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**Dedicated to the Spirit
and Service of God**

The Carolinian

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Meet “Farmer Cee” of North Carolina’s Green Heffa Farms

By Zoe Yarborough

StyleBlueprint Magazine

Clarenda “Farmer Cee” Stanley is the CEO of Green Heffa Farms, a flourishing medicinal plant and herb farm in Liberty, North Carolina. She’s also the country’s first Black-owned farm to earn Certified B Corp status. She started growing herbs to address her own anxiety and has developed a line of tasty blends that “help support adulting,” as she puts it cleverly. As she rakes in award after award, Clarenda also amplifies the voices of unsung farmers planting dreams the nation over. Meet our newest FACE of the South, Clarenda “Farmer Cee” Stanley.

Here Story
After my parents divorced, we moved [from Texas] back to my mother’s hometown in the Black Belt region of Alabama. It’s known as the Black Belt — one, for its very rich agricultural soil. And two, for the number of Black people who live there. I grew up in a county that still, today, has a segregated school system. I grew up on my maternal grandparents’ farm. They owned 100 acres, 20 of which I still own. I have a tree farm there in Alabama in addition to my herb farm here in North Carolina.

While I learned some aspects of agriculture from my extended family, I was not encouraged to be a farmer. I was encouraged to go off to college, get a degree, and land a high-paying job. But they taught me the importance of land ownership in building family wealth. I was taught that if you take care of the land, it will produce more for you. It’s investing in an asset. I grew up being the “I’m gonna save the world” kid.

Tell us how you started Green Heffa Farms

I was good and grown! I started it in 2018 when I was 42. I wish I had some romanticized story, but the truth is, there was a man, and we were legally entangled. He was going through an ... extended career transition ... and I asked, “What do you want to do!?” He said he wanted to grow cannabis hemp which had recently become available to produce in North Carolina under a state pilot project.

One of the requirements to get a hemp license at the time was prior farm income. Well, remember that tree farm I mentioned earlier!? I had farm income. So I got the hemp license. You get to an age where you keep what appreciates. The land did; the man did not. I got legally untangled, and I had this beautiful piece of land. At that



time, I was working for the world’s most resource-rich environmental organization as one of their senior global fundraisers. I was going around the world talking to people and companies about environmental concerns. It was challenging

work, and I realized this could be a blank slate for me.

How Do You Juggle It All
Our farm’s demand far outstrips our supply, but we don’t fret over that. We don’t want to scale quickly just so every customer who

wants our products can get them right away. That’s stressful! We’re going to scale in a way that makes sense for us. We’re going to grow slow, so we don’t owe. We’re profitable, but we have no desire to be popular. I refuse to create a stressful environment for myself and my team. We’re herb farmers! For us to be out here stressed ... what does that say about our product?!

A Typical Workday

I have some blooms like primrose that moonlight (bloom at night), so I have to wake up early to get them before they close. Then our sunshine blooms come through like roses, etc. Then it’s a combination of virtual meetings, harvesting, and hanging out with my unemployed farm dogs. In the afternoon, I’ll work with my consulting clients, package and fulfill orders, and try to get outside for the evening harvest.

Something Not Typical

Many people who just know me as “Farmer Cee” are surprised I had a life before farming. Also that I’m goofy and not into things society tells us to be into. For me, a good time is to open a plant and insect identification app and walk around identifying things, collecting rocks, pieces of bark, and leaves. A vintage t-shirt at a thrift store for \$2? High fashion! I had days when name brands meant success, but those have no comparison to planting a watermelon from scratch. Oh, and I love rhyming. I think I’m a rapper.

Common Misconception About Farming

There is such an under-appreciation of the intelligence and breadth of knowledge that farmers possess. What other profession, occupation, or area of expertise are you allowed ten years and are still categorized as “the beginning?”

Another one is the simplification of what is defined as a farm. There are so many diverse agricultural operations that are all considered farms or ranches by the USDA. But each operation — a fishery, a nursery, or a ranch — is its own thing. Understanding the different types of farming businesses that exist is essential.

Days Off

I love going to the mountains of North Carolina to see some waterfalls. Or meeting the bestie in Vegas to see Usher live. I believe resting is a fundamental human right. I’m in an industry where many farmers cannot afford to rest because of economic stability. I understand that privilege, so we give back every month to other farms.

What’s the best advice you’ve ever received, and from whom?

One time I was venting to my dad about a fee I had to pay. I don’t like paying fees. But this was for a mistake I had made. He said, “Don’t look at it as a loss. Look at it as tuition you just paid to learn something.”

NC House Speaker Hall Slam Stein’s Politically Motivated Medicaid Cuts

NC Political News—North Carolina House Speaker Destin Hall and the chamber’s Health Appropriations chairs strongly criticized Governor Josh Stein for threatening unnecessary Medicaid provider reimbursement rate cuts in a political stunt that jeopardizes North Carolinians’ access to health care.

Gov. Stein does not need to force these self-imposed cuts on his arbitrary October 1st deadline. Medicaid has sufficient funding to last into the new year, and, as Governor, he has the tools to provide additional financing immediately without legislative approval. Options include redirecting lapsed salary funding from NCDHHS and other agencies or utilizing \$18 mil-

lion through an intergovernmental transfer involving LME/MCOs.

The General Assembly has acted responsibly to ensure Medicaid remains stable and patients are protected. This year alone, lawmakers invested \$600 million to sustain the program into 2026, and the House overwhelmingly passed another \$192 million in Senate Bill 403 last week to fund the Medicaid rebase.

Last year, the legislature approved \$377 million for the Medicaid rebase in November 2024, clear proof that Stein’s October 1st deadline is unfounded. Lawmakers will deliver additional Medicaid funding when necessary, but will not be forced into rubber-stamping Gov.

Stein’s unproven rebase number.

NC House Speaker Destin Hall said, “Governor Stein’s arbitrary Medicaid cuts are unjustifiable, clearly intended to manufacture a crisis. The legislature has given funds to sustain Medicaid well into 2026. This breathtakingly cynical move ignores years of precedent where the rebase has been supplemented even later in the fiscal year.”

House Appropriations Senior Chair Donny Lambeth (R-Forsyth) said, “By cutting Medicaid provider rates now, Gov. Stein is manufacturing a crisis. Our most vulnerable North Carolinians shouldn’t be punished for the sake of political theater.”

Health Appropriations Co-Chair Larry Potts (R-Davidson) said, “Gov. Stein is the only person threatening cuts today. It’s a callous political move, not a fiscal necessity, and North Carolina families will suffer because of it.”

Health Appropriations Co-Chair Timothy Reeder, MD (R-Pitt) said, “Gov. Stein’s Medicaid cuts are his to own. His decision to play politics will hurt both patients and providers across our state.”

Health Appropriations Co-Chair Donna White (R-Johnston) said, “Governor Stein has the tools to fund Medicaid. I hope that he will choose to address the needs of the indigent and IDD communities; they do not need to suffer!”



GUIDE TO NC MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

WUNC — Hundreds of North Carolina cities and towns from Murphy to Manteo — and Canton to Calabash — will elect mayors and municipal boards on Nov. 4. If you’re not in a larger community, finding news coverage of the candidates and issues can be tricky.

Here at WUNC, we’ve got coverage of the municipal elections in Cary, Chapel Hill and Durham available here. But if you live in a smaller town, or you’re outside the Triangle, you might find that Googling your election or candidates leaves you with more questions than answers.

I’m right there with you: Living in the Raleigh suburb of Wendell, news about municipal issues is often limited. So here’s what I do to use my journalism skills to make an informed choice:

Start with a sample ballot: Enter your name on the State Board of Elections website, and see if you’ve got an election this year (some voters live in an unincorporated area, or in a community like Raleigh that moved municipal elections to even-numbered years). The “find your sample ballot” section will show you exactly what’s on your ballot. Several towns are also holding a referendum on things like tax rates and alcohol sales.

Contact the candidates: Most candidates have set up easy-to-find websites or Facebook pages, but often they feature vague platitudes that don’t give you a good sense for how they differ from their opponents (what the heck is “smart growth,” anyway?).

Talking to them directly can be more insightful — and at the local level, they usually have time to answer your questions personally. Most county board of elections websites have a “candidate list” that shows an email address and phone number for each candidate. I like to send out a short, specific list of questions that helps me understand the candidates’ priorities for our town and where they might disagree:

- If the town received a multimillion-dollar grant for parks, amenities and other infrastructure, what projects would you want to see funded immediately? (This gives you a sense for their big priorities as they spend tax dollars)
- What’s a specific decision made by the current town board that you would have voted against? (This helps you understand where the divisions are among candidates. I learned that a major fault line in Wendell politics involves the town board’s decision to approve a small townhouse development near my neighborhood).
- How many town board meetings have you attended in the past year? (These meetings can be tedious and wonky, and it takes a special sort of person to show up to them voluntarily — but that’s how you learn how local government works.)

