Senate Bill 349 would provide similar relief.

North Carolina currently offers three property tax relief programs for qualified homeowners that are administered by counties:

The Elderly/Disabled Homestead Exemption is for residents 65 years or older or those who are totally and permanently disabled. The program excludes from taxes the greater of $25,000 or 50% of the assessed value of the owner's permanent residence. To qualify, income for the preceding year must be $37,900 or less, including both incomes for a married couple.

The "Circuit Breaker" limits the amount of annual property taxes the owner pays on their permanent residence. Eligibility is limited to homeowners who are 65 and older or who are totally and permanently disabled. The tax bill is limited to a fixed percentage of income, and any taxes owed above that limit is deferred until a "disqualifying event" such as the owner's death. This program requires a new application to be filed every year.

The Disabled Veteran Exclusion program excludes up to the first $45,000 of the appraised value of the permanent residence of a disabled veteran who has a total and permanent service-connected disability or who received benefits for specially adapted housing. There is no age or income limitation for this program.

Paré said it's time to modify the $37,900 income limit for the elderly/disabled exemption, so more people qualify.

"That's just not realistic," Paré said. I think that with the cost of living in some of the more high cost-of-living counties, that just seems ridiculous."

A proposed amended version of HB 59 offered up last month during a bill discussion in the House Committee on Pensions and Retirement would link eligibility for the age/disability exemption to a county's area median income. Doing so, she said, would ease the burden on low wealth counties.

"That's the most accurate way to do it," Paré said. "I would just say that the only alternative would be for towns to budget differently and take the tax burden down for everybody, which I think is a good thing."

The proposed amendment would also set an area median income limit of 70% for a two-person household to qualify for the Circuit Breaker exemption. Applicants would be required to file an application for the Circuit Breaker every three years instead of every year under the proposal.

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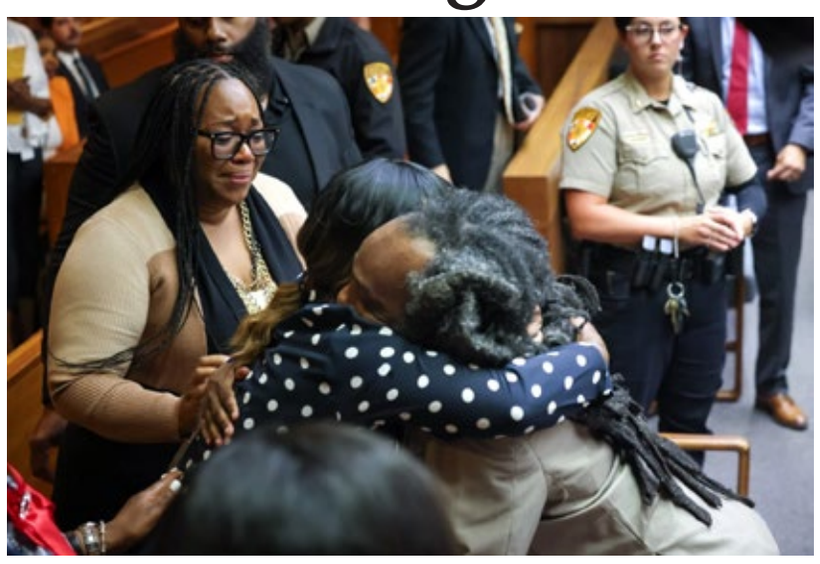
Released After 27 Years: How Benjamin Cole & Duke Law School Argued His Innocence



Ken A Huth (HuthPhoto) / Duke Law School

WUNC – Benjamin Cole spent 27 years - most of his life - in prison for a murder he has maintained he did not commit.

Cole was convicted in the 1998 murder of Calvin Jenkins in Greensboro despite his defense team not having access to records that supported his innocence.

The Wrongful Convictions Clinic at Duke University's Law School took on his case in 2021 and earlier this summer, Cole was released from prison.

His release comes as the state Senate considers eliminating the North Carolina Innocence Inquiry Commission, which investigates claims of wrongful convictions.

WUNC's Will Michaels spoke with Jamie Lau, the clinic's supervising attorney, and Britney Pearson-Norfleet, Cole's sister, about his case.

The conversation has been lightly edited for clarity and brevity.

Britney, I can only imagine what was going through your mind when you first heard that your brother was going to be released. But can you take me back to that moment and tell me what you were thinking?

So there was never a moment until the moment he was released, that I knew what would occur. We prayed, we hoped, but the second that Judge Bray said that he would be released, I literally felt like these chains broke. That's what it felt like: a release from being imprisoned myself.

Jamie, what were these records that pointed toward Benjamin Cole's innocence, and then how was the case resolved?

Mr. Cole always maintained his innocence and said that he was in Ohio at the time that the homicide occurred. Investigators went to Ohio to visit a music studio where Mr. Cole had said he was recording the evening that the homicide took place in Greensboro.

What they found there, and was documented in the Greensboro Police Department file, was an employee discussed payments that were made to the studio, including an apparent payment from Mr. Cole on the very night that the crime occurred in Greensboro. That payment also corroborated testimony from the studio engineer. Despite his insistence that Mr. Cole was there, the jury apparently didn't believe him, but the records from the studio itself, once they were disclosed, supported everything that that studio engineer had said. And of course, if the jury had those records, obviously Mr. Cole never would have served 27 years.

Jamie, correct me if I'm wrong, but there was more that came to light during evidentiary hearings earlier this year too, right?

Yeah, there's certainly more. Two women identified Mr. Cole when looking through photos that they were being shown at the Greensboro Police Department. They were in the apartment where the intruders came into the home and ended up shooting Mr. Jenkins. They reviewed 1,600 photographs of Black males in Greensboro before identifying Mr. Cole as the assailant in the case. There's never any additional evidence collected, never any physical evidence, no murder weapon, no confession. It was all the evidence ever collected in the case.

But the problem was no one ever asked the woman whether or not Mr. Cole could be the assailant, given that he had a very thick Jamaican accent. Very early on in our efforts, we went to those two witnesses and said, if Mr. Cole has a Jamaican accent, was it possible that he could have been one of the individuals in the apartment that night? And both of them said no, unequivocally.

Jamie, the prosecution offered an Alford plea, which is not the same thing as a full exoneration, but can you parse out the differences between those and how the case was resolved?

An Alford plea allows an individual to maintain their innocence but accept punishment for a crime that the state has accused them of. The Alford plea guaranteed that he would be released.

Obviously, it's a real difficult thing to do to accept that resolution, but in many conversations with Mr. Cole. and his family, everybody just wanted him home, and we were grateful that we were able to help facilitate that.

Britney, your brother was released less than a month ago. What have these past three weeks or so been like with him?

Prison? It has an effect on on people. And what I'm seeing now with my brother, he has the comfort of home. He has family surrounding him. However, he doesn't know us. 27 years later, he has to learn us, and we have to learn him.

There has been a lot of loss. We no longer have grandparents living. And to protect his mental health, we did not tell him these things while he was incarcerated. He's learning his new nephews and nieces who, none of them are babies. He's also a grand uncle now.

So to see that it's like he has to learn so much and to catch up. But I've always told my brother that I will fight for him from Day One until I couldn't fight anymore, and that means even now, I will continue to fight for him, to teach him to be able to enter back into society.

DS2_4289- North Carolina FC's Paco Craig (5) and Conor Donovan (20) battle with Indy Eleven's Josh O'Brien (11) for the header and defending the goal during the first half of their regular season USL game at WakeMed Soccer Park in Cary, NC on July 18, 2025. The NCFC went on to win 4-2. Photo By: Steve Worthy

HIGHWAY PATROL COMMANDER

Continued from page 1

could keep his post, even if he refused his duties or abused his power, the governor's office said.

"Making a Commander of the State Highway Patrol unremovable for any reason would threaten public safety, and I am relieved the Court did not endorse such a result," Stein said in a statement. "I continue to have confidence in Colonel Freddy Johnson's ability to lead the State Highway Patrol effectively, and I look forward to continuing to work with him to keep people safe."

Attorneys representing GOP House Speaker Destin Hall and Senate leader Phil Berger successfully argued in court last month that the governor's arguments against the provision were largely hypothetical. Additionally, Stein's legal representation and a lawyer for Johnson both reaffirmed that there was no personal conflict between the governor and the State Highway Patrol commander.

Stein has also challenged various other parts of the sweeping state law that eroded many powers of the governor and several other top Democrats holding statewide office. One of the most consequential changes transferred the power to appoint State Board of Elections members from the governor to the state auditor, who is a Republican.

State Auditor Dave Boliek's appointments to the board — which shifted from a Democratic to Republican majority — have stayed in place as the constitutionality of the provision that moved the power away from Stein will be debated in appeals courts.

Business & Finance

More Americans Shift Money From Checking & Savings To Accounts With Investment Income, Study Says

WASHINGTON (AP) — New research finds that more Americans are shifting their money from checking and savings accounts into financial vehicles that pay an investment income — a trend that helps to explain the resilience of the U.S. economy after a bout of high inflation and recent uncertainty due to tariffs.

The analysis by JPMorganChase Institute examined the accounts of 4.7 million households and found that people's total cash reserves are increasing when including new amounts going into brokerage accounts, money market funds and certificates of deposit to assess people's well-being.

Inflation-adjusted cash balances in checking and savings accounts "remain low with a flat-growth trajectory," but since the middle of 2024 total cash reserves have been increasing and approaching historical growth trends once the additional accounts are included, the analysis said.

"Families across many income bands are now seeing a turnaround

in their total cash," said Chris Wheat, president of the institute.

Wheat said it had been "hard to square the circle" of consumer spending staying strong despite the lack of growth in checking and savings accounts, an issue that can now be explained by people in a higher-interest rate environment shifting more money into accounts that yield investment returns. He said people appear to be using the other accounts to manage their cash, rather than simply making long-term investments.

Wheat cautioned, however, that the trend might be short term and that the institute doesn't have a basis yet as to whether it will continue.

The analysis also found that households with incomes generally lower than $35,000 had their total cash balances increase at an annual rate of 5% to 6%. The lowest income quartile tend to have checking and savings account balance of just over $1,000, while the median balances of the highest income quartile are above $8,000.

Coffee With Leaders Event, Featuring Kevin Dick, Brews Up Insights On Equitable Economic Biz Development

By Ms Jheri Worldwide
Staff Writer

This month's "Coffee with Leaders" series, presented by The Raleigh Chamber of Commerce, featured a compelling discussion with Kevin Dick, President and CEO of the Carolina Small Business Development Fund (CSBDF). The event provided local business owners and entrepreneurs with invaluable insights into navigating the small business ecosystem and fostering equitable economic development.

Kevin Dick, whose organization boasts a 35-year legacy of supporting North Carolina's economic landscape, underscored the CSBDF's core mission: providing both financial and technical assistance to small businesses. A key differentiator for CSBDF, as Dick explained, lies in its approach to small business lending. Unlike traditional banks that primarily focus on a "credit box" and credit scores, CSBDF acts as a long-term partner. "If you show up, you're the perfect person to pick," Dick quipped, emphasizing their willingness to work with businesses that might not meet stringent bank criteria. He illustrated this by explaining that while a bank might approve a loan for a thriving business, CSBDF offers sustained guidance, helping businesses refine financial statements, explore market opportunities, and strategize for growth. "We become a partner throughout the life cycle of the business," he stated.

Dick also emphasized the foundational role of access to capital, describing small business lending as "transformational when rooted in community and equity." He challenged the notion that investments in organizations like CSBDF are merely grants, asserting, "our organization is an investment," pointing to the ripple effect of small business growth on tax revenues and local character. He cited Fat Tuesdays, a local business, as an example of how small businesses contribute to "neighborhood-level energy."

A significant portion of Dick's address focused on the historical context and ongoing disparities in access to capital, particularly for marginalized groups. He passionately recounted a "story that is definitely grounded in truth" about the creation of "Levittowns" after World War II. He explained how the federal government provided 0% financing to developers like Levitt, on the explicit condition that homes would not be sold to Black individuals. This policy, enshrined in written covenants, created a stark contrast between the wealth-building opportunities afforded to white soldiers returning home and the systemic barriers faced by Black soldiers.

"Wealth in this country is generational," Dick stressed, "not just the transfer of finances, but the transfer of knowledge and relationships." He illustrated how the inability of Black individuals to access traditional banking relationships in the past continues to impact generational wealth today. This historical context, he explained, directly led to the creation of Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) and the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) of 1977, which finally recognized and addressed the practice of "redlining" by banks.

Dick acknowledged that challenges persist for small businesses seeking funding. He identified credit scores as a major hurdle, noting that many profitable businesses with solid operations might have their credit impacted by unforeseen life events like medical emergencies. He also highlighted a "lack of understanding what they can afford to take on" as another common challenge, emphasizing the need for businesses to accurately assess their operating income.

CSBDF, with the help of its business solutions officers like Vera and Ryan, who were present at the event, aims to bridge these gaps. They provide tailored technical assistance, helping businesses understand their financial capacity and prepare for sustainable growth. Dick also proudly mentioned their "on the ground" Spanish language program, a growing part of their portfolio aimed at serving the expanding Hispanic entrepreneurial population in North Carolina.

The event concluded with an encouraging call to action: "Leverage Support Networks," "Overcome Funding Hurdles," and recognize that "Access to Capital is Foundational." The insights shared by Kevin Dick provided valuable tools and a deeper understanding of how equitable access to resources is not just a societal ideal, but a powerful engine for North Carolina's economic vitality.

For The Third Time In Four Years, CNBC Names North Carolina As America's "Top State for Business" In 2025

EDPNC— CNBC has named North Carolina as America's Top State for Business in 2025, marking the third time the state has garnered the honor in the last four years. This morning, Governor Josh Stein joined CNBC's Scott Cohn at Battleship North Carolina in Wilmington for a live broadcast where the winner was revealed.

"This confirms what we have known for a long time – that North Carolina is the best state in the country for business," said Governor Josh Stein. "Our people, state's business climate, top research universities and excellent community college system, infrastructure, and high quality of life help both companies and workers thrive. I want to thank leaders like former Governor Roy Cooper and state legislators of both parties who have helped North Carolina create a welcoming climate. I am proud of the progress our state has made, and we are just getting started."

"This recognition reflects our relentless commitment to building a competitive, welcoming, and dynamic economy that creates opportunity for everyone," said N.C. Commerce Secretary Lee Lilley. "From our world-class workforce to our strategic investments in infrastructure, education, and innovation, North Carolina continues to lead the way as a place where businesses thrive, and communities prosper. We share this success with all of our partners across the public and private sectors and look forward to building on this momentum."

Now in its 19th year, the CNBC study looked at 135 metrics in ten categories of competitiveness, an increase in metrics studied in prior years given today's economic complexity. These are the factors companies consider year after year when making site selection decisions, and that states pitch in their efforts to attract business. Next, the CNBC team analyzes each state's economic development marketing pitches to determine the appropriate weight for each category. The more that states are talking about a particular aspect of competitiveness, the more weight it carries in the rankings.

North Carolina ranked in the top five for economy, workforce, and business friendliness, and placed in the top 10 for education and access to capital this year. And of note, the state announced 17,586 jobs in 2024, along with $16.1B in investment.

According to the CNBC data journalist behind the project, Scott Cohn, "In 2025, amid recession fears, more states than ever are touting their economic strengths. That makes Economy this year's most important category." He also shared, "Other categories rising in importance this year include Cost of Doing Business and Cost of Living, as inflation fears persist. Business Friendliness carries more weight this year as foreign and domestic companies seek the quickest path to the U.S. market. And Technology and Innovation rises to reflect the growing battle for dominance in fields like AI."

North Carolina's economy remains resilient in 2025 due to a combination of strategic geographic positioning, diversified industry sectors, and sustained public and private investment. From advanced manufacturing in automotive and aerospace, to life sciences production, to financial services, the state is adding jobs across a wide range of professional fields and educational levels. The state's relatively low corporate tax rate, regulatory environment, and incentives for high-growth sectors have also continued to compound in recent years to increase the state's business friendliness. Ongoing infrastructure investments in highways, broadband, and industrial sites have also boosted resilience and attracted investment even amid national slowdowns.

With a strong reputation as a "purple" state, with broad political representation across the state's elected leadership, North Carolina is also offering a compelling landing pad for businesses facing strong economic uncertainty as federal policies shift. This diverse political representation has also led to a balanced approach to economic development, with statewide attraction efforts led by a public-private partnership, the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina (EDPNC).

"North Carolina's recognition as the best state for business for the third year in the last four is a testament to an economic development strategy that relies on the power of partnerships," said Christopher Chung, CEO of the EDPNC. "Our strength lies in our ability to connect companies with the workforce, infrastructure, sites, industry ecosystems, and innovation resources needed to support their growth, as well as a business-friendly environment that's especially valuable in times of economic uncertainty. From one of the nation's top community college systems and the nation's oldest public university to our modern transportation networks and robust utility capacity, North Carolina is built for growth."

Earlier this year, North Carolina swore in a new Governor, Governor Josh Stein, who has maintained extraordinary economic momentum in the state even in the midst of continued recovery from Hurricane Helene. The state has seen record-breaking announcements from companies across industries choosing North Carolina, with more than 23,000 new jobs and $18.9B of investment announced in the state in the first half of the year alone. Companies choosing to expand or relocate to North Carolina have included Genentech, Amazon Web Services, JetZero, and Citigroup Technology, to name a few. JetZero's selection of the state, announced in June, was the largest job announcement in the state's history.

RDU AIRPORT APPROVES PLANS FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT AROUND LAKE CRABTREE

WUNC – The board that manages Raleigh-Durham International Airport has approved plans for a new development around Lake Crabtree.

The RDU board announced Thursday it had selected Dallas-based real estate firm Pacific Elm Properties to redevelop 136 acres near Aviation Parkway and Interstate 40. The firm is looking to build a "recreation and wellness destination," that could potentially include outdoor recreation facilities, restaurants, shops, and hotels.

"Pacific Elm Properties shares our vision of building an innovative destination that serves outdoor enthusiasts and supports the increasing demand for air travel at RDU," Michael Landguth, president and CEO of the Raleigh-Durham Airport Authority, said in a press release. "This is an opportunity to enhance our region's outdoor offerings while creating a valuable revenue stream for our growing airport."

Land around the lake is home to Lake Crabtree County Park, a very popular Wake County recreation area that contains more than 16 miles of trails. Trail activists, cyclists and local residents earlier this year expressed opposition to development plans in the area.

Wake County leased the land for Lake Crabtree Park for $1 a year. But new rules from the Federal Aviation Administration stipulates that airports must get fair-market value for any land they own.

The airport and Pacific Elm will hold a series of community forums on the development on Aug. 19, Sept. 23 and Oct. 21. Trails around the lake closed when the county's lease with RDU Airport expired last month.

Business Leaders Urge Congress To Help Combat Organized Retail Theft Trend

NC Newsline– If you've ever shopped at a big-box store like Walmart or Home Depot, chances are you've noticed merchandise locked away behind glass cases or tightly bound by a security tag. A few years ago, retailers used these tools to deter occasional shoplifting. Now it's estimated that the average American family pays more than $500 annually in additional costs due to the impact of organized retail theft.

Scott McBride, the chief global asset protection officer for American Eagle Outfitters, told the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee last week that organized retail crime (ORC) amounts to much more than simple shoplifting. It represents a sophisticated criminal enterprise perpetrating massive thefts and crossing jurisdictional lines to avoid prosecution.

"While ORC is not new, its veracity, sophistication, and frequency and geographic reach have dramatically increased in the post-COVID era," McBride explained. "These groups use encrypted message apps to recruit thieves, coordinate the consolidation of stolen goods, liquidate them through illicit online tertiary and black market sites, and even exfiltrate stolen products out of the country."

McBride said American Eagle Outfitters, which operates 23 stores

across North Carolina, notes the problem has grown so large with repeatedly victimized retail stores, it has disrupted supply chains.

A recent case involving the federal agency Homeland Security Investigations as well as state and local law enforcement, successfully recovered to almost 2,000 pairs of American Eagle jeans along with other retailer merchandise totaling almost $2 million.

"The retail jeans were valued at $100,000. RFID research revealed that those stolen AEO jeans came from 35 stores in 13 states," McBride testified.

That one case underscores the urgent need for national level involvement, McBride said, to support local and state government, district attorneys, and state's attorneys general in prosecuting such cases.

Cargo theft on the rise with technology resulting in more creative schemes

Donna Lemm testified on behalf of the American Trucking Associations that the frequency and sophistication of cargo theft incidents have increased exponentially over the past several years.

A few years ago, cargo theft was barely on her company's radar.

"In 2021, we had five cargo thefts reported. In 2024, we had 876 cargo thefts reported."

Lemm explained how last year fraudsters sent work order information using a spoofed email address that appeared to be from a real customer.

"Our team fulfilled the instructions and completed three loads. We did not learn that the customer's identity had been stolen until we attempted to send them an invoice. Ultimately, IMC Logistics was on the hook for the value of the lost cargo."

In another incident, fraudsters outfitted a truck with fake placards and printed counterfeit IDs for the drivers. Lemm said IMC Logistics' vehicles were equipped with GPS units, but the criminals were savvy enough to disable them within 20 minutes of leaving the lot.

"The trucking industry is doing everything right, but we are still vulnerable because Organized Theft Groups (OTGs) know that cargo theft schemes that cross state lines and span multiple law enforcement jurisdictions are unlikely to be investigated or prosecuted in a meaningful way," said Lemm.

(See ***URGE CONGRESS*** P. 4)

NICB WARNS CENTRAL NORTH CAROLINA ABOUT POTENTIAL CONTRACTOR FRAUD AFTER TROPICAL STORM CHANTAL

OAK BROOK, Ill. -- Tropical Storm Chantal has led to flooding in Central North Carolina resulting in homes, schools and businesses being destroyed or severely damaged. In response to this catastrophic weather event, the National Insurance Crime Bureau (NICB), the nation's leading non-profit association dedicated to preventing insurance fraud and crime, is warning residents and business owners about potentially fraudulent contractors who prey on consumers in disaster areas.

NICB agents are currently coordinating with local, state and federal law enforcement agencies, as well as NICB member insurance companies, to aid in the recovery process and support residents in preventing fraud. As first responder efforts subside, NICB agents will deploy in the region to assist our partners in combating any fraud that arises as the rebuilding process begins.

"North Carolina has declared a state of emergency in the aftermath of Tropical Storm Chantal," said Bill Woolf, Mid-Atlantic regional director, NICB. "As the conditions begin to improve, it is crucial for residents to be mindful that some contractors may promise help, ask for the assignment of benefits, and after being paid, disappear, never to be heard from again. Knowing the warning signs of potentially untrustworthy contractors can protect vulnerable citizens and deter this type of crime."

Fraud schemes may come from companies or individuals promising debris and tree removal, home construction and medical services. NICB urges affected residents to do their due diligence, check in with their insurance carrier and verify the credentials of anyone they plan to hire for a service.

Common red flags include high-pressure sales tactics via door-to-door solicitation, online or by phone. Additionally, pushing residents to sign contracts on the spot – often with multiple blank spaces in them – demanding payment upfront, and even requiring an Assignment of Benefits agreement which transfers insurance rights to the contractor can be signals to double check credentials and credibility.

Business Leaders Urge Congress — CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Theft takes a toll on the workforce

Summer Stephan, president of the National District Attorneys Association, said over the past two-year period (2023 and 2024), her office in San Diego County, California filed criminal cases involving organized retail theft against 218 defendants with a loss to stores of $2.6 million.

Stephan said the aggregation of theft amounts is critical because it distinguishes between somebody who maybe shoplifting to feed an addiction versus those who are habitual organized criminals.

"We used to have criminals coming in with the calculators to go right under $950, thus leaving them at a citation misdemeanor level," explained Stephan. "That's what caused all our products to become locked up."

Stephan said she's especially sympathetic to store employees who are anxious about being victimized by the rise in organized retail theft.

"I went to an Ulta Beauty store where there's 20-year-olds aspiring to become makeup artists. The way those young clerks looked was very different than the past. They're looking over their shoulder. They're waiting for something bad to happen."

Stephan was talking about employees in California, but the same could be true for workers in North Carolina. In May, four individuals were charged with stealing tens of thousands of dollars' worth of merchandise at a Ulta Beauty Store in Holly Springs.

Authorities believe that case was part of larger east coast theft ring, with the merchandise easily resold at a lower price.

Stephan testified that an often-overlooked impact of retail crime is the loss of jobs in the retail industry.

"When organized crime becomes rampant within a community, store closures and reduced hours usually follow. Each store closure and reduction of hours directly translates to a loss of jobs or hours for all employees at that location," she explained.

In 2022, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce reported that more than 650,000 jobs were lost nationwide due to organized retail crime.

Stephan along with Lemm and McBride voiced support for the Combatting Organized Retail Crime (CORCA) Act. The legislation sponsored by Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) and Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto (D-Nev.) would empower federal agencies to take a leading role in the coordination of enforcement activities while providing law enforcement agencies with the tools necessary to tackle the increasingly complex crimes targeting interstate and international supply chains.

Sen. Ted Budd (R-N.C.) is among a dozen bipartisan co-sponsors of the bill hoping to see its passage in the 119th Congress.

One note of caution

Sen. Dick Durbin (D-Illinois) said while he is not critical of the bill's intent, he has reservations about the additional authority it would give to the Department of Homeland Security, which has been singularly focused (and in his opinion, overly focused) on deportations under the Trump administration.

"I don't doubt for a second that what we've had described to us today is part of a much bigger network. But to say we're worried about whether someone who's cutting grass on a golf course today is undocumented, and we ought to put the resources of the federal government into putting them in a detention facility and deporting them. I don't think that's as high a priority as the subject of this hearing today," said Durbin.

Senator John Cornyn (R-Texas) said Homeland Security has the capacity to do more with $170 billion in new funding recently allocated for Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

As losses mount, states forced to respond

While apparel and electronics top the list of the most stolen items, food and beverages along with infant formula make the list because they are easy to resell and hard to track.

Lemm, the logistics executive, said these cargo thieves are constantly adjusting their schemes to capitalize on consumer demand. During recent nationwide egg shortages, approximately 100,000 eggs were stolen from a semi-trailer in Pennsylvania. That loss alone was estimated at $40,000.

North Carolina lawmakers passed a law three years ago to increase penalties for organized retail theft based on the value of stolen merchandise. The legislation also included a provision to expedite the return of any recovered goods to the retailer or corporation. In the case of perishable items like eggs, the food cannot be resold.

Recent research by Capital One revealed that retailers in North Carolina lost $1.8 billion in revenue to theft in 2022. Return fraud cost North Carolina retailers another $2.4 billion.

Left unchecked, the report projects that shoplifting could cost the nation's retailers over $53 billion in 2027.

Health and Wellness

Insurers, Customers Brace For Double Whammy To Premiums

NC Health News – Most of the 24 million people in Affordable Care Act health plans face a potential one-two punch next year — double-digit premium increases along with a sharp drop in the federal subsidies that most consumers depend on to buy the coverage, also known as Obamacare.

Insurers want higher premiums to cover the usual culprits — rising medical and labor costs and usage — but are tacking on extra percentage point increases in their 2026 rate proposals to cover effects of policy changes advanced by the Trump administration and the Republican-controlled Congress. One key factor built into their filings with state insurance departments: uncertainty over whether Congress allows more generous, covid-era ACA tax subsidies to expire at the end of December.

"The out-of-pocket change for individuals will be immense, and many won't actually be able to make ends meet and pay premiums, so they will go uninsured," said JoAnn Volk, co-director of the Center on Health Insurance Reforms at Georgetown University.

Especially if the higher subsidies expire, insurance premiums will be among the first financial pains felt by health care consumers after policy priorities put forward by President Donald Trump and the GOP. Many other changes — such as additional paperwork requirements and spending cuts to Medicaid — won't occur for at least another year. But spiking ACA premiums, as the nation heads into key midterm elections, invites political pushback. Some on Capitol Hill are exploring ways to temper the subsidy reductions.

"I am hearing on both sides — more from Republicans, but from both the House and Senate" — that they are looking for levers they can pull, said Pennsylvania-based insurance broker Joshua Brooker, who follows legislative actions as part of his job and sits on several insurance advisory groups.

In initial filings, insurers nationally are seeking a median rate increase — meaning half of the proposed increases are lower and half higher — of 15%, according to an analysisfor the Peterson-KFF Health System Tracker covering 19 states and the District of Columbia. KFF is a national health information nonprofit that includes KFF Health News.

That's up sharply from the last few years. For the 2025 plan year, for example, KFF found that the median proposed increase was 7%.

Health insurers "are doing everything in their power to shield consumers from the rising costs of care and the uncertainty in the market driven by recent policy changes," wrote Chris Bond, a spokesperson for AHIP, the industry's lobbying group. The emailed response also called on lawmakers "to take action to extend the health care tax credits to prevent skyrocketing cost increases for millions of Americans in 2026."

Neither the White House nor the Department of Health and Human Services responded to requests for comment.

These are initial numbers and insurance commissioners in some states may alter requests before approval.

Still, "it's the biggest increase we've seen in over five years," said analysis co-author Cynthia Cox, a KFF vice president and director of its Program on the ACA.

Premiums will vary based on where consumers live, the type of plan they choose, and their insurer.

For example, Maryland insurers have requested increases ranging from 8.1% to 18.7% for the upcoming plan year, according to an analysis of a smaller set of insurers by Georgetown University researchers. A much larger swing is seen in New York, where one carrier is asking for less than a 1% increase, while another wants 66%. Maryland rate filings indicated the average statewide increase would shrink to 7.9% from 17.1% — if the ACA's enhanced tax credits are extended.