You also might get a visit from the candidates or their campaign at your doorstep. Dustin Ingalls, a town commission candidate in Wendell, said “door knocking is really important” in his campaign.

“If you’re having a conversation, you can kind of drill down to ‘what are you concerned about? How can I address it?’” he said.

Some towns have candidate forums or meet-and-great events hosted by a neutral party like the local chamber of commerce.

A couple of other things to consider as you research your choices:

- Party labels aren’t as useful at the local level: In fast-growing communities, the biggest divides center around growth and development issues. Wendell, for example, has a Republican and Democrat teaming up in support of more limitations on development. In other towns, the race could center on a single local issue: A plan to close the police department in the Wilson County town of Stantonsburg is a popular election topic there. Most local races are nonpartisan, so you’d have to do extra work to find out the candidates’ party affiliation. And in some places, all the candidates might be from the same political party. That said, county-level Democratic and Republican party organizations often do issue endorsements.
- Beware of overpromisers: Plenty of well-intentioned people run for local office without a full understanding of what a municipal board can — and can’t — legally control. The state legislature puts a lot of restrictions on local government, and many decisions must be made at a higher level. If a candidate tells you they’ll widen the highway leading into town, or bring in a Chick-fil-A restaurant, you should probably be skeptical.
- Your vote can make a big difference: While it’s unlikely in state or national races, you really could cast the deciding vote in your municipal election. Nearly every year, some small town in North Carolina ends up with a tied vote count and has to pick a winner by flipping a coin.



By Jordan Meadows

Staff Writer

On Tuesday morning, hundreds of North Carolinians rallied on the grounds of the legislature in protest of a newly proposed congressional map, part of the Republican effort to maintain the majority for the 2026 midterm elections.

The demonstration featured speeches from lawmakers and grassroots leaders alike. It came as the Republican-led House prepared to debate a redistricting proposal that would redraw the state’s 14 congressional districts in a way that bolsters

GOP control, shifting the current 10-4 Republican advantage to a likely 11-3 split—leaving no competitive seats and jeopardizing the state of one of North Carolina’s few Black representatives, Rep. Don Davis.

Democrats have condemned the proposal as racially and politically motivated, citing former President Donald Trump’s direct influence on GOP lawmakers’ decision-making.

“You know, the last 24 hours have been insane... The amount of disdain and disrespect Republicans have, not only for the voters, but also for the Democrats that serve in this building is outrageous,” said Senate

Democratic Leader SYDNEY BATCH (Wake). “On Thursday, the maps dropped. On Monday, we had a committee. And he started the committee with this: ‘We did it because President Trump told us.’

Batch was likely referencing Senate Deputy President Pro Tempore RALPH HISE, who said publicly on Monday, presenting the plan at the Senate Elections Committee, “The motivation behind this redraw is simple and singular: Republicans hold a razor-thin margin in the United States House of Representatives. And if Democrats flip four seats in the upcoming midterm elections,

they will take control of the House and torpedo President Trump’s agenda.”

Protesters arrived by the busload from Charlotte, where the “All Aboard for Fair Maps” bus departed from Hornets Nest Park early Tuesday morning. Many were galvanized by the recent “No Kings Day” protests—a national day of action that saw an estimated 5 million people demonstrate across the country against authoritarianism and political overreach.

In Raleigh, chants of “No kings!”

(See **GOP REDISTRICTING** P. 6)





Check Out The Carolinian's Digital News Broadcast On



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‘We’re Here’: Black Female Gun Ownership in North Carolina

By Clay Morris

MediaHub

Dorrian Wilson grew up around guns.

In her hometown of Franklin, Louisiana, having guns was so common that it wouldn’t be unusual for a 5-year-old to receive a rifle on their birthday.

“We hunted, we fished, we grew our own vegetables and guns were not seen as something taboo,” Wilson said.

Wilson, who now lives in Charlotte, North Carolina, with her husband, Rob Austin, has an extensive family history of people using guns as a form of protection. Her uncles, she said, used firearms in Franklin to fend off white people who wanted to prevent them from voting in the ‘50s and ‘60s.

But her own reason for owning and shooting guns isn’t connected to a specific cause.

To Wilson, guns are a necessity. “For me owning a gun is, ‘I need shoes so my feet don’t get wet, I need gloves if it’s cold outside. I carry my gun on the off chance that somebody wants to kill me today,’” Wilson said.

Wilson is a part of the growing number of Black women across America who own guns. The National African-American Gun Association has 30,000 members and 60% of those members are women, according to its website. And during the pandemic, the number of new gun owners grew, with 21% of them being Black and over 50% being women.

But these numbers, and stories written about them, attempt to make Black women a “new” face of gun ownership in America. That ignores the rich history of Black women with guns and attempts to generalize a demographic full of nuance.

Joy Allen, owner and founder of InHERPiece, a shooting club for Black women and women of color with chapters in Raleigh and Spring Lake, North Carolina, didn’t grow up with guns in her immediate home. But she was comfortable around them from an early age because her grandparents owned shotguns.

“Growing up in the city, and once I got out of the house, I was not necessarily a gun fan,” Allen said. “And when I had children, I did know I did not want guns in the house while they were younger.”

In late 2016, Allen decided she wanted to learn how to shoot as a personal goal. Her children were old enough to be trained responsibly, and it seemed like a way to relieve stress from her job in clinical research.

“I just wanted to do it as something fun,” she said.

After taking her first shot: Allen was “addicted.”

“The first time I pulled the trigger it was very therapeutic,” Allen said. “I just felt empowered.”

Dorrian Wilson’s reason for stepping into the world of guns is a bit more direct.

“The real reason why I carry my gun is to kill men,” she said. “I’ve had instances in my life where guns were pulled on me by men, just trying to get to my apartment. So my number one goal is still safety.”

A 2020 Washington Post investigation found that since 2015 Black women have accounted for 20% of the women fatally shot in America and 28% of unarmed deaths, despite only making up 13% of the population overall. And a 2019 report from the Violence Policy Cen-



ter found that Black women had the highest rate of homicides perpetrated by men.

“So if I post a picture of myself shooting, carrying or something like that, the majority of the responses from women are ‘I need to learn how to shoot.’ And men, almost 100% of their responses are ‘I know not to mess with you,’” Wilson said. “In your predatory mind: you know now that I’m not prey.”

Black women have always used guns to protect themselves from men and other threats, said Antwain K.

Hunter, an assistant history professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill who is writing a book about the history of race and firearms in North Carolina between 1729-1865.

“Certainly when you get to the 1820s and ‘30s and then heading through the U.S. Civil War and even through reconstruction: there are women who are armed,” Hunter said. “And so one of the things I think stands out to me the most is thinking about why these women are armed. And a lot of it boils down to pragma-

tism. They’re able to defend themselves and their family members in ways that unarmed people are not.”

To Erica Maness, co-owner of Sharpshooterz Tactical, a firearm educational company in Greensboro, the idea of the woman as protector has stood the test of time.

“Women in general usually are the caretakers of their family, so they have to be in protective mode at all times,” Maness said. “Of course that doesn’t always mean you have to have a firearm to do that, but to have that as an option, if and when it’s needed, is wonderful.”

Most Americans have an understanding of history that is incompatible with the idea that Black women may choose to own guns, Hunter said.

“As an American people we do a disservice to our history,” he said. “You hear it in the debates around textbooks, you hear it in the debates around the boogeyman of critical race theory that everyone is up in arms about. Many Americans like history that coddles us and makes us feel warm and fuzzy about the past.”

And to Wilson, that fuzzy feeling has led to an apathy regarding Black women and their experiences, making recent statistics seem more monumental than they are.

“They don’t ask us a lot of different things,” Wilson said, referring to Black women. “Unless we are in service to something else: our personal opinions on how we feel aren’t usually recorded. Or why we do things, or if things are happening to us, they aren’t usually taken into consideration in a larger story.”

Rhonda Carson, owner and founder of Girlz on Fire, a firearm instruction academy in High Point, thinks

the face of gun culture in America is so white that Black people, and Black women are getting lost in the parade of the white men commonly associated with gun culture.

“In the media when it comes to gun news, there’s a lot of talk about the NRA, which we really don’t identify with as people of color,” Carson said.

The NRA, Carson said, is also seemingly unconcerned with Black members of the “2A community”—those who are supporters of the second amendment—male, female or otherwise.

“When they killed Philando Castile, a lot of Black people turned away from the NRA because they did not come out and make a statement in support of him as a legal concealed carry holder,” Carson said. “They’re not fighting for us. They’re fighting more for politics.”

Wilson also made it very clear that she sees her connection to guns as distinct from the broader “psychosis” and obsession with shooting that many Americans associate with gun owners.

“Sometimes you can look in the 2A community around Instagram and Facebook and you see people whose lives are consumed by thinking that everything and everyone and every instance is a threat,” she said. “I don’t ascribe to those things and I don’t let them penetrate my thinking.”

The specifics, though, of where other people think Black women fall within the landscape of gun culture in America is neither here nor there to Carson.

“I’m not really sure how Americans perceive Black women who own guns,” she said. “I just know we’re here.”

Traveling Around Puerto Rico: What To Do And Where To Go

By Steven Worthy and Sarah Ratliff

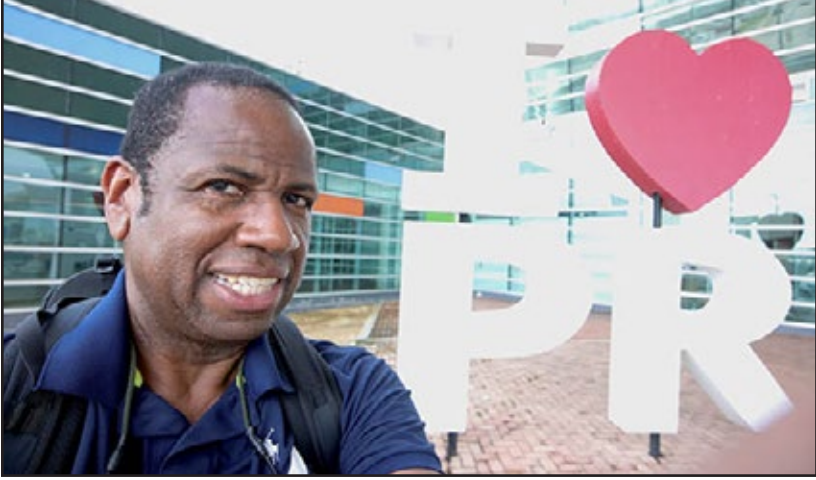
Special To The Carolinian

In an earlier article, I wrote about Puerto Rico in general as a great tropical vacation without a passport being necessary. I touched on getting a rental car, rooms, finding the perfect flight, etc. Now that the decision is made to travel, no doubt the next question one may ask is “Where do I go?” There are wonderful beaches, cities, mountains, and in each place, there are absolutely wonderful people to meet. After doing what was mentioned in the previous article, based off a long curiosity, I made several more trips to Puerto Rico after taking an initial five-day trip—really a 3-day with 2 days for travel, as I felt my first journey was not long enough as there is so much to see in a small island of 100 miles long and about 35 miles wide. As a suggestion to readers, I say to see much of the island in a short time for a first trip, try barnstorming to see different regions, which may require a bit of driving. While Google maps exist to navigate, I’d strongly suggest the Puerto Rico map from National Geographic as it not only shows the roads but also pinpoints attractions around the island. Costs about \$15 and it’s worth it! Also, find the guide called Places to GO Puerto Rico, as it is excellent to find places to explore—found in the airport, hotels and at placestogopr.com San Juan will



most likely be your first stop to get a feel for the Island. I recommend a night’s stay in the island’s capital city. After time to walk the streets of Old San Juan, admiring the architecture and unique ambience of the city, retrieve your vehicle (strongly suggest a 4x4!) from one of the decks or parking areas, go east toward Carolina (pronounced care-o-lean-ah) and drive by beautiful and popular beaches. Stop, if you wish to see the stunning landscape, of Barrio Pinoñes for a taste of good local foods from the numerous stands and kiosks. Driving from Pinoñes, next city is Loiza, the center of Afro-Puerto Rican Culture. Former slaves were brought to this region of the island in the early 1500s and many of the tradi-

tions, foods, including music (think Bomba! and the Money Dance) came with them, and over the ages, greatly influenced the Island. One could argue Puerto Rican culture would not be what it is without these important cultural influences. If you’re feeling adventurous, partake in Bomba Dance lessons held at the beach. If you visit in July, there’s the St. James Festival where you can march with Vejigantes (found only in Puerto Rico), celebrate and take part in the celebration patron saint of Loiza. Further down the road on the drive is Luquillo where there are well-known and beloved beaches along with the Kioskos de Luquillo with souvenirs, foods, and just a place to socialize. As the El Yunque Rain Forest is nearby, I took in a chance to see part of the rainforest at the Carabali Rainforest Adventure Park with horseback riding, ATV/side-by-side tours through the rainforest to see absolutely stunning vistas! I took part in it but recommend making reservations early as it can get



busy and was totally impressed! It’s a must-do when in Puerto Rico. I recommend the two-hour tour in the rainforest to feel getting your money’s worth. Fajardo at night is very popular to kayak in one of the very Bioluminescent Bays in the United States. All I can say on this is to search it out and try it! This is for another trip one day for me! From here, I drove west across the Island on the Autopista (think turnpike) toward Aguadilla to take in some awesome views of the Caribbean during a late afternoon! Time was limited here but from the beach, colorful houses on the hills that are unlike anything in the Continental United States. After Aguadilla, drive west on Highway 2 toward Mayagüez (pronounced my-a-whez) depending on the time of day, road turns left and the absolutely most magnificent vista of the Caribbean you will see anywhere. A rest area is there to take it all in! Mayagüez, western most seaside city on the island, is a nice stop to be in another

larger city different from San Juan. Friendly people, great food, and if staying near the Columbus Plaza, people are there to dance, sing, play the Bomba or Plena (which I’ll cover in a future article). Also while at the Columbus Plaza, I highly recommend the Puerto Rico grown coffee from the kiosks. While I am not a coffee drinker, the smell of the fresh brew has anything in the USA beat by far! If there during Christmas or Three Kings Day, look for the unique lightshow on the Alcalde (City Hall) as the City changes up the designs every year. In Mayagüez, as well as other areas, while there are many fun and interesting places there traveled to at this point, still remember to be aware of your surroundings wherever you go. A couple of blocks away from the Plaza, you may find the smells of beef or chicken pastelillos or empanadillas (empanadas to us). Be warned, you can’t eat just one. These local delights will cap the trip to the seaside city! From this city there are choices on how to cross

the island for something different. The Ruta Panorámica, a road which goes through the mountain region of Puerto Rico and stretches to Yabucoa in the Southeast or go south on Highway 2 which leads to the City of Ponce. Driving through the mountains in Puerto Rico is what I like to describe as the exhilaration of the Blue Ridge mountains enhanced by the hot Caribbean sun peeking through a canopy of bamboo. But be forewarned, though, the narrow and undulating mountain roads are a patch work of uneven pavement and potholes. My recent sojourn made me thankful I had a 4x4. I’m told sinkholes are not uncommon on these roads. To make matters even more exciting, the higher up you drive, don’t be surprised to encounter sudden drop offs. One learns the art of swerve driving very fast. It’s both exhilarating and nerve racking all at once! Utuado (pronounced Utwatho) Caguana Indigenous Ceremonial Park is a favorite among tourists and locals alike. A tour guide at the park will show you what life was like for these indigenous people also found throughout Jamaica, Cuba, Hispaniola and The Bahamas. Through the tour guide’s narrative, you’ll learn about how the Taíno prepared food, lived communally, built homes, reared their young, and the games they played. Many of their rituals are told through the petroglyphs, which endure to this day. Because it is one of the most significant archaeological sites in the Caribbean, it’s not uncommon for the park to be visited by Taíno organizations for a festival and to provide history and

(See **PUERTO RICO** P. 9)

Supreme Court Case Could Lead To Loss of Black Representation In Congress

WASHINGTON (AP) — A neutering by the Supreme Court of the Voting Rights Act’s last remaining major provision would potentially trigger a political avalanche — an event that starts narrow but gathers momentum as it spreads across the national map.

In this case, the benefit would be to Republicans seeking to maintain a majority in the House of Representatives, perhaps for many years to come.

Such a change seemed more plausible Wednesday after the court’s conservative majority indicated a willingness to limit race-based districts under Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act. The landmark civil rights law requires the drawing of legislative districts that allow minorities to select representatives of their choosing. That has created majority-Black and Latino districts that vote reliably Democratic in some of the nation’s most conservative states.