Most insurers are asking for 10% to 20% increases, the KFF report says, with several factors driving those increases. For instance, insurers say underlying medical costs — including the use of expensive obesity drugs — will add about 8% to premiums for next year. And most insurers are also adding 4% above what they would have charged had the enhanced tax credits been renewed.

But rising premiums are just part of the picture.

A bigger potential change for consumers' pocketbooks hinges on whether Congress decides to extend more generous tax credits first put in place during President Joe Biden's term as part of the American Rescue Plan Act in 2021, then extended through the Inflation Reduction Act in 2022.

Those laws raised the subsidy amounts people could receive based on their household income and local premium costs and removed a cap that had barred higher earners from even partial subsidy assistance. Higher earners could still qualify for some subsidy but first had to chip in 8.5% of their household income toward the premiums.

Across the board, but especially among lower-income policyholders, bigger subsidies helped fuel record enrollment in ACA plans.But they're also costly.A permanent extension could cost $335 billion over the next decade, according to the Congressional Budget Office.

Such an extension was left out of the policy law Trump signed on July 4 that he called the "One Big Beautiful Bill." Without action, the extra subsidies will expire at the end of this year, after which the tax credits will revert to less generous pre-pandemic levels.

That means two things: Most enrollees will be on the hook to pay a larger share of their premiums as assistance from federal tax credits declines. Secondly, people whose household income exceeds four times the federal poverty level — $84,600 for a couple or $128,600 for a family of four this year — won't get any subsidies at all.

If the subsidies expire, policy experts estimate, the average amount people pay for coverage could rise by an average of more than 75%. In some states, ACA premiums could double.

"There will be sticker shock," said Josh Schultz, strategic engagement manager at Softheon, a New York consulting firm that provides enrollment, billing, and other services to about 200 health insurers, many of which are bracing for enrollment losses.

And enrollment could fall sharply. The Wakely Consulting Group estimates that the combination of expiring

tax credits, the Trump law's new paperwork, and other requirements will result in ACA enrollment dropping by as much as 57%.

According to KFF, insurers added premium increases of around 4% just to cover the expiration of the enhanced tax credits, which they fear will lead to lower enrollment. That would further raise costs, insurers say, because people who are less healthy are more likely to grit their teeth and reenroll, leaving insurers with a smaller, but sicker, pool of members.

Less common in the filings submitted so far, but noticeable, are increases pegged to Trump administration tariffs, Cox said.

"What they are assuming is tariffs will drive drug costs up significantly, with some saying that can have around a 3-percentage-point increase" in premiums as a result, she said.

Consumers will learn their new premium prices only late in the fall, or when open enrollment for the ACA begins on Nov. 1 and they can start shopping around.

Congress could still act, and discussions are ongoing, said insurance broker Brooker.

Some lawmakers, he said, are consulting with the CBO about the fiscal and coverage effects of various scenarios that don't extend the subsidies as they currently exist but may offer a middle ground. One possibility involves allowing subsidies for families earning as much as five or six times the poverty level, he said.

But any such effort will draw pushback.

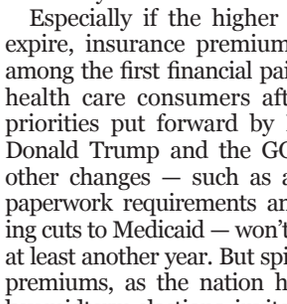
Some conservative think tanks, such as the Paragon Health Institute, say the more generous subsides led people to fudge their incomes to qualify and led to other types of fraud, such as brokers signing people up for ACA plans without authorization.

But others note that many consumers — Democratic and Republican — have come to rely on the additional assistance. Not extending it could be risky politically. In 2024, 56% of ACA enrollees lived in Republican congressional districts, and 76% were in states won by Trump.

Allowing the enhanced subsidies to expire could also reshape the market.

Brooker said some people may drop coverage. Others will shift to plans with lower premiums but higher deductibles. One provision of Trump's new tax law allows people enrolled in either "bronze" or "catastrophic"-level ACA plans, which are usually the cheapest, to qualify for health savings accounts, which allow people to set aside money, tax-free, to cover health care costs.

"Naturally, if rates do start going up the way we anticipate, there will be a migration to lower-cost options," Brooker said.



THE GOLDEN YEARS

By Judykay Jefferson

TOLERANCE: A PATH TO GROWTH OR A STEP TOWARD DECLINE

In our communities, across this country, we cherish the bonds that tie us together, yet we often find our differences taking center stage. As we navigate our daily lives, the question remains: Are we fostering tolerance, or are we allowing our differences to create division?

Tolerance is more than just a word; it's an essential ingredient for harmony and growth. As African American seniors, we have experienced a myriad of challenges that have often forced us to lean on one another. We've seen years of struggle, resilience, and ultimately, progress. But with that progress comes the responsibility to embrace diversity and understand differing perspectives.

Imagine a garden. To flourish, it requires various plants, each contributing uniquely to the ecosystem. Without a balance, some plants may thrive while others may wither. Similarly, our communities thrive when we warmly welcome differing opinions, lifestyles, and backgrounds. Engaging in meaningful dialogues, whether with family or neighbors, fosters understanding. It teaches us that our experiences, while uniquely ours, can lead to enriched collective wisdom.

On the flip side, a lack of tolerance can lead to stagnation and conflict. When we dismiss others instead of reaching out, we risk losing the richness that comes from shared experiences and stories. Remember, we once fought for the right to be seen and heard. Let's not undermine that legacy by closing ourselves off to others.

So, just how important is it to you that others agree with you? Is it important that your friends, family, even strangers think the way you think? Like what you like? Live like you live? Do you find yourself judging the "correctness" of someone's behavior or clothing choices or food choices or political or religious choices based upon how you were reared or educated? Hate to tell you but we all do it at some time or the other. Remember when we used to ask ourselves or anyone in close proximity when in the presence of some young person with body parts previously through of as better off hidden (fluffy mid-drifts, rolls of juiciness over and under the belt, side boob, etc.), "Where is her mother?" Admit it, we are now those old people. Were you aware of the "bubble dress" trend of a few months ago? Like most trends, it had a brief shelf life but it shocked and outraged sho'nuff grown folks nationwide. Then like smoke dissipating, it was gone. This is how our parents and grandparents felt when we renounced perms and straightening combs and shaped our natural, unprocessed hair into halos announcing our Black pride and cultural identity. Think about the outcry about mini dresses and hot pants. They were considered risqué for their time. We insisted we do it our way and demanded the world adjust to accommodate our right to "Do our own thing." It was a different world then and it's a different world now.

As seniors, our voices matter immensely. Let's lead by example, showing younger generations the power of love and understanding. Tolerance starts within our homes and radiates outward. Let's cultivate conversations that bridge gaps. Attend community events, join discussion groups, or simply chat with a neighbor over the fence. It is these small gestures that pave the way for a more inclusive society. Endeavor to make a new friend who can introduce you to another culture. Visit a church different from your traditional faith. Try a culturally diverse cuisine. (pizza doesn't count.)

The choice is ours: nurture tolerance and watch our community flourish or allow our differences to create distance. Let's choose to grow together, sharing a future filled with compassion and respect. Through understanding, we not only honor our history but also pave the way for generations to come.

Arts & Culture

She Was Dubbed The Most Beautiful Woman In Harlem: Remembering Black Cinema Star Francine Everett

By Jordan Meadows

Staff Writer

Francine Everett, born Franciene Williamson on April 13, 1915, in Louisburg, North Carolina, was an actress, singer, dancer, and model whose career in Black cinema during the 1930s and 1940s left a lasting mark on American film history.

Raised in the segregated South by her father, a tailor named Noah Williamson, Everett's early life in North Carolina exposed her to the deep-rooted racial inequalities that would shape her fiercely independent spirit. At just 18 years old, in 1933, she married Booker Everett, a union that would later dissolve. That same year, she began performing with a traveling nightclub act called The Four Black Cats, launching a lifetime in show business. Seeking greater opportunities, she moved to Harlem, New York, where she immersed herself in the arts and began studying with the Federal Theater Project, a progressive initiative under the Works Progress Administration (WPA) that offered jobs and creative outlets to Black artists during the Great Depression.

Everett's time with the Federal Theater positioned her at the heart of Harlem's cultural scene and introduced her to socially conscious performance. In 1936, she married renowned actor Rex Ingram and moved to Hollywood. There, she was offered a role in the Warner Bros. all-Black religious drama The Green Pastures, in which her husband starred as De Lawd. She turned it down, however, refusing to take on a stereotyped role as an angel.

This act of defiance was a bold statement at a time when Black actors were rarely given opportunities outside of servant or comedic roles. Her refusal to accept such parts effectively sidelined her from a major Hollywood career.

After divorcing Ingram in 1939, Everett returned to Harlem, where she quickly became one of the most beloved stars of "race films"—independent productions featuring all-Black casts created for Black audiences, often shown in segregated theaters across the United States.

In this space, Everett found her true artistic voice. She starred in key films such as Paradise in Harlem (1939), where she delivered a standout performance reciting Shakespeare as Desdemona; Keep Punching (1939), alongside boxing champion Henry Armstrong; Big Timers (1945), with comedy legends Moms Mabley and Stepin Fetchit; Tall, Tan and Terrific (1946); Dirty Gertie from Harlem U.S.A. (1946), directed by Spencer Williams Jr.; and Ebony Parade (1947), a musical short that featured Dorothy Dandridge, Cab Calloway, and Count Basie.

These films, though often low-budget, offered her substantial roles where she could showcase her full range of talent. Everett brought warmth, dignity, and emotional depth to every part she played, earning a reputation as one of the most skilled actresses in Black cinema.

Dubbed "the most beautiful woman in Harlem" by Billy Rowe, a columnist for The Amsterdam News, Everett was admired not just for her physical beauty but for her relatability and down-to-earth charm. While Hollywood icons like Lena Horne and Dorothy Dandridge were often forced to adjust their image to appeal to white audiences, Francine Everett remained unapologetically Black in both her style and screen presence.

She became a symbol of attainable glamour and authentic femininity for Black audiences who saw themselves reflected in her. In addition to acting, Everett was a prolific singer and dancer. She appeared in more than 50 "soundies"—short musical films produced in the 1940s—and lent her sultry, soulful voice to countless nightclub performances. She also worked as a print model, appearing in fashion and cosmetics advertisements in Black newspapers and magazines during the 1940s.

Though her filmography was not vast, the quality and cultural significance of the roles she chose made her one of the most important actresses in the history of Black cinema. Filmmaker William Greaves once remarked that Everett "would have been a superstar in Hollywood were it not for the apartheid climate in America and the movie industry at the time."

This sentiment reflects the harsh reality she faced—a world where her talent and charisma were undeniable, but the doors of Hollywood remained largely closed to her. After her final screen roles in Lost Boundaries (1949) and No Way Out (1950), the latter being Sidney Poitier's film debut, Everett quietly retired from the entertainment industry.

In the 1950s, she began working as a clerk at Harlem Hospital, a job she held until her retirement in 1985. Still, she remained involved in the arts through her participation in seminars and lectures sponsored by the International Agency for Minority Artists Affairs, where she spoke passionately about the importance and impact of race films.

She was also a member of the Negro Actors' Guild, continuing her advocacy for fair representation of Black performers. Everett rejected roles that degraded Black identity and embraced those that celebrated it.

Francine Everett died at the age of 84 on May 27, 1999, in a nursing home in The Bronx, New York. Though her name may not be as widely known as some of her contemporaries, her influence runs deep. Her legacy continues to inspire scholars, filmmakers, and performers who look to her as a trailblazer of Black cultural excellence.

Beer Pioneer: She's A South African Black Female Brewer

JOHANNESBURG (AP) — After pouring brown, gritty liquid from a huge silver tank into a flute-like container known as a refractometer, South African beer brewing master Apiwe Nxusani-Mawela gives an expert nod of approval and passes it around to her students, who yell their observations with glee.

"When you are brewing you must constantly check your mixture," Nxusani-Mawela instructs them. "We are looking for a balance between the sugar and the grains."

The 41-year-old Nxusani-Mawela is an international beer judge and taster, and is believed to be the first Black woman in South Africa to own a craft brewery, a breakthrough in a world largely dominated by men and big corporations. Her desire is to open South Africa's multibillion-dollar beer-brewing industry to more Black people and more women.

At her microbrewery in Johannesburg, she's teaching 13 young Black graduates — most of them women — the art of beer making.

The students at the Brewsters Academy have chemical engineering, biotechnology or analytical chemistry degrees and diplomas, but are eager to get themselves an extra qualification for a possible career in brewing.

Wearing hairnets and armed with barley grains and water, the scientists spend the next six hours on the day's lesson, learning how to malt, mill, mash, lauter, boil, ferment and filter to make the perfect pale ale.

"My favorite part is the mashing," said Lerato Banda, a 30-year-old chemical engineering student at the University of South Africa who has dreams of owning her own beer or beverage line. She's referring to the process of mixing crushed grains with hot water to release sugars, which will later ferment. "It's where the beer and everything starts."

Nxusani-Mawela's classes began in early June. Students will spend six months exploring beer varieties, both international and African, before another six months on work placement.

Nxusani-Mawela's Tolokazi brewery is in the Johannesburg suburb of Wynberg, wedged between the poor Black township of Alexandra on one side and the glitzy financial district of Sandton — known as Africa's richest square mile — on the other.

She hails from the rural town of Butterworth, some 1,000 kilometers (621 miles) away, and first came across the idea of a career in beer at a university open day in Johannesburg. She started brewing as an amateur in 2007. She has a microbiology degree and sees beer making as a good option for those with a science background.

"I sort of fell in love with the combination of the business side with the science, with the craftsmanship and the artistic element of brewing," she said.

For the mother of two boys, beer brewing is also ripe for a shakeup.

"I wanted to make sure that being the first Black female to own a brewery in South Africa, that I'm not the first and the last," she said. "Brewsters Academy for me is about transforming the industry ... What I want to see is that in five, 10 years from now that it should be a norm to have Black people in the industry, it should be a norm to have females in the industry."

South Africa's beer industry supports more than 200,000 jobs and contributes $5.2 billion to South Africa's gross domestic product, according to the most current Oxford Economics research in "Beer's Global Economic Footprint." While South Africa's brewing sector remains male-dominated, like most places, efforts are underway to include more women.

One young woman at the classes, 24-year-old Lehlohonolo Makhethe, noted women were historically responsible for brewing beer in some African cultures, and she sees learning the skill as reclaiming a traditional role.

"How it got male dominated, I don't know," Makhethe said. "I'd rather say we are going back to our roots as women to doing what we started."

While Nxusani-Mawela teaches all kinds of styles, she also is on a mission to keep alive traditional African beer for the next generation. Her Wild African Soul beer, a collaboration with craft beer company Soul Barrel Brewing, was the 2025 African Beer Cup champion. It's a blend of African Umqombothi beer — a creamy brew incorporating maize and sorghum malt — with a fruity, fizzy Belgian Saison beer.

"Umqombothi is our African way, and everybody should know how to make it, but we don't," she said. "I believe that the beer styles that we make need to reflect having an element of our past being brought into the future."

She's used all sorts of uniquely African flavors in her Tolokazi line, including the marula fruit and the rooibos bush that's native to South Africa and better-known for being used in a popular caffeine-free tea.

"Who could have thought of rooibos beer?" said Lethabo Seipei Kekae after trying the beer for the first time at a beer festival. "It's so smooth. Even if you are not a beer drinker, you can drink it."

Malcolm-Jamal Warner, 'Cosby Show' Actor, Dies At 54 In Costa Rica Drowning

SAN JOSE, Costa Rica (AP) — Malcolm-Jamal Warner the actor who played teenage son Theo Huxtable on "The Cosby Show," has died at age 54 in an accidental drowning in Costa Rica, authorities there said.

Costa Rica's Judicial Investigation Department said Monday that Warner drowned Sunday afternoon on a beach on Costa Rica's Caribbean coast. He was swimming at Playa Cocles in Limon province when a current pulled him deeper into the ocean.

"He was rescued by people on the beach," the department's initial report said, but first responders from Costa Rica's Red Cross found him without vital signs and he was taken to the morgue.

Warner created many TV moments etched in the memories of Generation X children and their parents, including a pilot-episode argument with Bill Cosby's Cliff Huxtable about money and an ear piercing he tries to hide from his dad. His Theo was the only son among four daughters in the household of Cliff Huxtable and Phylicia Rashad's Clair Huxtable on the NBC sitcom, and he would be one of the prime representations of American teenage boyhood on a show that was the most popular

in America for much of its run from 1984 to 1992.

He played the role for eight seasons in all 197 episodes, winning an Emmy nomination for supporting actor in a comedy in 1986. For many the lasting image of the character, and of Warner, is of him wearing a badly botched mock designer shirt sewed by his sister Denise, played by Lisa Bonet. The "Gordon Gartrell" shirt later became a memeable image. Anthony Mackie wore one on "The Tonight Show" with Jimmy Fallon and the profile picture on Warner's Instagram shows a toddler sporting one.

Like the rest of the show's cast, Warner had to contend with the sexual assault allegations against its titular star, whose conviction in a Pennsylvania court was later overturned.

Warner told The Associated Press in 2015 that the show's legacy was "tarnished."

"My biggest concern is when it comes to images of people of color on television and film," Warner said. "We've always had 'The Cosby Show' to hold up against that. And the fact that we no longer have that, that's the thing that saddens me the most because in a few generations the Huxtables will have been just a fairy tale."

Representatives for Cosby declined immediate comment.

Warner later appeared on the sitcom "Malcolm & Eddie," co-starring with comedian Eddie Griffin in the series on the defunct UPN network from 1996 to 2000. And in the 2010s he starred opposite Tracee Ellis Ross as a family-blending couple for two seasons on the BET sitcom "Read Between The Lines." He also had a role as O.J. Simpson's friend Al Cowlings on "American Crime Story" and was a series regular on Fox's "The Resident."

His film roles include the 2008 rom-com "Fool's Gold" with Matthew McConaughey and Kate Hudson. A poet and a musician, Warner was a Grammy winner, for best traditional R&B performance, and was nominated for best spoken word poetry album for "Hiding in Plain View."

Warner was married with a daughter, but chose to not publicly disclose their names. Warner's representatives declined immediate comment.

FROM CHAINS TO COMPANIONS: THE COMPLEX HISTORY OF BLACK AMERICANS AND DOGS

By Ms Jheri Worldwide

Staff Writer

Recently, I attended a Moral Mondays event with the Poor People's Campaign in downtown Raleigh. I brought my five-year-old German Shepherd, who was very friendly and adorable, if I can say so myself. An older black man remarked, "Wow! A peaceful German Shepherd, they used to chase us and bite us." I was glad he was not intimidated by my dog, but I also took a moment to reflect on what he was truly communicating. I was very taken aback by this casual yet disturbing comment about his experiences and sentiments towards dogs. I thought about photos I've seen of protesters being hosed down and chased and bitten by dogs. I began to think about the historic relationship between African-Americans and dogs.

It is widely known that the enslaved were not permitted to read. Additional restrictions included marriage; permission was needed for travel, but did you know the enslaved also could not own dogs in most parts of the United States well into the Jim Crow Era?

The Jim Crow Museum researched our founding father, George Washington, who in 1792 wrote a letter to his estate manager at Mount Vernon. In the letter, Washington addressed issues about dogs on the estate. The president was very clear about his expectations regarding African Americans and their ownership of dogs. "It is not for any good purpose Negros raise, or keep dogs; but to aid them in their night robberies; for it is astonish to see the command under which their dogs are." Washington also stated that if a "negro presumes under any pretence (sic) whatsoever, to preserve, or bring one into the family, that he shall be severely punished, and the dog hanged," cited in the University of Virginia Press.

An 1805 code in Mississippi authorized "patrols and all other persons to kill all dogs owned or kept by slaves."

Laws continued to regulate the relationship in 1806 further, a bill was passed in Maryland making it unlawful for any "negro or mulatto" within the state to keep any dog, except "he be a free negro or mulatto," and in that case, he may be permitted to keep one dog and be responsible to obtain a yearly license to do so, via the Maryland Herald & Hagerstown Advertiser, 1807.

This dialogue on dogs is important because it further demonstrates the complex nature of African American mental health in today's society. It has been clinically proven that dogs reduce stress, provide emotional support, reduce loneliness, and provide stability. So it makes sense that, as an additional human rights abuse of chattel slavery, such laws were enforced. This is in addition to the fear that slave owners constantly lived with of rebellion and destruction. It is unclear what became of these laws post-emancipation; more research is required. However, we still see dogs employed in law enforcement today. While pet ownership is by and large uncensored, there are certain breeds that are stereotyped, and ownership has been regulated by local animal control in certain situations. Dogs are still considered man's best friend, but it is interesting to know the way the relationship has been regulated, manipulated to evolve to what it is today.

Upcoming STEAM Area Events In Raleigh

By Ms Jheri Worldwide

Staff Writers

This August, Artspace in downtown Raleigh will become a site of reflection and community storytelling with a new exhibition by artists Huiyin Zhou and Laura Dudu of the Chinese Artists and Organizers (CAO) Collective. The exhibition, titled "辫 (biān) / 彼岸 (bǐ àn)," will run from August 1 to September 29, 2025, offering a layered exploration of immigration, queer kinship, and familial history.

Through a mixed-media, site-specific installation featuring photos, writing, collage, and family archives, the artists will transform the gallery into a space for dialogue about the diaspora experience. The exhibition is not just for observation; visitors are actively encouraged to contribute their memories, dreams, or stories, which will become part of an evolving, living archive within the space.

The title itself holds a deep, dual meaning central to the exhibition's themes. As the artists explain in their statement, " '辫 (biān)' means to braid. '彼岸 (bǐ àn)' literally translates as 'the shore across,' but in Buddhism it also means another world — one reached through transcendence." Though the words share the same syllables in Chinese, their different tones create distinct meanings, reflecting the liminal space of migration and the braiding together of individual histories. The project was inspired by years of collaboration and conversation between the two artists, who work together as the duo hú-tu (Laura 嘟嘟 & Huiyin Zhou), as they navigated personal and collective grief within their community.

Additionally, Dia de la Ciencia y la Cultura (Science and Culture Day) returns for its second annual celebration at the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences on Saturday, July 26, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. This free, fully bilingual (Spanish-English) event celebrates both science and Hispanic culture. The Museum is an agency of the N.C. Department of Natural and Cultural Resources.

Whether you're a science enthusiast, student, or simply curious, you'll find engaging talks, interactive exhibits, and hands-on activities led by scientists and educators. Explore stations that beautifully blend science with cultural traditions and history, offering fun educational activities for all ages. Highlights include over 40 displays covering diverse topics such as bird and butterfly migrations, the impressive nest-building skills of bluehead chub fish, prehistoric discoveries (including dinosaurs) with real fossils, the wonders of magnetism, and the snakes of North Carolina, among many others.

Don't miss the Living Conservatory, an exhibit designed to replicate a Central American tropical dry forest, teeming with living plants and animals, including butterflies, turtles, tarantulas, snakes, and even a two-toed sloth. Additionally, visitors can explore a special art gallery featuring works by Latino and Hispanic artists created specifically for this event. You can also enjoy a performance by Takiri Folclor Latino, a group that brings Latin American culture to life through dance. "Día de la Ciencia y la Cultura" is presented by the NC Museum of Natural Sciences, the Consulate General of Mexico, and the RedGlobalMX Raleigh Chapter.

Community

1,000+ Gather To Question Leaders On Housing Progress

By Jordan Meadows
Staff Writer

More than 1,000 Wake County residents gathered at Watts Chapel Missionary Baptist Church in southeast Raleigh on July 12th with one pressing question for their city leaders: Have you kept your promises on affordable housing?

The event, organized by One Wake, a nonpartisan coalition of 40 religious congregations and community groups, packed the church's sanctuary and two overflow rooms with residents, organizers, and elected officials.

Attendees waved handheld fans and watched intently as council members were publicly asked to account for pledges made last October—just weeks before the municipal election—to significantly expand the city's affordable housing efforts.

The elected officials—seven of eight Raleigh City Council members, including Mayor Janet Cowell—were asked to give simple "yes" or "no" answers to a series of questions about progress toward their campaign promises.

The questions were clear: Had they raised the city's affordable housing budget from $30 million to $70 million? Had they identified 100 acres of city-owned land for affordable housing development? And would they support a new $200 million bond referendum to fund future projects?

City leaders acknowledged they had fallen short on the first two commitments.

Raleigh's affordable housing budget has not reached $70 million, though it did receive a modest boost this year, including $11.8 million from the final portion of a previous $80 million bond and another $11.6 million from property taxes.

"This budget cycle, the affordable housing budget did increase slightly," said Council Member Jonathan Lambert-Melton. "We budgeted a little more conservatively, given what's going on in the world and in the nation. I will say, where most departments were asked to cut things and to constrict, the affordable housing budget did not do that. We are committed to expanding affordable housing."

But there was little movement on the promised 100 acres of land. The Randleigh Tract, a 415-acre property jointly owned by Raleigh and Wake County, has emerged as a focal point for advocates. One Wake has pressed officials to commit at least part of that land for affordable housing, despite acknowledged challenges like planned highway construction.

More than 1,000 people attended One Wake's assembly to advocate for affordable housing on July 12, 2025. Mary Kintz One Wake

"When there's over 400 acres of land available, some of which isn't usable for certain projects, there is space for affordable housing," said the Rev. Dr. Donna Coltrane-Battle of Southeast Raleigh Table United Methodist Church, one of One Wake's key leaders. "We're okay negotiating, what we're not okay with is the commitment to do the work, and it does not happen, and the citizens of Wake County don't get what they need."

The most dramatic moment of the assembly came when Rev. Paul Anderson, pastor of The Fountain of Raleigh Fellowship, asked the council members—one by one—if they would support a new bond to fund affordable housing. Each answered yes to the idea of a bond. But when asked if they would support a $200 million bond, only three—Lambert-Melton, Megan Patton, and Christina Jones—committed to that figure.

Mayor Cowell and others hesitated. "To commit to an actual number is just something that we are not able to do," Cowell told the audience, adding that she expects a new bond proposal before the 2026 election will be significantly more than $80 million." But she cautioned against moving too quickly, especially after a recent affordable housing bond failed in Cary.

"I think when you see some of these failures, you just want to be careful that you're not going out and setting yourself up for failure," Cowell said. "We haven't even started the conversation yet, so I just want to go through the correct process with the staff. I do feel confident that we will have an affordable housing bond. I feel confident we will size it in a way that will make a dent, and will also pass."

A massive cardboard report card sat at the front of the sanctuary, waiting to be filled in with council responses. Due to North Carolina's open meeting laws, the council had to split into two groups to avoid forming a quorum, leading to a brief intermission where attendees held hands and sang "We Shall Overcome."

"We seek to be in a public relationship with elected officials. For most of them–maybe not for all of them–we are meeting with them, we're constantly having conversations,
Battle said.

According to the North Carolina Housing Coalition, over 120,000 households in the county are cost-burdened, meaning they spend more than 30% of their income on housing. Nearly half of rental households struggle to afford their homes, and in 2023 alone, the county saw 779 foreclosures and nearly 30,000 evictions.

One Wake's style of direct, public accountability—asking leaders "yes" or "no"—is modeled on decades of organizing tradition through the Industrial Areas Foundation, the nation's largest faith-based organizing network. Leaders emphasized that clarity in public commitments is crucial.

"We have a $275 million bond for Parks and Rec. But if people can't afford to live here, particularly people who have been long-time residents of Raleigh and Wake County, are having to go further and further out. We're really wanting our elected officials to push, and to be in it with us, for higher bonds, particularly since building costs have nearly doubled," Battle emphasized.

The resistance to large-scale affordable housing efforts, she argued, often stems from bias and limited imagination.

"I would say one misconception is that we can't do it. Because we can. Or that we can't do it at scale: no, we have the capacity to do it at scale," Battle said. "I think another misconception is that when people hear affordable housing, they hear the word poverty. What they don't hear is: humans deserve homes and that all humans want to live in a safe, beautiful neighborhood where they can thrive."

For Coltrane-Battle, the mission is personal and spiritual. It's centered around an optimistic and dutiful perspective called "People Power".

"'People power' is an age-long social reality. We have the ability to impact one another, and when we're working in concert with each other we can go a lot further than if we're working alone," Battle said. "One Wake, and all of its sister institutions here in North Carolina have a number of wins. We also just recently got a win in Cary, where the Cary City Council is now working with one of our institutions to build affordable housing."

New Leadership for NCCU Raleigh-Wake Alumni Chapter Announced

By Ms Jheri Worldwide
Staff Writer

The North Carolina Central University Alumni Association, Inc. (NCCUAA), Raleigh-Wake Chapter is excited to introduce its new slate of officers and committee chairs for the upcoming 2025-2027 term. Under the leadership of newly elected President Dr. Delores Fogg, the association is ready to continue its legacy of fostering strong connections among alumni, supporting the university's mission, and promoting valuable programming for members, and the Wake County community. The newly elected and appointed executive board brings with it a blend of experience, passion, and dedication to the chapter's goals.

The full slate of officers includes: President Delores Fogg, Vice President Vivian Roberts, Secretary Kelli Davis, Treasurer Christopher Smith, Financial Secretary Margie Gibson, Parliamentarian Betty Yancey, Chapter Reporter Brenda Lewis, Chaplain Michael Oakley, Amenities Chair Marsha Rogers.