Plaintiffs in one of those states, Louisiana, brought the case before the high court after the state was ordered by a federal judge to redraw its congressional map to include a second majority-Black district, one that was won by a Democrat last year. If the plaintiffs win their case, it could turn that district back into one likely to be represented by a Republican and possibly even eliminate its other Democratic seat, which also was mandated under the Voting Rights

Act.

That could ripple across the South, where the Democratic group Fair Fight found that there are 19 VRAmandated, Democratic-held seats that Republicans could conceivably redraw to their benefit.

“I’m really worried that, given the political climate that we’re in and the conservative nature of this court, and then rolling back affirmative action and giving more executive power to the president, that this will not end well for us,” said Rep. Terri Sewell, an Alabama Democrat.

Difficult to predict the extent of GOP gains in Congress

Republicans have increasingly complained about Section 2, contending it forces them to either violate the Constitution by using racial factors in redistricting or get sued if they’re not solicitous enough of racial groups that lean Democratic.

“We are damned if we do and damned if we don’t,” Louisiana Attorney General Elizabeth Murrill told reporters Wednesday.

If the court sides with Louisiana, some Democratic members of Congress said they hoped the decision would be narrowly tailored to that case rather than an all-out assault on the last major pillar of the landmark civil rights law.

Even if the court strikes a broader blow to the Voting Rights Act, it’s unlikely most of those districts could be redrawn before the 2026 midterm

elections, and the number that ultimately could swing to the GOP is likely smaller.

Still, with the House decided by a razor-tight margin in recent elections — the GOP currently controls the chamber by three votes — every seat counts.

“It makes it harder for Democrats to create a majority if they are eliminating only Democratic districts,” said Jonathan Cervas, a political scientist at Carnegie Mellon University who has helped draw maps ordered by judges in multiple Voting Rights Act-related cases. But he cautioned against predicting the size of future Republican gains.

“None of us can even know this,” Cervas said, adding that there would still be limits on GOP benefits. “We’re talking about real ceilings here.”

With extreme gerrymandering, ‘It won’t be a democracy’

That’s because, even if Section 2 went away, the Democratic-leaning voters it gave voice to would not. Republican mapmakers would have to put them somewhere — likely still in Democratic districts.

Take Tennessee, where the Republican-controlled Legislature drew a ruthlessly partisan map during the last redistricting cycle. That map yielded seven reliably Republican seats, and one Democratic one, a Voting Rights Act-compliant district in Memphis.

Even without the Voting Rights Act, Cervas said, there is no way for Republicans to make that Memphis seat red. If they scattered the city’s voters among neighboring GOP-heavy districts, they might make those competitive.

He said some other GOP-controlled states, such as Missouri and South Carolina, are in similar binds with their lone, heavily Democratic seats that were drawn to comply with the voting law. Others, like Georgia, are so politically competitive that it’s likely Republicans couldn’t erase a Democratic seat in one part of the state without jeopardizing one of their own.

Still other GOP-controlled states, such as Mississippi, may have an easier time eliminating their lone Democratic, Voting Rights Act-mandated seat. And in larger states such as North Carolina and Florida, Republicans would have a freer hand to redraw the maps to favor their party without having to preserve majority-minority seats held by Democrats.

Members of the Congressional Black Caucus gathered after Wednesday’s Supreme Court arguments and warned that a broad decision against Section 2, which allows challenges to racially discriminatory electoral practices, could lead to extreme gerrymandering by Republicans. That could leave many Black voters without real representation in Congress, they said.

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Business & Finance

Red Lobster Is Betting On Black To Save Its Business

By Timeka Tounsel
Forbes Contributor

Red Lobster is a cultural tradition for many Black Americans born before 1990. Once a go-to casual dining option for birthdays, graduations, and post-church feasting, the seafood chain filed bankruptcy in 2024 after a decade of business struggles.

Now, the restaurant so iconic that it earned a mention in Beyoncé’s 2016 megahit, “Formation,” is hoping to make a comeback with a new millennial CEO at the helm, Damola Adamolekun. Before joining Red Lobster, Adamolekun was CEO of another struggling eatery, P. F. Chang’s. He was the company’s first Black chief executive, steering the chain through the pandemic years and overseeing the rollout of elevated takeout options.

Restaurant upgrades and new customer offerings were the centerpiece of the P. F. Chang’s revival, but Adamolekun has strategically integrated his own image into the Red Lobster rebrand. The CEO participated in a press tour that included an interview with the hosts of the syndicated hip-hop radio show and podcast, The Breakfast Club. Based in New York, the podcast surpassed a billion downloads in June 2025. Adamolekun’s appearance introduced him to potentially millions of listeners, most of whom are Black consumers between the ages of 18 and 34.

Leveraging his identity as a Nigerian-American with his own memories of visiting Red Lobster as a child positions the CEO to establish a cultural connection with Black restaurant goers that an executive with a different background might have overlooked.



Rebranding Through Cultural Recognition

Adamolekun is the first person viewers see in a new commercial for Red Lobster’s rebrand, and he’s not eating seafood. Instead, the opening scene finds the CEO sitting at a desk as he introduces himself. The setting signals that the “real change” discussed throughout the advertisement isn’t superficial, but comprehensive, top-down transformation.

In other words, Adamolekun wants viewers to know that Red Lobster is better than it was a year ago, but still retains all of the qual-

ities that have made it iconic, like the Cheddar Bay Biscuits.

The 36-year-old executive also intends to build on the brand’s strong rapport with Black consumers.

Red Lobster’s cultural legacy extends back to its establishment in 1968. When founder Bill Darden opened the very first restaurant in Lakeland, Florida, he made the decision to follow the laws that prohibited segregation in public places, even as other Southern business owners resisted.

“From the very beginning, Black people were welcome to eat there, welcome to work there,” Adamole-

kun said during his interview for The Breakfast Club. “So, it’s always had a good relationship with Black America.”

Adamolekun hopes to enrich the brand’s relationship with Black consumers through strategic partnerships. For example, Red Lobster sponsored ESPN’s Band of the Year competition in Atlanta last December, where Florida A&M University, a historically Black university, was awarded the championship.

“HBCU marching bands are more than musical performers—they are storytellers, cultural icons, and creators of unforgettable experiences,”

The Federal Shutdown Affects On N.C.

Carolina Public Press—As the federal government crept into its third week of shutdown Wednesday, deadlines for when some essential services that affect North Carolina residents will run out of funding are quickly nearing or have already passed.

Food and nutrition programs. Federal court operations. Disaster relief funds. All of these will be put on hold if the shutdown remains in place, to the detriment of many North Carolinians.

The political stalemate began on Oct. 1 after Democrats and Republicans in Congress failed to come to an agreement over a spending bill that was necessary to keep the government running. Democrats stood firm on wanting to extend tax credits for Affordable Care Act (a.k.a. “Obamacare”) health insurance policies that were set to expire this year. Republicans want to nix the subsidies that keep health care affordable for many Americans but cost the government billions of dollars each year.

So far, nine votes to reopen the government have failed as both sides dug in their heels.

The battle in Washington, D.C., has real consequences for North Carolinians, state leaders have warned, the most pressing of which include social-safety-net programs that may soon go broke without new appropriations.

Counties administer many of these services through their Department of Social Services offices. So far, information from the federal government has been “minimal,” Sharnese Ransome, Executive Director of the North Carolina Association of County Directors of Social Services, told Carolina Public Press.

“Counties are very concerned about the impact the federal government shutdown will have on the residents of the state,” Ransome said.



The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), known generally as food stamps, could be the first of the human services to be affected. The U.S. Department of Agriculture, which funds the federal program, told states in a letter last week that SNAP has enough money to last through October.

However, those funds will not be enough to fully fund November benefits, and the Department directed states to delay sending next month’s issuance information to their vendors in charge of distributing SNAP benefits.

“We are working to get a better understanding of exactly what that disruption will mean for North Carolina,” said Summer Tonizzo, a spokesperson for the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services. More than 700,000 households in North Carolina receive SNAP benefits each month, and a majority of participating families have either a child, senior or an adult with a disability, according to DHHS. About 582,000 children in North Carolina rely on SNAP for nutritious food.

Chatham County DSS director Jen-nie Kristiansen said she’s “particu-

larly concerned” about SNAP, which serves about 5,000 people in the county.

“Chatham County, like many other counties in N.C., is heavily reliant on federal funds to serve residents, so we are paying close attention to the federal shutdown” she said.