In addition, the following alumni leaders have been appointed as committee chairs: Audit Committee Chair Richard Gilbert, Budget & Finance Chair Christopher Smith, Bylaws & Constitution Chair Betty Yancey, Fundraising Chair Laverne Lane, Membership Chair Cassandra Lee, Nominating Chair Mona Parks, Programs Chair Vivian Roberts, Scholarship Chair Trina McCarter, Social Chair Pamela Johnson, Technology Chair Renee Hart.

This dynamic team is committed to carrying forward the association's mission of connecting alumni with each other and the university, while continuing to support the current and future students of NCCU. With a focus on strengthening community bonds and enhancing alumni engagement, the new leadership is excited to uphold the excellence of past programming and introduce new initiatives that will enrich the alumni experience. President Fogg is enthusiastic and honored to lead this remarkable group of alumni who are passionate about our alma mater and peers. She looks forward to building on the fantastic work put in place by Dr. Anthony Bonapart's out-going administration (recently named "Chapter of the Year" 2024-2025 by the NCCU national alumni association)—ensuring that the chapter stay connected, continue supporting scholarships, and remain engaged in the university's initiatives. The officers were officially sworn in on June 26 and began their 2-year term on July 1. Changes in some committee chairs reflect the evolving needs of the chapter, while continuing to honor the outstanding programming that has earned us Chapter of the Year recognition in past years. This new leadership team is excited to serve the alumni community and to create opportunities that will bring lasting value to all who are part of the Raleigh-Wake Chapter. A Send-Off event for Wake and Johnston County students is set for Saturday, July 26. For more info, incoming freshmen and alumni should visit the chapter's website. The chapter meets in-person or via Zoom on the 4th Thursday of every month. For more information about when we meet or how to join the chapter, please visit http://nccuraleighwake.org

SUNFLOWERS IN FULL BLOOM AT DIX PARK: A MID-SUMMER MUST-SEE

Dix Park is in full bloom, and it's a breathtaking sight to behold. Captured on July 15th, the latest images from the park eveal rows of radiant sunflowers basking in the summer sun, their golden petals stretching wide under clear Carolina skies. The fields are at their peak, offering visitors a stunning display of nature's beauty that's expected to last through the end of next week.

Each summer, the sunflower fields at Dix Park draw thousands of visitors, and 2025 is proving to be no exception. Whether you're a photographer, a family seeking a peaceful outing, or simply a lover of seasonal beauty, the blooms provide the perfect backdrop for memorable moments.

For those planning a visit, now is the time. Bring a camera, wear sun protection, and prepare to be surrounded by fields of sunshine. The sunflower bloom is brief but brilliant—and it's not to be missed.

For directions, parking info, and park updates, visit dixpark.org.

Photo By: Steve Worthy

Fayetteville Mayor Reverses Course, Colvin Enters Race For Fifth Term

By Jordan Meadows
Staff Writer

The 2025 Fayetteville mayoral race has taken an unexpected turn with Mayor Mitch Colvin reversing his decision to step away from public office and officially entering the race for a fifth term just hours before the filing deadline on July 18.

Colvin, Fayetteville's longest-serving Black mayor, first took office in 2017 and had announced in June that he would not seek reelection. But citing growing concerns over the city's leadership transition, Colvin filed to run just before the deadline, stating his decision stemmed from a desire to ensure continuity and stability amid widespread changes across city and county institutions.

"I had all intentions to not file for reelection," Colvin said. "But at the end of the filing period, with three open council seats and major changes in leadership across our institutions, I felt compelled to continue serving."

Recent leadership transitions, including the swearing-in of a new police chief, the appointment of a new superintendent for Cumberland County Schools, and the retirement of longtime Sheriff Ennis Wright, have sparked concerns about the city's direction.

Colvin emphasized that his decision wasn't self-serving.

"There's infrastructure work, utility coordination, collaborations with the county on emergency communications, and education initiatives. This is about finishing the work we've started," he said.

A third-term council member first elected in 2019, Councilwoman Courtney Banks-McLaughlin, also made a last-minute pivot from seeking reelection in her District 8 seat to entering the mayoral race.

"I've done so much to improve our community," she said. "And I would love for your support to be the next Fayetteville mayor. Over the next couple of weeks, I'll be out in the community to hear your concerns and visions for growth."

Other prominent candidates include:

Mario "Be" Benavente, a second-term council member from District 3; Kathy Keefe Jensen, a five-term council member and current mayor pro tem from District 1; Freddie de la Cruz, a perennial candidate who has previously run for both mayor and state office.

Additional candidates: Josh Ashford, Clifton Johnson, Nahlee Iris Smith, Tisha S. Waddell, and Paul A. Williams.

With ten candidates competing and a primary set for October 7, Fayetteville's mayoral race is expected to focus on several pressing issues that will shape the city's future.

Public safety and crime prevention are at the forefront, particularly as the city welcomes a new police chief and seeks to strengthen community-police relations. Candidates are expected to present plans for improving neighborhood safety and supporting law enforcement leadership.

Affordable housing is another key concern, with rising costs and homelessness affecting residents across the city. Economic opportunity also features prominently in the race, as candidates call for more job creation, support for small businesses, and access to high-wage employment—issues highlighted by Mario Benavente's call to build "a city for all of us."

Infrastructure and public services are also central, with ongoing projects such as the Mable C. Smith Community Center and a new fire station, as well as negotiations with Cumberland County over 911 communications, reflecting broader goals for regional cooperation and sustainable growth.

Fayetteville's mayoral contest is officially nonpartisan, but the diversity of candidates—from seasoned council veterans to political newcomers—means voters will be weighing a wide range of leadership styles and visions for the future.

On this past Saturday 19July2025, The Wendell Top Ladies & Top Teens in partnership with The Riley Hill Baptist Church & The American Red Cross sponsored a Sickle Cell Blood Drive. Because 1 pint of blood can benefit 3 lives, 93 lives could benefit. The Drive exceeded the goal set that can be used by Sickle Cell patients during the pain crisis.

Class-Based Affirmative Action—*CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1*

there were some parents who were unhappy, but nothing like the groundswell that would justify the amount of organizing around it. But a recent letter from America First Legal Foundation, a conservative advocacy group started in 2021 by Trump adviser Stephen Miller, finally gave me an answer.

The foundation opposes affirmative action, running ads accusing the Biden administration of "anti-white bigotry" and representing white farmers opposing a loan program for minorities. The July 17 letter requests that the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division investigate the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine for anti-white discrimination.

Among the expected complaints about programs to encourage diversity, there's one targeting a tuition policy started in 2024 thanks to a $1 billion donation from a charity started by billionaire Mike Bloomberg. Under the program, students coming from families earning less than $300,000 a year pay no tuition, and those whose families make less than $175,000 get help with room and board too. Nearly two-thirds of enrolled students meet those standards.

As far as class-based affirmative action goes, this is quite generous; it covers both lower-income and middle-class families. But the group objects because the dean once said it would enhance "socioeconomic diversity."

It's worth reading America First Legal's argument in full:

It is well recognized that race and ethnicity are inseparable from socioeconomic status. They are 'intimately intertwined' and, in terms of stratification, often determine a person's socioeconomic status. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, wealth and income gaps vary significantly between racial groups, with Black and Hispanic households possessing a fraction of the wealth held by White and Asian households. By leveraging these disparities, Johns Hopkins masks racial preferences behind income thresholds.

In short, the group claims, Johns Hopkins is trying to help poor and middle-class students of all races, but since that would help Black and Hispanic students more, it's racist.

This logic is toxic. It would mean the government not only doesn't have an obligation to fight poverty, but is actually barred from even trying by civil rights laws. The only race-neutral option, it appears, would be helping maintain the status quo — at all costs.

It's tempting to think of Miller's group as an outlier, but it may be more of an advance guard, like the conservatives I knew who fought so hard against Wake County's schools policy. Because if you agree with this, by extension you would also want to raise taxes on the poor and reduce them on the rich, make it harder for lower-income and middle-class students to go to college and add barriers to immigration from countries in Central and South America while creating new ways for rich Europeans to move to the U.S. And in fact, the Trump administration has done all those things.

Today, America First Legal's letter is an egregious request from a far-right advocacy group. Tomorrow, it may be government policy.

Church

Lincoln Park Holiness Church Youth Community Choir 2nd Anniversary

The Youth Community Choir of Lincoln Park Holiness Church celebrated its 2nd Anniversary on July 13, 2025. The service was held at 11:00 a.m. at the church. Elder Demetrius Hunter, Youth Pastor, presided over the service. The following musical selections were done: "Hang On" Jade Murphy, Soloist; "I'm Expecting Great Things" Tahlia Ratcliff, Soloist; "Bless Me" Shawn Scarborough, Soloist; and "How Excellent." Shawn Scarborough is choir director. The sermon, "The Beauty of Praise: A Community of Praise," was delivered by Mother Belinda McKoy, based on the Scriptures: Nehemiah 12:31-40, Matthew 18:20, Leviticus 26:8, and Deuteronomy 32:30. The service concluded with the Baby Dedication of Peyton Cyrus Holland-Lawton. Parents are Chandler Holland and Preston Lawton.

Practical Biblical Principles

IT DIDN'T TAKE WICKEDNESS LONG - PART TWO

Read: Genesis 6:11-18

By: John L. Caldwell, Pastor

New Jerusalem Baptist Cathedral

Science fiction or real! Are we having to deal with a superman today? Which do you believe in today? The Super man of the Bible or the superman of the comic books and movies? Which is the real superman? Is there a real superman?

Did the world ever make the superman of the bible or comic books mad? Has the world today caused the superman of the bible to increase his wrath? If so, what is the reason? Church you can stay with science fiction, if you wish, or you can get taken in the reality of what one will have to face off with in the near future.

As we focus upon reality today, is there some power or authority we are supposed to be accountable to?

The bible text tells us a little more than 2500 years or more some of God's created creatures decided to believe in themselves and discovered how to make themselves gods, so as not to be accountable to anyone. Today the historical bible text calls such creatures "fallen angels." In short, one third of God's heavenly creation in that day rebelled against the "God of Creation." This incident didn't go over well with God at all. The first rebellion was with Adam and Eve, the second was when Cain slew Abel. The third rebellion was the rebellion of Nimrod. As one sees, it didn't take long for sin to grow and take over the world. The fallen angels like many people today discovered that the more they sin the more they become their own little gods. The gift of free-will includes the "ego" and the desire to enjoy sin. It is the undisciplined ego which drives one to take pleasure in sin. The more one sins the more one becomes their own little god.

No one knows precisely when the war in heaven took place, and the rebellious angels were thrown out of God's heaven. One thing we do know the rebellious angels were allowed to live and coexist among God's human creation for a little more than 1500 years.

It was some 120 years after the 1500 years that God decided to make a correction in His creation. O, the patience of God. We too, like God can get angry, very angry. There are some misgivings about God ever getting angry. The superman of comic books and movies has never been recorded as being angry. He was always seen as that mild-mannered guy. Well to make this argument short, superman of comic books and movies never had a son. Here we are dealing with a whole different set of circumstances.

The Son of God (Jesus) did become angry at times. However, He was mild-mannered 99% of the time while he was on the earth executing His Father's plan of salvation for man (John 3:16).

God saw the growth of sin take over His grand creation. The growth of sin was taking God's creation in a direction He didn't intend for it to go (Gen 6: God also concluded that if He didn't do something sin unchecked would soon be an afront to His holiness, His peace, and destroy His blessed creation (Genesis 6:1-2).

This illicit marriage of spirit beings and human beings was an affront to God and His divine order of reproduction (Genesis 1:24). My Spirit shall not strive with man forever (Genesis 6:3-4).

And God became sorrowful that He had ever created man (Gen 6:6-8). Question: Do you think this was science fiction or real?

After more than 1500 years since Adam, God only saw eight people who would be qualified to be saved from His wrath. This was Noah and his family.

God commanded Noah to build an "ark." The ark is not a ship, but a floating platform designed to float only and keep people from drowning. For more than 100 years Noah constructed this ark and at the same time on a daily basis preached to the people of that day, "It is going to rain." Noah had never seen rain and didn't know what it was. For Noah this was not science fiction. Noah believed in God and prepared the ark as God had specified (45 feet high, 75 feet wide, and 450 feet long. How Noah was able to get two of each kind of animals and birds (male and female) of the earth into the ark has always been in question. We can believe Noah had some superman help in loading up all the birds and animals in the ark.

God made a covenant with Noah to save them as the new rain began to fall (Genesis 7:1). Rain came from above and from below the surface of the earth (Genesis 7:11-12). It rained forty days and forty nights without stopping (Genesis 7: 17-19). The highest mountain on the earth was covered over with 22 feet of water. One could say this was a "slam dunk" flood which guaranteed that everything which was living on earth at that time in now gone (Genesis 7:19-20). True or false?

Is this going to happen again, or will it be fire next time, true or false?

Black Voices Are — CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

speech recognition tools, which can often misinterpret AAE. In some cases, a dataset like this may make employees less likely to codeswitch because they won't have to worry as much about whether their voice and speech patterns will be understood by workplace AI tools, making these tools more inclusive and accessible. Industries like healthcare, customer service and the legal sector, which may use speech-to-text tools for things like clinical documentation, customer sentiment analysis, and to transcribe legal documents could particularly benefit from Project Elevate Black Voices.

The criticism that can be seen online is not completely unwarranted. There are very real tensions around who will have access to the dataset in the future and some are worried that the data could be extracted and exploited to the detriment of the community that it was designed to benefit. The value of this type of rich data outside of improved speech recognition tools is a preservation and archive of Black American culture during a time when Black history is being actively erased. In the wrong hands though, this type of data could be used in nefarious ways, furthering the use of Black AI influencers and digital Blackface, training AI products without the compensation or credit (and in some cases the knowledge) of those whose data was used to train these products, and expanding the use of surveillance technology that disproportionately harms and targets Black people.

According to Howard's media release about the partnership, "The Howard African American English Dataset 1.0 will initially be made available exclusively to researchers and institutions within historically Black colleges and universities to ensure that the data is employed in ways that reflect the interests and needs of marginalized communities, specifically African American communities whose linguistic practices have often been excluded or misrepresented in computational systems." It's understandable to question how this data could be used to further the harm that Black communities already face. While the initial intentions in collecting this data may be benevolent, it's imperative to understand how easy it is for data to be wielded for corrupt and capitalistic purposes.

It is a great move that the data will be available to HBCU institutions, but a word of caution: Black-led, Black-founded and Black-owned organizations and institutions are not immune to harm and extraction—one could argue that within these systems, harm is more insidious and is sometimes more challenging to spot and combat. Organizations and institutions that are primarily Black or led by Black people can still engage in practices that are oppressive and harmful. Audre Lorde taught us that, "the true focus of revolutionary change is never merely the oppressive situations we seek to escape, but that piece of the oppressor which is planted deep within us." We must be careful that when we are trying to reclaim equity and repair broken tools that we do not recreate newer versions of the same harmful systems.

Photo's by Mathias Bishop

Wakaboomee, Dr. Marico Dove, Rep. Kanika Brown & Abundant Love Christian Daycare Inspire Students Through STEAM & Healthcare

Durham, NC – July 21, 2025 — The Wakaboomee Program, in partnership with Abundant Love Christian Daycare, Representative Kanika Brown, and pharmacist Dr. Marico Dove, delivered a powerful, hands-on career exploration experience for students ranging from Pre-K to high school.

The day kicked off with a book reading by Dr. Dove at Abundant Love Christian Daycare. While Pre-K students enjoyed story time, Wakaboomee teens observed how early education environments can spark curiosity and inspire future healthcare careers. Dr. Dove, a pharmacist with degrees from Campbell University and NCCU, shared her journey and passion for service, encouraging students to dream big.

Representative Kanika Brown generously sponsored white lab coats and gift bags, helping students visualize themselves in professional roles. Wearing the white coat became a meaningful act of vision-building—turning imagination into possibility.

"This is what Wakaboomee is all about," said Founder Narkie Nartey. "When education, community, and opportunity come together, we plant seeds for a brighter future."

Abundant Love Christian Daycare, led by Yolandra Shronne Powell, continues to be a valued Wakaboomee partner. With over 30 years in early childhood education, Powell's center provides a strong, faith-based foundation for growth and empowerment.

Wakaboomee thanks all partners, volunteers, and families who made this event possible. Together, we showed what's possible when we invest in our youth and believe in their potential.

Want to Get Involved?

This event was limited to 18 students due to funding—but interest is growing. Schools, daycares, sponsors, and families are invited to connect at www.wakaboomers.com. Let's build the future together.

Obituaries

NC Civil Rights Icon James Ferguson Dies at 82

By Jordan Meadows

Staff Writer

James "Fergie" Ferguson, a civil rights attorney and native of Asheville, North Carolina, passed away on July 21, 2025, at the age of 82.

Born in 1942 in the Jim Crow South, Ferguson became a figure in the struggle for educational equity, civil rights, and legal reform in the United States and abroad.

Ferguson began his activism early, leading the Asheville Student Committee on Racial Equality (ASCORE) while still a student at Stephens-Lee High School. After earning a law degree from Columbia University in 1967, he co-founded North Carolina's first interracial law firm with Julius Chambers, James Lanning, and Adam Stein.

His most influential work came in the landmark Supreme Court case

Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education (1971), which mandated the use of busing to desegregate schools. The ruling transformed Charlotte into a national model for integration and significantly expanded educational opportunities for African American students.

Ferguson also helped secure justice for the Wilmington 10, co-founded South Africa's first Trial Advocacy Program during apartheid, and taught law at Harvard and North Carolina Central University. In his later years, he returned to Asheville to represent victims of police brutality, continuing his lifelong commitment to civil rights.

Honored with numerous accolades, including North Carolina's highest civilian honor—the Order of the Long Leaf Pine—Ferguson is remembered not only for his legal brilliance but for his efforts towards justice and change. His legacy lives on in the classrooms, courtrooms, and communities he helped transform.

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

Nine Ways To Suppress African American Votes—the Republican Playbook

By Stephen Legomsky

Give Republican state legislators their due. They work hard to make it as burdensome as possible for African Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans, and college students to vote in both state and federal elections.

To accomplish this, they first have to pretend that voter fraud is widespread. That is hard enough, since the data conclusively show voter fraud to be exceedingly rare. Then, they must claim that their actions are the only way to restore "election integrity." That's even harder, since selectively disenfranchising huge swaths of the eligible voting population would seem to undermine, not promote, election integrity. Finally, they need to pretend that only illegal voters are affected. For that claim, the tens of thousands of disenfranchised U.S. citizens in states like Kansas and Georgia stand awkwardly in the way.

Now that poll taxes and literacy tests are illegal, suppressing votes is harder still. But Republican legislators have been equal to the task.

Here are their nine favorite tricks:

1. Make voter registration harder.

Several Republican-controlled states have taken aim at voter registration drives, which account for disproportionately high percentages of Black and Hispanic registrations. A federal appellate court had to strike down a North Carolina law that intentionally targeted would-be Black registrants with "surgical precision."

2. Purge registered voters.

Georgia Secretary of State Brian Kemp, running (successfully) for governor in 2017, purged 107,000 eligible voters from the rolls. In Ohio, failing to return a postcard from the state can cost you the right to vote.

3. Require photo IDs.

Although voter impersonation is exceptionally rare (more Americans are struck by lightning), many states require voters to present photo IDs. This requirement disproportionately affects racial minorities. At least four solid red states accept gun licenses but not university IDs. Not coincidentally, college students vote overwhelmingly for Democrats while Republicans are more than twice as likely as Democrats to own guns.

4. Require documents that prove U.S. citizenship.

To vote in federal elections, individuals already must swear under penalty of perjury that they are U.S. citizens. Non-U.S. citizen voting, therefore, is virtually unheard of. Who would risk criminal prosecution, imprisonment, and deportation for the miniscule chance that their one vote would swing an election? Nonetheless, in 2022, Republican bills requiring voters to document their U.S. citizenship were pending in at least 10 state legislatures. The U.S. House has now passed a bill that would require such documentation nationwide.

But how do you prove you are a U.S. citizen? More than 21 million Americans—predominantly the poor, African Americans, and young people—lack birth certificates and passports. For married women who have changed their surnames, even birth certificates would be insufficient. Moreover, since most of us don't pack birth certificates or passports when we go to shopping malls, political demonstrations, parks, outdoor concerts, places of worship, or the like, requiring documentary proof of U.S. citizenship would make voter registration drives impossible.

5. Slash early voting.

Democrats vote early in much greater numbers than Republicans. So Republican legislatures have shortened early voting periods in states all across the country; North Carolina and Wisconsin are among the more extreme examples. In a decades-old tradition called Souls to the Polls, Black churchgoers have resisted voter suppression by traveling together to the polls after Sunday services. Republican legislatures in North Carolina, Wisconsin, and Georgia have responded by drastically curtailing Sunday voting.

6. Limit ballot drop boxes.

Ballot drop boxes avoid long postal delays. They are hard as a rock, safely located, and secure against fraud. Their open hours especially ease the burden on working class voters, particularly those who work nights or irregular shifts. They are used disproportionately by Black voters. But a rash of Republican-led states have banned them entirely or severely shrunk their numbers. In 2020, Texas' Harris County—which was 64 percent Black or Hispanic—had one drop box for its 4.7 million people.

7. Restrict third-party delivery of absentee ballots.

Third parties frequently deliver other people's ballots. There is no evidence of widespread abuse, and they are a boon to the elderly and the disabled. Native Americans on tribal reservations sometimes live hours from the polls and lack mail service. Black churches often gather their congregants' ballots and deliver them en masse. Republican-controlled states have responded by imposing particularly severe restrictions.

8. Disenfranchise citizens with criminal convictions.

The states vary widely as to which crimes disqualify citizens from voting and when voting rights may be restored. As of 2024, some 4,000,000 U.S. citizens were disenfranchised because of criminal convictions, roughly half of them even after fully serving their criminal sentences. A disproportionate number have been African American; five states, all Republican-controlled, have disenfranchised more than 10 percent of their African American adults because of criminal convictions.

9. Selectively close polling stations.

Since 2013, when the Supreme Court effectively gutted the heart of the Voting Rights Act, states with hallowed histories of racial discrimination in voting have ravenously reduced the number and hours of their polling stations—disproportionately in counties with large African American populations. Among the results are long lines and major transportation issues for the affected voters. In 2018, the average wait time in precincts where 90 percent of the populations were white was only 5.1 minutes; in contrast, in precincts where over 90 percent of the voters were nonwhite, the average wait time was 32.4 minutes. In some precincts, wait times exceeded five hours. In 2016, these problems induced an estimated 560,000 eligible voters to sit out the election. Republican strategists have also called for closing polling stations on college campuses, especially in swing states with large in-state student populations.

This is not democracy.

Stephen Legomsky is the John S. Lehmann university professor emeritus at the Washington University School of Law.

A Different Voice

By Dorothy Shaw Thompson

FREE TO SPEAK

One of the gifts of the American environment has been freedom, or at least the potential for it. Of course, coming from a 78 soon to be 79 year old, if God wills, African American descendant of slaves, this claim may appear to be paradoxical, and justifiably so. I continue to believe that God intends all humans who come to planet Earth to be free to pursue His purpose for us here. I believe we all have a purpose. To be clear, God has a plan for each of us, and that plan is hidden within us, just as the oak tree is hidden within the acorn.

I believe that Jesus the Christ and His mission on Earth support my theory. Jesus is our example. Just as He was formed in His mother's womb, so were we. I know we have biological truth that I accept, but that changes nothing for me. I believe that biology also supports my beliefs. The chances of us being anybody else but ourselves are too specific to be random. That, to me, disproves other theories. If that is the beginning of our being, then we were also specifically selected. Our fingerprints prove it. Our DNA confirms it. For me, there is no other explanation that makes sense. This belief is not new. It is ancient. Here's to all who understand.

I read the book African Religions and Philosophy, and I was pleased to find my thoughts affirmed there. I have spoken to small children who have told me things like, "I'm not supposed to let them change me," or "He's not the boss of me," or even "God told me." One little girl claimed she went to high school with me and knew my name back then. All of these experiences reinforce my belief. Just as I'm sure your experiences reinforce yours, I believe that America is and was a gift to the world. But as I wrote last week, "We Messed Up." God did not send people here to take the land from those who were already here. They certainly had no right to kidnap and enslave His creations. While God allows us to learn through our actions, we too often learn the fallacies of our choices only through their consequences. In the United States, we stir up disputes, we sow division, and sadly, that is often the only way we seem to learn.

Last week, it was announced that CBS is canceling Stephen Colbert, and perhaps Jimmy Kimmel and John Stewerts', The Daily Show, on Comedy Central. Some believe this is happening because Donald Trump is disturbed by their comedic portrayals of him, as well as their willingness to contradict, criticize, and call attention to his fallacies and decisions. Surely, the CEOs and boards of these television stations do not all agree with him. But the love of money, the root of all evil, creates fear. They fear losing something if they defy Trump. If that fear leads them to silence others, then they do not understand that some of us are meant to be here right now. Some of us were chosen to be here, and we are free thinkers. Shutting down those shows will not change anything. We see, we know, and we will speak the truth, because we are free. It is an insult to think that stopping others from speaking can influence us to think differently. That is not true. They need to know that the God in us has opened our ears and our eyes. No matter what they say or do, our minds respond. And we shall be free, for we are free indeed.

Our leaders will have to answer for their allegiance to this administration. They will go down in history as those who stood by, watched, voted, and allowed our legal freedoms to be taken away. They will open their mouths to speak, and their mouths will not cooperate. That is not from me. That is biblical. Sadly, their chance to stand firm and protect the citizens from tyranny may have already passed.

As for the rest of us, we remain free to speak. Some believe freedom of speech was granted by the Constitution, but the Constitution only reflects the truth that comes from God. We can continue to witness the storms, the flooding, feel the tremors and rumblings of volcanoes, and chalk it up to coincidence. But some of us recognize the warning signs. We have seen them.

We have read the prophecies and know that despite man's desire to control others, God is in control. And once again, we are free to speak.

Guest Columnist

Armstrong Williams

AN EPIDEMIC OF MAL-PARENTING

The nation is afflicted with an epidemic of mal-parenting. How do we know? The persistence of shocking levels of juvenile delinquency and crime. The posterchild case is Ethan Crumbley, guilty of murdering four students at Oxford High School in southeastern Michigan in 2021 and sentenced to life imprisonment without the possibility of parole.

You do not need to be a criminologist to understand the nexus between parental mal-parenting and crime. It is as obvious as the force of gravity. If there is a father in the household to impart discipline and provide a role model of righteous behavior, and a mother to provide tender loving care in times of child adversity, the probability of juvenile waywardness approaches zero. The greatest influence on children is parents. Second is not even within shouting distance.

Parents should spend hours daily with their children reading and discussing books that impart moral lessons like parables. Here is a partial list: Aesop's fables, "Grimms' Fairy Tales," Edith Hamilton's "Mythology," Charles and Mary Lamb's "Tales from Shakespeare," Louisa May Alcott's "Little Men" and "Little Women," Harriet Beecher Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin," Charles Dickens' "Oliver Twist," Mark Twain's "Adventures of Huckleberry Finn" and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories and novels. If you don't want to make the effort and sacrifice, then don't be a parent. It is a status freely chosen.

Parents should also regularly take their children to museums. For starters, the National Museum of African American History and Culture; the National Museum of the American Indian; the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum; the Smithsonian National Museum of American History; and the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History. Parents should take their children on outings to Lexington Battle Green, Mount Vernon, Monticello, Montpelier, Yorktown, the Gettysburg Battlefield, Ford's Theatre, the Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument, the Alamo, Tuskegee University and the Wounded Knee Battlefield. They should take them to performances of Dickens' "A Christmas Carol," Tchaikovsky's "Nutcracker Suite" and Prokofiev's "Peter and the Wolf."

If parents do all these things, children will be so excited by learning and inspired to righteousness that crime or delinquency will never enter their minds. And the out-of-pocket costs for parents are de minimis.

Every bride and groom should be required to master these lessons before marriage. They should be preached in the pulpit and taught in the home. Federal, state and local governments should issue Parents of the Year awards superior to the kudos showered on beauty queens or football heroes. Hollywood should glamorize irreproachable parents, making them de rigueur. It's well worth the investment. As Frederick Douglass admonished, "It's easier to build strong children than to repair broken men."

Mountains of criminological literature tell us the root causes of crime are poverty, discrimination, failing schools, lack of jobs, or the vestiges of centuries-old oppression. But crime trended down during the Great Depression and spiraled during the boom years of the 1960s. It all comes back to the family.

It's easy to blame kids rather than parents. Kids have no votes. Parents do. Kids have no financial resources. Parents do. Kids are inaudible. The voices of parents are heard. It requires maturity and intellectual honesty to acknowledge we have a parent problem, not a delinquency problem.

I understand that excellent parenting is arduous, demanding and time-consuming. It requires forgoing a tempting menu of hormonal gratifications. It is not for everyone. In his first public address as vice president, JD Vance declared, "I want more babies in the United States of America." The declaration is unobjectionable as far as it goes. But more babies without more enlightened, selfless parents are a problem. The chief victims of mal-parenting are the children whose lives are stunted and ruined.

Parents everywhere, the ball is in your court.