A separate supplemental nutrition program for women, infants and children (WIC) has not yet been funded but remains operational, DHHS said. About 262,000 North Carolinians receive benefits from WIC.

Right now, state and county health officials are playing the waiting game as they seek more information from the federal government.

“Our leadership team is reassessing the situation daily,” DHHS spokesperson Hannah Jones said.

Some Helene recovery funds are on pauseThe federal government has exempted programs fueled by its Disaster Relief Fund from the effects of the shutdown, meaning most FEMA-run programs should continue to operate. That includes the federal home repair and buyout program and public assistance for local governments.

However, programs housed within other federal agencies such as the

Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Department of Agriculture (USDA) have been affected, according to a letter penned by Gov. Josh Stein to federal budget director Russell Vought.

Farmers in Western North Carolina haven’t been able to access federal reimbursements for the nearly \$5 billion in crop losses and other agricultural impacts as a result of Tropical Storm Helene.

Meanwhile, the state’s home repair and rebuilding program, which is funded by a \$1.4 billion grant from HUD, has been delayed by its inability to draw down federal money.

FEMA also hasn’t been issuing new flood insurance policies or renewing expired policies since the shutdown began. That could become a serious problem in the event of a major storm.

“The people of North Carolina cannot afford any more delays or setbacks, especially as we face the rest of this year’s hurricane season,” Stein wrote.

Stein requested that the Office of Management and Budget, which provides guidance on which federal programs are considered essential, also exempt those recovery programs which aren’t paid for through the Disaster Relief Fund.

So far, there’s been no response to the request.

“Support from the federal government is critical to Helene recovery,” Matt Calabria, director of the Governor’s Recovery Office for Western North Carolina, told CPP in an email. “We can’t run short on resources, especially on the eve of the winter season.”

US courts running out of cash during shutdown

Federal courts will continue paid operations through Friday, Oct. 17, according to the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts.

Adamolekun stated in a press release. “This sponsorship reflects our commitment to celebrating the rich heritage, passion, and talent of the HBCU community, and we are honored to help shine a spotlight on their historic legacy.”

The company has also partnered with the Chicago Sky, the WNBA team that is home to sophomore standout and double-double record-setter Angel Reese. This season fans will see the tunnel fits that Reese is known for on the Red Lob-

ster red carpet. The sponsorship is intended as a tie-in to the restaurant’s new Red Carpet Hospitality initiative, an effort designed to elevate the customer experience.

In the end, Red Lobster may not have the cultural capital of a Black owned business, but its rebrand indicates that it is nevertheless committed to Black patrons. Time will tell if the operational changes and new messaging are enough to convince diners to give the chain another chance.

STATE UTILITY REGULATORS GRAPPLING WITH DATA CENTER ENERGY DEMAND, RATEPAYER PROTECTIONS

WUNC—Data centers require an enormous amount of energy. In North Carolina, state regulators are trying to figure out how to meet this unprecedented demand while also protecting the average ratepayer. Earlier this week, the North Carolina Utilities Commission held a two-day 'large load technical conference' to talk about these issues.

This conversation has been edited lightly for clarity.

Let’s start by introducing the players here. Who or what is the North Carolina Utilities Commission? Who was at the meeting this week?

The utilities commission is a five-person regulatory agency. They regulate public utilities in North Carolina, the largest being Duke Energy, which provides energy to the vast majority of the state.

The meeting held this week was focused on how to best serve large load customers like data centers. Several different stakeholders presented their ideas to the commission, including Duke Energy, Dominion Energy, clean energy advocates, and representatives from the data center industry.

In this context, what is the term 'large load'?

A large load customer is a customer that requires a lot of energy. According to a congressional report, data centers across the U.S. in 2023 used about 176 terawatt hours of energy, or about 4.4% of the country’s total electricity consumption that year. Some projections show the energy consumption from data centers could double or triple by 2028.

And why is that? Data centers have been around for years already. Why are they going to need so much more energy now?

Because of the rise of AI. At the meeting this week, I heard over and over again that right now, we’re at an inflection point. How we choose to respond to this situation is going to have ramifications on energy production, infrastructure, and on the climate for decades to come.

What else did you hear at this week’s meeting? What are some of your biggest takeaways?

It seems that right now in North Carolina, there are a lot more questions than answers. Some of the biggest questions are: How much more energy are we going to need? By when do we need it? How are we going to generate that energy, and who’s going to pay for it?

Something else that stood out to me is that there are a lot of different balancing acts going on. Political leaders and Duke Energy representatives say data centers want to come to North Carolina because we have such a business friendly climate. These are million, and in some cases, billion dollar investments that provide good paying jobs for local families.

But that economic opportunity has to be balanced with consumer protections. The utilities commission wants to make sure the average person isn’t paying for additional energy infrastructure that’s ultimately meant to support data centers.

This is often what we hear when utilities have to generate more electricity. They talk about raising rates on ratepayers. Did this meeting provide any clarification on whether ratepayers will be paying more?

I think it’s fair to assume that yes, ratepayers can expect to keep seeing higher prices. Duke Energy representatives emphasized that they have to make upgrades to existing resources to increase reliability, while at the same time adding new resources to generate more energy.

Company representatives also really stressed that over the long term, as more large load customers join the system, that should alleviate rates. But it’s my understanding that that downward pressure won’t happen until at least another 15 years.

Another important topic that was discussed is energy generation. How are we going to produce all this energy? Data centers want energy as quickly as possible, and fossil fuels like natural gas and coal can meet this large demand quickly. But we have to remember that there’s a backdrop here of reaching net zero carbon emissions in North Carolina by 2050. Under state law, Duke Energy has to be carbon free by then.

So the balancing act here is how much clean energy do we use, even if it takes longer, versus how much energy from fossil fuels do we use, even though we need to reach net zero? Again, lots of questions that are still being figured out.



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OpenAI Slipped Shopping Into 800m Users’ Chats – Here’s Why That Matters

(THE CONVERSATION) Your phone buzzes at 6 a.m. It’s ChatGPT: “I see you’re traveling to New York this week. Based on your preferences, I’ve found three restaurants near your hotel. Would you like me to make a reservation?”

You didn’t ask for this. The AI simply knew your plans from scanning your calendar and email and decided to help. Later, you mention to the chatbot needing flowers for your wife’s birthday. Within seconds, beautiful arrangements appear in the chat. You tap one: “Buy now.” Done. The flowers are

ordered.

This isn’t science fiction. On Sept. 29, 2025, OpenAI and payment processor Stripe launched the Agentic Commerce Protocol. This technology lets you buy things instantly from Etsy within ChatGPT conversations. ChatGPT users are scheduled to gain access to over 1 million other Shopify merchants, from major household brand names to small shops as well.

As marketing researchers who study how AI affects consumer behavior, we believe we’re seeing the beginning of the biggest shift in how

people shop since smartphones arrived. Most people have no idea it’s happening.

From searching to being served For three decades, the internet has worked the same way: You want something, you Google it, you compare options, you decide, you buy. You’re in control.

That era is ending. AI shopping assistants are evolving through three phases. First came “on-demand AI.” You ask ChatGPT a question, it answers. That’s where most people are today. Now we’re entering “ambient AI,”

where AI suggests things before you ask. ChatGPT monitors your calendar, reads your emails and offers recommendations without being asked.

Soon comes “autopilot AI,” where AI makes purchases for you with minimal input from you. “Order flowers for my anniversary next week.” ChatGPT checks your calendar, remembers preferences, processes payment and confirms delivery.

Each phase adds convenience but

(See *OPENAI* P. 4)



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OpenAI Slipped Shopping Into 800m —CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

gives you less control.

The manipulation problem

AI's responses create what researchers call an "advice illusion." When ChatGPT suggests three hotels, you don't see them as ads. They feel like recommendations from a knowledgeable friend. But you don't know whether those hotels paid for placement or whether better options exist that ChatGPT didn't show you.

Traditional advertising is something most people have learned to recognize and dismiss. But AI recommendations feel objective even when they're not. With one-tap purchasing, the entire process happens so smoothly that you might not pause to compare options.

OpenAI isn't alone in this race. In the same month, Google announced its competing protocol, AP2. Microsoft, Amazon and Meta are building similar systems. Whoever wins will be in position to control how billions of people buy things, potentially capturing a percentage of trillions of dollars in annual trans-

actions.

What we're giving up

This convenience comes with costs most people haven't thought about.

Privacy: For AI to suggest restaurants, it needs to read your calendar and emails. For it to buy flowers, it needs your purchase history. People will be trading total surveillance for convenience.