Classifieds

CUMBERLAND COUNTY

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
CUMBERLAND COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File Number 25E001051-250

THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 7th day of July 2025, as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of LOUIS ENRIQUE RIVERA, Deceased, of Cumberland 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 24th day of October, 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 24th day of July 2025.
Miriam Rivera, Administrator
5305 Trampas Court
Fayetteville, NC 28303
7/24, 7/31, 8/7, and 8/14/2025

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 25E000377-310

THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 3rd day of April 2025, as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of ANNIS F. WILLIAMSON, 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 24th day of October, 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 24th day of July 2025.
Lisa Williamson, Administrator
407 Weatherly Drive
Durham, NC 27703
7/24, 7/31, 8/7, and 8/14/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File Number 25E000932-310

THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 17th day of July 2025, as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of KENNETH DAVIS, 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 24th day of October, 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 24th day of July 2025.
Ronald Davis, Administrator
428 Walton St.
Durham, NC 27703
7/24, 7/31, 8/7, and 8/14/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File Number 25E000916-310

THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 14th day of July 2025, as EXECUTOR of the Estate of ELSA AMANDA SCHERER, 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 24th day of October, 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 24th day of July 2025.
Gabriela J. Matthews, Executor
4 Sawmill Lane
Durham, NC 27712
7/24, 7/31, 8/7, and 8/14/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File Number 25E000934-310

THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 17th day of July 2025, as EXECUTOR of the Estate of MARCENE BIVINS BYRD A/K/A LOLA MARCENE BYRD A/K/A LOLA BIVINS BYRD, 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 24th day of October, 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 24th day of July 2025.
John E. Byrd, Jr., Executor
1200 Byrds Views Lane
Hillsborough, NC 27278
7/24, 7/31, 8/7, and 8/14/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File Number 25E000867-310

THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 30th day of June 2025, as EXECUTOR of the Estate of EDITH MOORE OTTAWAY, 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 24th day of October, 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 24th day of July 2025.
Barry M. Ottaway, Executor
3021 Redwood Rd.
Durham, NC 27704
7/24, 7/31, 8/7, and 8/14/2025
NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION
NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF DURHAM
In the General Court of Justice District Court Division
File No: 24CVD000121-310
[CHILD CUSTODY PROCEEDING]
OFELIA LANDIN,
Plaintiff
v.
ESEQUIEL TREVINO,
Defendant.

To Esequiel Trevino, the above-named defendant:

TAKE NOTICE that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above-entitled action. The nature of the relief being sought is as follows: that permanent sole legal and physical custody of the minor child Daniela Landin, born September 18, 2012 be granted to Ofelia Landin.

You are required to make defense to such pleading not later than August 26, 2025, said date being forty (40) days from the first publication of this notice, and upon your failure to do so the party seeking service against you will apply to the court for the relief sought.

This, the 17 day of July, 2025
Kayla Chargois, JusticeMatters, Inc. Attorney for the Plaintiff
P.O. Box 199 Durham, NC 27701
(919) 794-7511
7/17, 7/24, and 7/31/2025

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File Number 25E000793-310

THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 12th day of June 2025, as EXECUTOR of the Estate of EDNA GOOCH PARRISH, 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 15th day of October, 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 17th day of July 2025.
Debra Parrish Kearns, Executor
1528 Palmers Grove Church Rd.
Hillsborough, NC 27278
7/17, 7/24, 7/31, and 8/7/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
File Number 25E000890-310

ALL PERSONS, firms and corporations having claims against Musia G. Lakin aka Musia Gingold Lakin, deceased, of Durham County, N.C., are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before 10-17-2025, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This 7-17-2025.
Lori M. Bernstein, Executor of the Estate of Musia G. Lakin aka Musia Gingold Lakin
2726 Croasdaile Dr. Suite 202
Durham, North Carolina 27705
7/17, 7/24, 7/31, and 8/7/2025
NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION
NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF DURHAM
In the General Court of Justice District Court Division
File No: 25CV004072-310
[CHILD CUSTODY PROCEEDING]
ALMONIE ALSTON,
Plaintiff
v.
UNKNOWN FATHER,
Defendant.

To Unknown Father of a female child born to Mortier Shenee Watson on October 26, 2010, in Durham, Durham County, North Carolina:

TAKE NOTICE that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above-entitled action. The nature of the relief being sought is as follows: that permanent sole legal and physical custody of the minor child Bre'Nyah Di'Shae Earls, born October 26, 2010 be granted to Almonie Alston.

You are required to make defense to such pleading not later than August 26, 2025, said date being forty (40) days from the first publication of this notice, and upon your failure to do so the party seeking service against you will apply to the court for the relief sought.

This, the 17 day of July, 2025
Kayla Chargois, JusticeMatters, Inc. Attorney for the Plaintiff
P.O. Box 199 Durham, NC 27701
(919) 794-7511
7/17, 7/24, and 7/31/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
File Number 25E000812-310

All persons, firms, and corporations having claims against Marcia Elizabeth Seume Hanson, deceased, late of Durham County, NC, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 13th day of October, 2025, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment.

This the 10th day of July, 2025.
Jennifer Cate, Co-Executor
Scott Davis, Co-Executor
c/o Hemphill Gelder, PC
PO Box 97035
Raleigh, NC 27624-7035
7/10, 7/17, 7/24, and 7/31/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File Number 25E000817-310

THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 1st day of July 2025, as EXECUTOR of the Estate of MARYANN ROHRER A/K/A MARY A. GALLIGAN, 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 10th day of October, 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 10th day of July 2025.
Walter Scott Rohrer, Executor
c/o Marion Law Office, PLLC
2741 University Drive
Durham, NC 27707
7/10, 7/17, 7/24, and 7/31/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File Number 25E000460-310

THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 8th day of May 2025, as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of MAUDE SPEAKMAN, 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 10th day of October, 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 10th day of July 2025.
Todd Speakman, Administrator
5308 Silkwood Drive
Durham, NC 27713
7/10, 7/17, 7/24, and 7/31/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File Number 25E000868-310

THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 30th day of June 2025, as EXECUTOR of the Estate of BETTY S MOORE A/K/A BETTY STRAYHORN MOORE, 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 10th day of October, 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 10th day of July 2025.
Sherry L. Strayhorn a/k/a Sherry Lewis Strayhorn, Executor
4004 Capul Drive
Durham, NC 27703
7/10, 7/17, 7/24, and 7/31/2025
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 FELTON R. ADAMS, 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 10th of October, 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 10th day of July, 2025.
Robert E. Levin
Public Administrator of the Estate of Felton R. Adams, Deceased P.O. Box 51429
Durham, NC 27717
7/10, 7/17, 7/24, and 7/31/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File Number 25E000749-310

THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 4th day of June 2025, as Administrator of the Estate of DANIELLE LESPINASSE MCCALL, 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 4th day of October, 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 3rd day of July 2025.
Douglas Ernest McCall, Executor
2501 Carver St.
Durham, NC 27705
7/3, 7/10, 7/17, and 7/24/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File Number 25E000818-310

THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 19th day of June 2025, as Administrator of the Estate of ELEANOR BAKER KAPIKO, 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 4th day of October, 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 3rd day of July 2025.
Jerrold Loo Kapiko, Administrator
118 Friendly Lane
Hampstead, NC 28443
7/3, 7/10, 7/17, and 7/24/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Having qualified as Executor for the Estate of Shirley Ann Rooker Pojman, Shirley Ann Pojman, Shirley A. Pojman, late of Durham County, North Carolina, the undersigned hereby notifies all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the estate of said decedent to exhibit them to the undersigned at the offices of Allman Spry Leggett Crumpler & Horn, P.A., 380 Knollwood Street, Suite 700, Winston-Salem, North Carolina 27103, on or before October 3, 2025, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons, firms and corporations indebted to said estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This the 3rd day of July, 2025.
Kenneth Brian Pojman, Executor
Estate of Shirley A. Pojman
B. Bailey Liipfert, III, Esq.
Allman Spry Leggett Crumpler & Horn, PA
380 Knollwood Street, Suite 700
Winston-Salem, NC 27103
7/3, 7/10, 7/17, and 7/24/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
File No. 25E000764-310

Having qualified as Personal Representative of the Estate of Gladys Young, deceased, of 912 S. Mineral Springs Rd. Durham, Durham County, North Carolina 27703, the undersigned does hereby notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the estate of said decedent to exhibit them to the undersigned in care of the attorney for the estate on or before October 4, 2025, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons, firms, and corporations indebted to the said estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This the 3rd day of July, 2025
Jeffrey L. Austin, Attorney
Personal Representative
500 Westover Dr. #32043
Sanford, NC 27330
7/3, 7/10, 7/17, and 7/24/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
File No. 25E000798-310

THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 19th day of June 2025, as Executor of the ESTATE OF RICHARD ARTHUR CARDOZA, 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 4th day of October, 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 3rd day of July 2025.
Katherine Anne Cardoza
Executor
Estate of Richard Arthur Cardoza
c/o Rupe S. Gill, Attorney
Walker Lambe, PLLC
240 Leigh Farm Rd, Ste 100
Durham, North Carolina 27707
7/3, 7/10, 7/17, and 7/24/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File Number 25E000805-310

THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 26th day of June 2025, as EXECUTOR of the Estate of JOSE LUIS SOSA CARDENAS, 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 4th day of October, 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 3rd day of July 2025.
Claudia Rico Rivera, Executor
C/O Manning Fulton & Skinner, P.A.
PO Box 20389
Raleigh NC 27619-0389
7/3, 7/10, 7/17, and 7/24/2025

WAKE COUNTY

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File Number 25E002382-910

THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 7th day of July 2025, as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of HOWARD DOUGLASS MARTIN, Deceased, of Wake 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 24th day of October, 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 24th day of July 2025.
Dolores Simpson Martin, Executor
616 Oakbrook Pass Way
Fuquay Varina, NC 27526
7/24, 7/31, 8/7, and 8/14/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY
NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION
File No. 24CV021463-910

THERESE MCCULLERS, PLAINTIFF VS. CHARLENE DOUGLAS, DEFENDANT

TO DEFENDANT: 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 24th day of July, 2025.
Charlene Douglas, Plaintiff
7903 Holly Lea Ct. Apt. D
Tampa, FL 33614
7/24, 7/31, and 8/7/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File Number 25E000203-910

THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 4th day of June 2025, as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of EARNEST WESLEY JORDAN, Deceased, of Wake 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 15th day of October, 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 17th day of July 2025.
Jennifer Mangum Jordan
Administrator
609 Berry Chase Way
Cary, NC 27519
7/17, 7/24, 7/31, and 8/7/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Having qualified as Administrator of the Estate of SANDY MARIE JOHNSON (25E002230-910), late of Wake County, NC, the undersigned does hereby notify all persons,. firms, and corporations having claims against the estate of said decedent to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 17th day of October, 2025 or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. All persons, firms, and corporations indebted to the said estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This the 13th day of July, 2025.
Dorothy L. Little, Administrator
36 Mitchell Manor Drive
Angier NC 27501
9192759415
7/17, 7/24, 7/31, and 8/7/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY
NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION
In the General Court of Justice, District Court Division
File No. #24CV040271-910

[ABSOLUTE DIVORCE & CHILD CUSTODY PROCEEDING] BIANEY GARCIA ESPINOZA, Plaintiff v. CARLOS MORENO SANTIAGO, Defendant, father of C.J.M.G born 12/14/07 and E.N.M.G born 10/27/10 to Plaintiff.

TAKE NOTICE that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above-entitled action. The relief sought is an award of absolute divorce and legal custody of the children to Plaintiff. You are required to make defense with the Wake County Clerk of Court no later than 8/27/25. Upon your failure to do so, Plaintiff will apply to the Court for the relief sought. Katherine Moye, Attorney for Plaintiff, P.O. Box 58058, Raleigh, NC, 27658, 919-794-7511. The Carolinian 7/17, 7/24, 7/31.
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File Number 22E000184-910

THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 19th day of June 2025, as Administrator of the Estate of ROSEMARIE MADISON, Deceased, of Wake 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 10th day of October, 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 3rd day of July 2025.
ERIKA SMITH, Administrator
40458 Village Wood Road
Novi MI 48375
7/10, 7/17, 7/24, and 7/31/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY

Classifieds

WAKE COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File Number 25E000203-910

THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 4th day of June 2025, as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of EARNEST WESLEY JORDAN, Deceased, of Wake 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 10th day of October, 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 10th day of July 2025.
Jennifer Mangum Jordan
Administrator
609 Berry Chase Way
Cary, NC 27519
7/10, 7/17, 7/24, and 7/31/2025

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY

AFFIDAVIT AND PUBLIC NOTICE

LET IT BE KNOWN TO ALL PEOPLE OF UNITED STATES OF AMERICA – This is public notice and affirmation that a baby boy has been born on the land in a mortal body to the Concepcion family. The family welcomed their baby earthside on the land of the geographical location commonly known as [Raleigh, North Carolina Republic, United States of America] North America on the 22nd day of June in the calendar year 2025 AD. He is happy, healthy and thriving!
This, the 10th day of July, 2025

Publication, The Carolinian: July 10, 17, 24, & 31, 2025

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File Number 25E001085-910

THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 1st day of April 2025, as Administrator of the Estate of CAROLYN YVONNE HINES A/K/A CAROLYN Y. HINES, Deceased, of Wake 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 4th day of October, 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 3rd day of July 2025.
Emily Jackson, Administrator
1802 South Side Blvd
Greensboro, NC 27406
7/3, 7/10, 7/17, and 7/24/2025

D/M/WBE

SUBCONTRACTORS/SUPPLIERS WANTED

Pipeline Utilities, Inc. (NC General Contractor License No. 325) is seeking certified DBE, MBE, and WBE subcontractors and suppliers for the **NC SBI GMP 2 BP-33 Headquarters, Logistics, and Building 12 Renovations** project for **HITT Contracting, Inc.** which bids on **August 5, 2025, at 8:00 AM**. Plans and specifications for this project are available at the following locations: Pipeline Utilities, Inc.; 2204-F Associate Drive; Raleigh, NC 27603.

Potential subcontracting opportunities include but are not limited to surveying, hauling, asphalt paving, striping, traffic control, erosion control, seeding, linework/pipe installation, bypass pumping, and flatwork. Please contact **Dustin Downie (ddownie@pui-nc.com)** if you are interested in submitting a proposal on any portion(s) of this project. Contact via phone 919-772-4310; fax: 919-772-3261; or email. All quotations will be accepted up to the closing time of the bid date. Pipeline Utilities, Inc. is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer.

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

Submit your Classified BID Advertising to
ads@caro.news

BUYING CASSETTE TAPES

Paying cash and buying old Rap music cassette tapes and used blank cassette tapes. Call Marvin 919-268-7476.