Choice: Right now, you see multiple options when you search. With AI as the middleman, you might see only three options ChatGPT chooses. Entire businesses could become invisible if AI chooses to ignore them.

Power of comparing: When ChatGPT suggests products with one-tap checkout, the friction that made you pause and compare disappears.

It's happening faster than you think

ChatGPT reached 800 million weekly users by September 2025, growing four times faster than social media platforms did. Major retailers began using OpenAI's Agen-



tic Commerce Protocol within days of its launch.

History shows people consistently underestimate how quickly they adapt to convenient technologies. Not long ago most people wouldn't think of getting in a stranger's car.

Uber now has 150 million users. Convenience always wins. The question isn't whether AI shopping will become mainstream. It's whether people will keep any real control over what they buy and why.

What you can do

The open internet gave people a world of information and choice at their fingertips. The AI revolution could take that away. Not by forcing people, but by making it so easy to let the algorithm decide that they forget what it's like to truly choose for themselves. Buying things is becoming as thoughtless as sending a text.

In addition, a single company could become the gatekeeper for all digital shopping, with the potential for monopolization beyond even Amazon's current dominance in e-commerce. We believe that it's important to at least have a vigorous public conversation about whether this is the future people actually want.

Here are some steps you can take to resist the lure of convenience:

Question AI suggestions. When ChatGPT suggests products, recognize you're seeing hand-picked choices, not all your options. Before one-tap purchases, pause and ask:

Would I buy this if I had to visit five websites and compare prices?

Review your privacy settings carefully. Understand what you're trading for convenience.

Talk about this with friends and family. The shift to AI shopping is happening without public awareness. The time to have conversations about acceptable limits is now, before one-tap purchasing becomes so normal that questioning it seems strange.

The invisible price tag

AI will learn what you want, maybe even before you want it. Every time you tap "Buy now" you're training it – teaching it your patterns, your weaknesses, what time of day you impulse buy.

Our warning isn't about rejecting technology. It's about recognizing the trade-offs. Every convenience has a cost. Every tap is data. The companies building these systems are betting you won't notice, and in most cases they're probably right.



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Health and Wellness

From Waterways to Wombs: Widespread Threats of Plastic

NC NEWSLINE– Endometriosis affects one in 10 girls/teens and women of childbearing age, according to the World Health Organization.

Endometriosis is a painful condition where tissue similar to the uterine lining grows outside the uterus in the pelvic region, most often on the ovaries, fallopian tubes or pelvic tissue.

Despite its wide prevalence and potential to cause debilitating pelvic pain and infertility, researchers say the disease remains underdiagnosed and poorly understood.

Now, emerging research is exploring a possible link between endometriosis and microplastic exposure, raising questions about how environmental contaminants might contribute to development of the condition. The findings also underscore growing public health concerns over plastic waste accumulating in human bodies and the environment.

With nearly 200 million girls and women worldwide affected by endometriosis, experts say improving understanding of the disease — and how environmental factors may influence it — is critical for advancing diagnosis and treatment.

That’s the message Julia Froese, a senior studying environmental health sciences at UNC-Chapel Hill’s Gillings School of Global Public Health, shared at a recent conference in Charlotte. Froese presented research — currently under peer review — that investigates whether menstrual blood could serve as a noninvasive diagnostic tool for endometriosis, an alternative to laparoscopic surgery, the current standard for treatment/diagnosis.

Her research poster at the 10th Annual NC Breathe Conference, sponsored by CleanAIRE NC, earned an award in the student research competition.

“The study is looking to create a diagnostic test that’s noninvasive, using menstrual blood to actually diagnose endometriosis,” Froese said. “So more people can get diagnosed [earlier], before they turn 30 and try to have kids, and face fertility issues that could’ve been addressed if they knew they had this condition.”

The new research builds on a 2022 study that found traces of environmental toxins, including plastic particles, in menstrual blood

samples, suggesting these substances can accumulate in the uterus and disrupt reproductive processes. Other recent studies highlight another barrier: period stigma. A paper published this year found that taboos surrounding menstruation often prevent people from seeking care, delaying diagnosis for conditions like endometriosis.

Not all experts agree that menstrual blood analysis will reveal early signs of endometriosis specifically, but some see value in the approach as a broader tool for monitoring contaminant exposure.

“As many toxins are widespread and causality between toxins and endometriosis is uncertain, an annual screening might not be helpful for detecting early signs,” said Liping Feng, associate professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Duke University School of Medicine. “For patients in highly contaminated areas, it’s worthwhile to screen for broader concerns.”

Advancing research As part of the project, Froese worked with Dr. Christine Metz, a professor at New York-based Northwell Health’s Feinstein Institutes of Medical Research, and co-director of the organization’s Research Out-Smarts Endometriosis Study. Metz, short on specifics because the research is yet unpublished, said the team is examining how micro- and nanoplastics affect uterine health and female reproduction, with early findings showing the smallest particles may cause the greatest harm.

“The smaller plastic particles seem to have more significant effects, and they’re not typically assessed or measured,” she said.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration defines microplastic compounds as fragments smaller than 5 mm in length — about the size of a pencil eraser. Over time, they can break down into even smaller particles, known as nanoplastics, some invisible to the naked eye. These substances are believed to persist in the environment for hundreds, even thousands, of years. Because plastics are still relatively new, it’s hard to know. Metz’s research also takes a novel approach to studying the uterus by analyzing menstrual blood, which contains shed uterine tissue.

“We started this in 2013 and many people laughed at us,” she said. “It’s now becoming more common, and you’ll see more studies using menstrual blood.”

Metz said she hopes that one day

assessments of endometrial health through menstrual blood analysis could become part of routine wellness visits.

“The endometrial lining is shed every month,” she said.

She also said that using the substance also has the potential to help scientists measure the effects of widespread environmental contamination.

“If there were a train derailment and terrible things were released into the environment, you could actually assess exposure through [menstrual blood],” Metz said.

Hard to track Plastic waste is an emerging worldwide contaminant that threatens the environment as well as aquatic and human health. Oceans and waterways absorb the daily load of 2,000 garbage trucks’ worth of plastic waste — more than 25 million tons each year, according to the UN Environment Programme.

Scientists are increasingly linking these microplastic particles to human health risks. A 2023 Duke University study found a possible connection between nanoplastics and a brain protein associated with Parkinson’s disease and certain forms



of dementia. Previous studies have suggested that humans ingest about a credit-card’s worth of microplastics each week, and that these particles may play a role in conditions such as inflammatory bowel disease and hormonal disruption. A 2019 study also estimated that people may inhale 74,000 to 121,000 microplastic particles each year.

waste shows up in North Carolina’s rivers and streams. Between 2021 and 2024, seven Waterkeeper organizations maintained 21 in-stream trash traps across the state and trained staff and volunteers to record the types and quantities of litter during cleanouts. They documented more than 150,000 pieces of debris, with plastic bottles and Styrofoam making up the majority, according to a study done in the wake of the cleanup.

“Plastic doesn’t just disappear — it breaks down into microplastics, but it doesn’t decompose into vitamins and minerals like natural materials do,” said Madison Haley, an NC State graduate student and project researcher.

That same journey — from waterways into the human body — is what researchers like Froese and Metz are investigating as they study how micro- and nanoplastics may accumulate in uterine tissue and affect reproductive health.

Metz said researchers have reliable methods for detecting microplastics, but nanoplastics — particles that may be more harmful — remain far harder to track. “We don’t yet have great ways to do that,” she said.

MORAL MONDAY ACTIONS TARGET CONGRESSIONAL OFFICES OVER HEALTHCARE CUTS



By Jordan Meadows

Staff Writer

In cities across North Carolina, the Moral Monday movement roared back to life on Monday as clergy, low-wage workers, impacted families, and justice advocates gathered for mass prayer vigils to protest what they call a “violent and immoral” legislative assault on the poor.

Led by Bishop William J. Barber II and organized by Repairers of the Breach, the coordinated actions took place outside the offices of congressional representatives in Raleigh, Greensboro, Hickory, Boone, Cornelius, and Wilmington. In Raleigh, demonstrators gathered in front of Senator Ted Budd’s office on Fayetteville Street.

At the heart of the protest were urgent concerns: deep cuts to healthcare protections, delayed paychecks due to the government shutdown, and the ramping up of detention and deportation efforts that are sowing fear in immigrant communities.

“This is not just an attack on Black folk. This is not just an attack on poor folk. This is an attack on everybody,” declared Bishop Barber, citing Medicaid enrollment figures. “When you talk about Medicaid enrollees in North Carolina, 709,000 are white...543,000 are Black...322,000 are Latino...190,000 are mixed.”

Many of the cuts in Medicaid referenced throughout the event dealt with the “One Big Beautiful Bill Act”. Chiquita Stenson, a mother of six from Wake County, delivered a plea to lawmakers:

“Senator, what did you expect to gain from voting for this bill?” she asked. “In this day and age, where the rich get richer, you’re working on ways to keep the poor stagnant.”

Participants also highlighted the human cost of the federal government’s partial shutdown, which has delayed pay for thousands and strained essential programs that serve the elderly, disabled, and low-income families.

This week’s moral actions are part of a broader national movement throughout October, rooted in a tradition of Moral Fusion Organizing that traces back to the First and Second Reconstructions. Today’s organizers see themselves as the foundation of a Third Reconstruction—a growing force that demands economic justice, racial equity, and human dignity for all.

Bishop Barber announced plans for a massive “old-style” Moral Monday March in Raleigh this February, recalling the 2014 protests that drew more than 100,000 people.

“We think we can do even better now,” Barber said.

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Arts & Culture

More Women Are Redefining Their Baldness As Beautiful

NEW YORK (AP) — “Being bald is sexy. It’s an attitude. It’s a luxury. It’s a lifestyle.”

That’s how Brennan Nevada Johnson, who shaved her head voluntarily 14 years ago, opens the video podcast she launched last November to celebrate the advantages of choosing a bald look.

Sensuous, self-assured and glamorous are not the adjectives typically assigned to women with shorn hair. For centuries, many cultures have viewed long hair as a symbol of femininity, health and fertility. But more women are defying that traditional beauty standard and finding empowerment by baring their heads.

“Once you do it, it brings all this confidence into your life,” Johnson, 34, said. “Whenever you see someone who’s bald and not wearing a wig, just know that they have fully embraced themselves, and I think that’s something that’s really challenging to do.”

Her initial decision to go bald-headed was practical. Johnson played competitive volleyball in college and found the sweating she did on the court affected the expensive hair relaxing treatments she often had done. Once she started shaving off her hair, though, she was hooked. She was relieved to save money on salon trips.

Johnson now owns a New York public relations firm. “Bald and Buzzed with Brennan,” the video podcast she posts on YouTube, was an attempt to fill a void in social media content that affirmed bald people, especially women. She says she always thought baldness was sexy.

“It’s such a fashion statement, and it’s a really powerful look,” Johnson said.

Other women without hair, whether voluntarily or due to medical conditions, also have sought ways to support each other, attending conferences, joining “baldie” groups and swapping grooming and scalp care



tips.

“There’s a whole community of us out there,” said Dash Lopez, a content creator who posts a weekly video series of her shaving routine called “Fresh Cut Friday.” “We need to talk about it because we do find comfort and empowerment and beauty in what some people think is weird.”

Redefining beauty Lopez said members of her family praised the long curly hair she had growing up. Some of her friends played with different hair colors and styles, but Lopez said she didn’t have the same freedom. And she didn’t enjoy detangling her hair or spending long afternoons at the salon.

As soon as she turned 18 and could get a haircut without permission, she chopped her locks into a pixie cut. Then she shaved it all off during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“It makes me feel powerful in the sense that I’m able to detach from the things that people place so much emphasis on,” Lopez, 29, said. “I’m not sitting here planning, ‘Oh my gosh, when am I going to get my next color appointment done? That’s gonna cost me \$300. Oh my gosh. I’ve got to get my hair done before I

go to this event.”

Lopez signed a contract with a modeling agency in 2020, a time when brands wanted to showcase diversity, she said. Back then, being bald worked for her professionally.

“There was an appreciation for quirks and if you had a gap in your tooth, if you had a bald head, if you had a face full of freckles, that’s what casting directors were looking for,” Lopez said.

She noticed the tide shifting last year, when her bookings for modeling jobs decreased. “Let’s be honest, the odds were stacked against me in the modeling world,” Lopez said. “I was 5’ 4”, 5’ 5” on paper, no hair.”

A client suggested she wear wigs to land more work. Lopez did not want to do that or grow out her hair. Her modeling contract ended. Since then, she has shared glimpses of her life as a bald woman on Instagram and TikTok, where some of her videos have been watched millions of times.

“I feel powerful in the sense that I’m making my own choices,” Lopez said. “I’m doing it for my own self-empowerment, I am doing it from my own self-clarity, for a deeper understanding of what it is that I value,

a deeper understanding of what beauty means to me.”

Creating community Many women are confronted with how they define beauty when they lose hair due to health conditions such as alopecia or during chemotherapy treatment for cancer.

Felicia Flores, a flight attendant who lives in Atlanta, was diagnosed in 2001 with alopecia, an autoimmune disorder that causes hair to fall out. Six years later, all her hair was gone. Initially, she wore wigs.

Then she came across a group called The Baldie Movement on Facebook. “The ladies just really inspired me,” Flores, 47, said. “They really did help to encourage me and give me strength, ... and they were just so confident.”

She eventually decided to stop wearing wigs and embrace being bald in 2015, after a romantic breakup. “I was tired of lying. I felt like I was hiding something. I felt like I wasn’t myself,” she said.

To help uplift and inspire other women, Flores founded an annual conference called Baldie Con. The fourth one drew more than 200 attendees to Atlanta last month for a fashion show, guest speakers, a jazz brunch and a black tie gala, she said.

Managing reactions Aicha Soumaoro, who works in Philadelphia as a nurse on weekdays and as a mechanic on weekends, said some of her patients call her “sir” instead of “ma’am,” but she doesn’t let it bother her. “It’s new to them, girls that are bald.”

Soumaoro, 27, said that after she shaved her head, her mother told her that most men wouldn’t want to marry a woman with no hair. She focuses instead on the compliments she’s received while out in public, including “You wear it with confidence” and “Your face is gorgeous.” “Being bald, it’s like a boost of confidence out of nowhere,” said Soumaoro, who cuts her hair every Sunday. “It’s like a new skin, a new

layer, a new personality. I just feel fresh. Like I was born again.”

She also hikes on Sundays, savoring the feeling of cold breezes on her scalp. “Having that connection with Earth, it feels amazing,” Soumaoro said. “I feel like I can hear everything more clearly. It’s like I have a clear mindset when my head is bald.”

Tiffany Michael Thomas, an Atlanta-based performer who goes by the stage name Amor Lauren, shaved her head in a show of support when her mother was undergoing treatment for pancreatic cancer.

After her mother died, Thomas continued receiving compliments

from other women. She decided to keep the bald look.

“Once I began to really embrace it, it just made me feel like I was unstoppable,” Thomas, 37, said. “There’s nothing that I have to hide behind anymore. ... It forced me to deal with all of my insecurities.”

If you’re thinking about shaving your head, don’t hesitate, Thomas advises. Women tell her they’re concerned that their head isn’t the right shape, or they have a lump or a scar. “Do it without thought,” she said. “Do it scared. Everything in life, just do it scared. The best way to get through that fear is to actually do it.”

THE RALEIGH-WAKE ALUMNI CHAPTER OF NCCU CONGRATULATES STEPHANIE WILSON JONES ON BEING CROWNED MS. NCCU ALUMNI 2025!



By Jheri Hardaway

Staff Writer

This spirited and hard-fought competition showcased the very best of Eagle Pride, with Stephanie raising an outstanding \$41,574.75 in support of the university — directly contributing to scholarships for deserving students. An active and dedicated member of the Raleigh-Wake Alumni Chapter, Stephanie also serves on the regional level as an Assistant Vice

President, where she leads with energy, commitment, and a true can-do spirit. Known as a hustler and hard worker, her dynamic fundraising campaign featured Fish Fry sales, popcorn sales, raffles, and a vigorous outreach strategy that rallied support from businesses, organizations, fellow alumni, family, and friends.

Stephanie is a proud magna cum laude graduate of NCCU, where she earned her Bachelor of Business Administration degree in 2004. Beyond her outstanding service to NCCU, Stephanie is a devoted mother of two, a successful real estate Broker in Charge of her own firm (Next Move Realty), and a fitness enthusiast. She is also a proud member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. As part of the celebration of this incredible achievement, Stephanie will be presented to the student body and alumni during NCCU’s Homecoming Football Game halftime show on October 25 on campus in Durham, NC. This special moment will honor her leadership, service, and contributions in front of the entire Eagle community. The Raleigh-Wake Alumni Chapter celebrates Stephanie’s remarkable achievement and extends heartfelt congratulations for representing the chapter, Region IV, and NCCU with excellence, grace, and determination. Congratulations, Ms. NCCU Alumni 2025 — Stephanie Wilson Jones!