SOFTWARE ENGINEER (MULTIPLE POSITIONS)

Software Engineer (Multiple Positions): Collab w/ stkhldrs to understand proj req, contrib to dsgn & arch phases. Involve in all phases of SDLC. Dvlp scalable & maint apps. Conduct compr Unit Tests. Collab w/ cross-func teams. Create, dvlp, & deploy auto test scripts. Support prod'n team & t'shoot tech issues. Wage: $154877/annum - Req: Master's Deg. Travel & reloc may be req'd to mult unanticipated client locs t'out USA. Mail resume to: Techlogyx Inc., 118 International Dr, Ste 110, Morrisville, NC 27560 or email to hr@techlogyx.com

D/M/WBE

SUBCONTRACTORS/SUPPLIERS WANTED

Pipeline Utilities, Inc. (NC General Contractor License No. 325) is seeking certified DBE, MBE, and WBE subcontractors and suppliers for the **Annual Waterline Replacement** project for the **Town of Cary** which bids on **August 5, 2025, at 2:00 PM.** Plans and specifications for this project are available at the following locations: Pipeline Utilities, Inc.; 2204-F Associate Drive; Raleigh, NC 27603 * Town of Cary Utilities Department; 316 North Academy Street; Cary, NC 27513 * Town of Cary website and planroom * Dodge Data and Analytics website * ConstructConnect website * NC Institute of Minority Economic Development (NCIMED) website.

Potential subcontracting opportunities include but are not limited to surveying, hauling, asphalt paving, striping, traffic control, erosion control, seeding, sodding, landscaping, linework/pipe installation, bypass pumping, and flatwork. Please contact **Dustin Downie (ddownie@pui-nc.com)** if you are interested in submitting a proposal on any portion(s) of this project. Contact via phone 919-772-4310; fax: 919-772-3261; or email. All quotations will be accepted up to the closing time of the bid date. Pipeline Utilities, Inc. is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer.

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

ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS

Town of Magnolia
P.O. Box 459
Magnolia, NC 28453

Separate sealed BIDS for the construction of 2022 Water Line Replacement Project Contract No. 1 - Water System Improvement will be received by the ENGINEER at the Magnolia Town Hall, 110 East Carroll Street, Magnolia, NC 28453 until 2:00 PM Eastern Daylight Time, August 19, 2025, and then at said office publicly opened and read aloud.

The CONTRACT DOCUMENTS may be examined at the following locations:

Magnolia Town Hall, 110 East Carroll Street, Magnolia, NC 28453
McDavid Associates, Inc., 3714 North Main Street, Farmville, NC 27828-049
Dodge Data and Analytics, 2860 South State Highway 161, Suite 160, #501, Grand Prairie, TX 750527361
(View online at www.construction.com)
ConstructConnect, Attn: DPC, 30 Technology Parkway South, Suite 100, Norcross, GA 30092
(View online at www.constructconnect.com)
Construction Journal, 400 SW 7th Street, Stuart, FL 34994
(View online at www.ConstructionJournal.com)
Builders & Contractors Exchange, Inc., 1118 Azalea Garden Road, Norfolk, VA 235025612
(View online at www.bceva.com)

Physical copies of the CONTRACT DOCUMENTS may be obtained at the office of McDavid Associates, Inc. located at 3714 North Main Street, Farmville, NC 27828-0049 upon a non-refundable payment of $101.00 for each set.

The OWNER reserves the right to reject any and all BIDS.

BIDDER shall be properly licensed under Chapter 87, General Statutes of North Carolina.

Small, minority, women's, and disadvantaged businesses and labor surplus area firms are encouraged to submit BIDS.

This PROJECT is subject to the good faith efforts and goals for participation by minority businesses required by G.S. 143-128.2. The OWNER has adopted a verifiable ten percent (10%) goal for participation by minority businesses in the total value of the WORK.

BIDDERS shall, within the time frames specified in the BID documents, submit all required affidavits and documentation demonstrating that the BIDDER made the required good faith effort in compliance with G.S. 143-128.2. Failure to file all required affidavits and documentation within the required time frames is grounds for rejection of the BID.

Prospective BIDDERS who have been found guilty of discrimination within the last two (2) years are debarred from bidding.

A pre-Bid conference wil be held at 10:00 am on August 4, 2025 in the Magnolia Town Hal, 110 East Carroll Street, Magnolia, NC 28453. Prospective BIDDERS are encouraged to attend this pre-bid conference as part of their good faith efforts.

July 24, 2025

Dawn R. Ward
Mayor

Town of Magnolia

Sports

Venus Williams Is Back In Tennis And Wishes Serena Would Come Back Too

WASHINGTON (AP) — Venus Williams is back on the tennis scene, ready to compete for the first time in more than a year, and while she smiled or laughed frequently Sunday while discussing her return at the DC Open, there was something that would make her even happier: if her younger sister Serena were along for the ride.

"I keep saying to my team: The only thing that would make this better is if she was here. Like, we always did everything together, so of course I miss her," Venus said when asked about a recent video on social media that showed Serena swinging a racket. "But if she comes back, I'm sure she'll let y'all know."

That, of course, was said with a wide grin. Serena, 43, hasn't played since the 2022 U.S. Open, when she declared she was "evolving" away from the sport she dominated for stretches on the way to 23 Grand Slam singles titles and an additional 14 in doubles with Venus.

"I don't know what she's going to do. I don't ask those questions," Venus said a day before the hard-court tournament in the nation's capital begins. "I think we always hit the ball, because that's who we are. We're always hitting."

She said it was during a recent practice session of hers that Serena showed up and joined in for about 15 or 20 minutes.

On Tuesday, 45-year-old Venus Williams became the oldest woman since Martina Navratilova to win a singles match

"She can take six months off and she clocks it clean," Venus said. "You can't teach that kind of talent. She's just so good."

They both were the best around at one point.

Both reached No. 1 in the rankings. Venus, who turned 45 last month, won seven major singles championships, two at the U.S. Open and five at Wimbledon.

Her last tournament was in March 2024 at the Miami Open, where she exited in the first round. It's been so long that the official WTA Tour website lists her as "inactive."

"This is very special for me to come back and play tennis," Venus said. "I think it's a surprise for the fans — and a surprise in general, as I hold my cards tight."

Sure does.

It came as a bit of a shock to the tennis world when her appearance in Washington via a wild-card invitation was announced a week ago.

Her team had reached out to DC Open chairman Mark Ein via text in April to gauge whether he'd be open to having Venus at an event she last entered in 2022. He said he needed two seconds to reply: "Of course."

"She's such an icon of the sport — and, importantly, both on and off the court," Ein said in an interview. "So anytime you can have her engaged and have the spotlight on her and everything she's done and continues to do, it's hugely positive."

What did she miss the most while away from the tour?

"All the times that I had and, of course, the adrenaline, all those things," Venus said. "Just the pure fun of playing the game, the fun of the challenge, overcoming — when you play, you overcome so many challenges: your opponents, the conditions, a lot of times you have to overcome yourself. Those things are very exciting."

When asked why she's getting back on court, Venus offered a simple response: "Why not?"

As for whether this is a one-stop tour or she plans to play elsewhere, she wasn't prepared to say much.

"I'm just here for now, and who knows?" Venus said. "Maybe there's more. ... But at the moment, I'm focused just on this. I haven't played in a year. There is no doubt I can play tennis, but obviously coming back to play matches, it takes time to get in the swing of things. I definitely feel I'll play well. I'm still the same player. I'm a big hitter. I hit big. This is my brand."

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander And Simone Biles Win Top Honors At The ESPYS

LOS ANGELES (AP) — NBA Finals MVP Shai Gilgeous-Alexander and Olympic champion gymnast Simone Biles won as best male and female athletes at the ESPYS on Wednesday night.

Gilgeous-Alexander led the Oklahoma City Thunder to the NBA championship last month while piling up hardware as league MVP and scoring champion.

"It's a dream come true and for dreams to come true it takes a village," he said, thanking his wife, parents, brother and others. "Those names probably don't mean much but to me they mean everything."

Biles, an 11-time Olympic medalist, claimed the night's first award, best championship performance for her efforts at the Paris Games. She won three golds and a silver while helping the U.S. win its first team title since 2016.

"That was very unexpected, especially in a category of all men," Biles said after kissing her husband, Chicago Bears safety Jonathan Owens. She beat out Stephen Curry, Freddie Freeman and Rory McIlroy.

Biles' Olympic teammate, Suni Lee, won the best comeback award for overcoming two rare kidney diseases. She brought one of her doctors to the show.

Arthur Ashe Award for Courage

Basketball Hall of Famer Oscar Robertson accepted the Arthur Ashe Award for Courage from point guard Russell Westbrook.

Robertson was president of the NBA Players' Association at the time of a landmark antitrust lawsuit against the NBA in 1970. It led to an extensive reform of the league's strict free agency and draft rules and eventually to higher salaries for all players.

The 86-year-old Robertson, a 12-time All Star known as The Big O during his career, was the first Black president of any sports labor union.

"I knew there was work to do. There was a desperate need for players to have more career security, improved working conditions and other accommodations," he said. "In life, it's important to be persistent or as I have been called stubborn. Stubborn about what you believe in."

Host Shane Gillis' awkward monologue

Comedian Shane Gillis ' opening monologue as host of the show that honors the past year's top athletes and sports moments went over awkwardly.

Early on, he called out various famous faces in the Dolby Theatre crowd, including retired WNBA star Diana Taurasi. Gillis said, "Give it up for her" after calling her "Deanna." The camera showed an unsmiling Taurasi shaking her head. Gillis quickly caught his mistake, saying, "My bad on that."

Gillis moved on to WNBA superstar Caitlin Clark, who wasn't on hand.

"When Caitlin Clark retires from the WNBA, she's going to work at a Waffle House so she can continue doing what she loves most: fist fighting Black women," he joked.

While some in the audience laughed, others appeared uncomfortable.

Gillis plowed on for 10 minutes, with jokes about President Donald Trump and Jeffrey Epstein, whose sex trafficking investigation has roiled the Justice Department and FBI.

Gillis' performance drew mixed reviews on social media, with some calling him "hilarious" and others "cringey."

Gillis' initial joke about North Carolina coach Bill Belichick and his 24-year-old girlfriend Jordon Hudson drew a lot of laughs.

"A bookie is what Bill Belichick reads to his girlfriend before bed time," he said. "They read 'The Very Horny Caterpillar,' 'The Little Engine That Could But Needed a Pill First' and of course the classic 'Goodnight Boobs.'"

But the laugher lessened as Gillis continued.

"He won six Super Bowls. He's dating a hot 24 year old. Maybe if you guys won six Super Bowls you wouldn't be sitting next to a fat ugly dog wife."

Before closing it out, a smiling Gillis said, "I see a lot of you don't like me and that's OK. That's it for me. That went about exactly how we all thought it was going to go. I don't know why this happened."

Icon Award

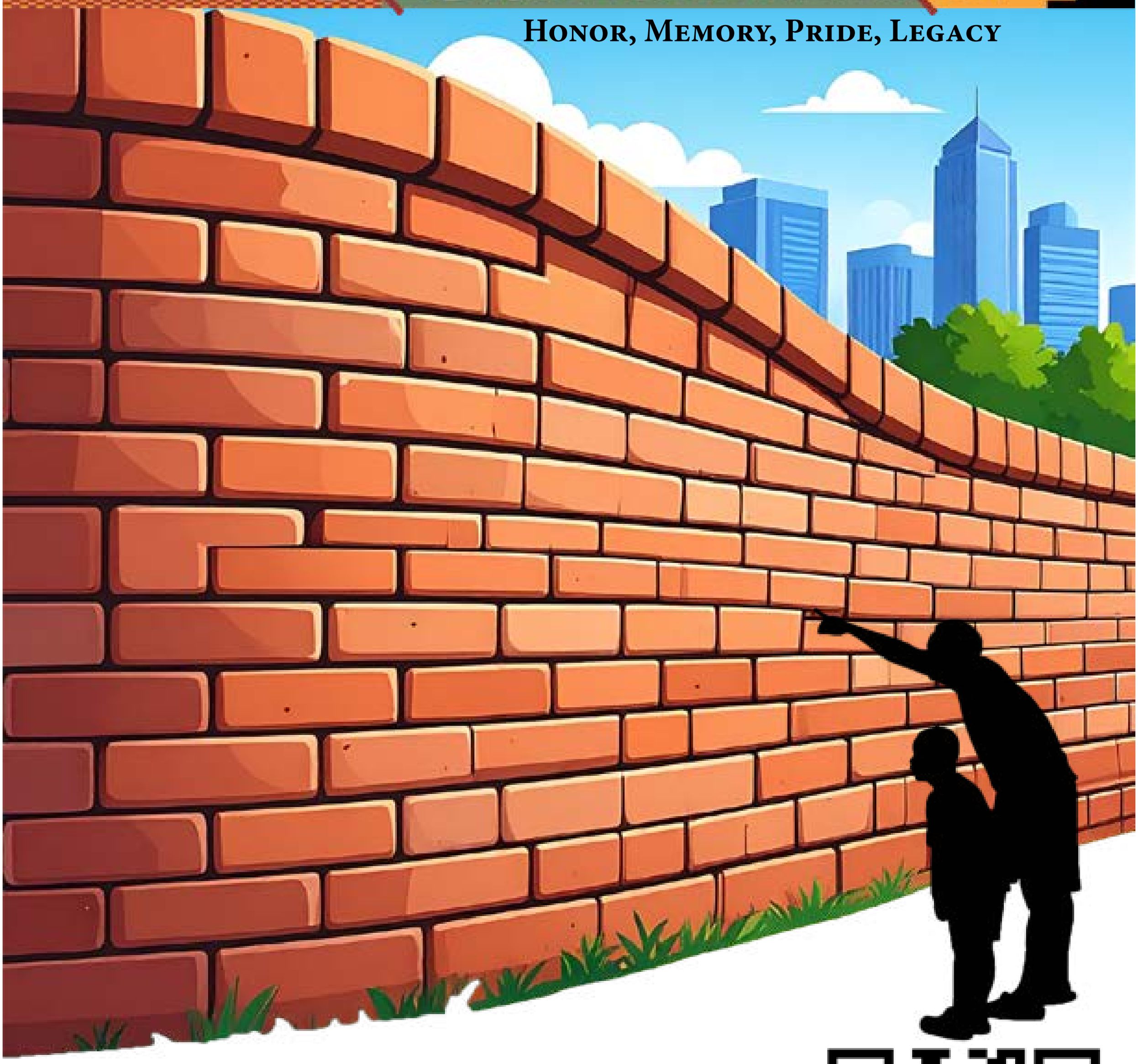
Taurasi and retired U.S. national women's soccer team star Alex Morgan shared the Icon Award in recognition of their careers and major impact on sports.

The women touched their trophies together in a toast.

"Our mission has always been very similar," Morgan said. "We fought to leave our game in a better place than where we found it just as a generation before us did. We're standing on the shoulders of giants."

The Carolinian

Honor, Memory, Pride, Legacy



The Carolinian Legacy Project

Whether honoring the accomplishments of a generation past, rooting a family name or celebrating a personal success, The Carolinian's Legacy Wall is how to say "I WAS HERE" on the landscape of Raleigh for generations to come.

Click on the QR code to learn more ➔

Secure your place in history by purchasing a brick in The Carolinian's Legacy Wall. Visit www.CARO.news for more information.