“Art, Freedom, And The Power Of The Collective”: Angela Y. Davis Inspires

By Judaea Ingram

Staff Writer

On last Wednesday morning, the air inside Harrison Auditorium at North Carolina A&T was alive clapping, laughter, and the rhythmic beat of drums filled every corner of the room. As the Suah African Dance Theatre opened the program with West African dance, hundreds of students, faculty, and alumni rose to their feet, clapping along. The auditorium was packed, every seat filled, and for a few hours, the campus felt less like a university and more like a community in motion, united in rhythm, reflection, and purpose.

This was no ordinary lecture. It was a living conversation about art, activism, and freedom. At its center stood Angela Y. Davis, the world-renowned scholar, activist, and icon of justice. Hosted by A&T’s College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences as part of its Lyceum Series and “Art & Activism 2025” initiative, the event reminded the audience of the profound role that creativity plays in movements for change.

“Her visit serves as a timely reminder of the power of art and activism,” said Dr. Jonovan Cooper, assistant professor and Lyceum Committee chair. “Artists have a responsibility to participate in the struggle for humanity and help shape a more just society.”

A Celebration of Art as Resistance Before Davis even took the stage, the audience was drawn into a multimedia performance, a video montage featuring professors in the College of Arts peaking on how art reflects the times we live in. They spoke of using dance, music, and painting as languages of survival, history, and protest. The message was clear: art is not a luxury; it is a necessity.

As the lights dimmed and Angela Davis appeared, the crowd erupted in applause. Decades of activism and scholarship walked to the stage, yet her presence was gentle, even play-



ful. She began not with theory or politics, but with something simple: her favorite color.

“Colors have vibration,” she said, smiling. “Purple makes me feel powerful a power that brings people along.”

The audience laughed, clapped, and murmured in agreement. That warmth carried throughout the morning, Davis was not there to lecture, but to connect.

Healing Through Expression Davis spoke of art as “a catalyst for healing, dialogue, and transformation.” She reminded listeners that Black history is not only about suffering but about survival about how people have transformed pain into progress.

“We should not just draw from the pain of our history,” she said. “What matters is how we survived, how we never gave up.”

Her words rippled through the room. You could feel people leaning forward, clinging to every syllable. She spoke about her own childhood in segregated Birmingham, Alabama, where signs and systems declared limits that she refused to accept. “There were many places we couldn’t go,” she recalled softly. “But I knew

it will be different one day. And you will be part of that change.”

For Davis, activism is not a burden. “It’s not a sacrifice,” she said. “It’s a beautiful way to experience life. We have a duty to push the needle forward and we do this together.”

The Power of Art and Imagination Throughout the discussion, Davis returned to one central theme: the connection between art and freedom. She spoke of how art allows people to imagine new worlds something that activism cannot survive without.

“Art gives us a different kind of freedom,” she explained. “It opens imagination the space where transformation begins.”

The moderator was Professor and artist Jessica Kelly, exploring how dance, visual art, and music become tools for collective wellness. “Create like a child,” Kelly urged. “Don’t think, just do, just feel. That’s where truth lives.”

When asked about her iconic Afro, a symbol of defiance during the Civil Rights and Black Power movements, Davis smiled. “It became a symbol of standing up against racism, of pride. It said, ‘I’m Black and I’m beautiful.’”

Art as Wellness, Freedom as Practice

The conversation turned tender when Davis reflected on wellness how creativity sustains the spirit. “Art is spiritual, it’s energetic,” she said. “You can feel the energy people put through their art.”

For her, wellness is not about retreat but relationship with the self, with community, with the ancestors whose courage paved the way.

She also spoke of the importance of Historically Black Colleges and Universities, calling them “the future.” “HBCUs continue to struggle to stay afloat,” she said, “but they are vital to our communities they hold the knowledge of how to fight and how to dream.”

Questions That Reach Beyond the Stage

Students filled the aisles with questions about advice, queerness, capitalism, and the evolving nature of activism. Davis listened carefully, responding not with answers but with challenges gentle ones to think collectively rather than individually.

“We’ve been taught to think of ourselves as individuals,” she said. “But none of us are free until all of us are free.”

Her voice carried the conviction of someone who has lived every word she speaks.

“A Beautiful Way to Experience Life”

By the end, as Davis stood to leave, the audience rose with her not out of ceremony, but reverence. Students embraced each other, still buzzing with thought. Professors smiled, nodding in quiet agreement.

The morning had begun with movement the rhythm of drums and dance and ended in reflection.

It was a full-circle moment: art had done what it always does. It reminded everyone in that room that freedom is not a distant dream but a living practice, one painted, danced, written, and sung into existence, together.

should keep its redistricting powers.

Republicans swiftly rejected the proposal without comment.

The erasure of eastern North Carolina’s Black representation hit home for many at the rally. U.S. Rep. Alma Adams reflected on the legacy at stake: “And in that district, in the East, we’ve had Black representation for the past 30 years. And so they are disenfranchising people. And you might not like what I have to say, or you might not like what I do. But listen, I deserve to have a vote and be fairly represented,” Adams said. “It’s good to strategize. It’s good to agonize—but it’s time for us to put the agony aside and organize!”

GOP Redistricting —CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

echoed through the crowd as they marched around the legislature. Anderson Clayton, chair of the North Carolina Democratic Party, told the crowd:

“We are here to show the General Assembly that people across this state and across this nation are watching them!”

Democratic leaders seized the rally as an opportunity to reframe the redistricting fight as a moral battle for the soul of democracy in North Carolina.

“The North Carolina General Assembly stole three seats from the people of North Carolina,” said U.S. Rep. Deborah Ross. “And the consequences have hurt Americans from coast to

coast. It cost us the U.S. House. It’s costing millions of Americans their Medicaid.”

The proposed map would effectively erase Rep. Don Davis’s eastern North Carolina district by carving up majority-Black areas and replacing them with whiter, more conservative counties. Under the new plan, Davis’s home would be placed into Rep. Greg Murphy’s district.

Davis responded with a statement on Tuesday that pushed back against the supposed necessity of the redrawing:

“Since the start of this new term, my office has received 46,616 messages from constituents of different political

parties, including those unaffiliated, expressing a range of opinions, views, and requests. Not a single one of them included a request for a new congressional map redrawing eastern North Carolina. Clearly, this new congressional map is beyond the pale.”

The changes to Davis’s district would have made it all but unwinable for a Democrat in 2024 — Trump would have carried the new version of the district with over 55% of the vote.

Inside the Senate chamber, Sen. Michael Garrett (Guilford) proposed a bold alternative: instead of enacting the map, he suggested putting a constitutional amendment on the ballot to let voters decide if the legislature

Whether it’s mastering a new recipe, picking up a musical instrument, or finally figuring out how to use that smartphone—learning isn’t just about skill. It’s about confidence. One study found that adults aged 58 to 86 who took multiple classes over three months improved their mental abilities to the level of people 30 years younger. That’s not just impressive—it’s liberating.

But learning also comes with vulnerability. We might feel embarrassed, frustrated, or overwhelmed. That’s okay. Growth isn’t linear, and failure isn’t fatal. In fact, psychologist Rachel Wu emphasizes that failure and feedback are essential to adult learning. I’m giving myself permission to be a beginner again. To ask questions. To laugh at my mistakes. To celebrate small wins.

At this point in life, I find strength in faith, prayer, and reflection. I am reminded that I am not alone, that my life has purpose, and that renewal is always possible.

Daily I challenge the myth that aging is decline. You can too. Let’s embrace the truth that aging can be refinement. We are not of age. We are not diminished. We are seasoned, soulful, and still capable of joy, growth, and impact.

Whether you’re 65 or 85, it’s never too late to combat negative thoughts, change bad habits, and learn something new. Your mind is still fertile. Your spirit is still strong. And your story is still unfolding.

Community

‘A Vote Betrayed’: Former HRC Chair Addresses Raleigh Council For Blocking African American Affairs Board

By Jheri Hardaway

Staff Writer

RALEIGH, N.C. – After years of community advocacy and a unanimous City Council vote to approve its creation, the Raleigh African American Affairs Board (AAAB) has been effectively blocked by the very council members who once championed it. We recently caught up with Byron Laws, the former chair of the Human Relations Commission for the City of Raleigh. Laws proudly served six years which is three terms, and was involved with the African American Affairs Board.

In an informative interview, Byron Laws detailed a “stunning reversal” by the City Council, accusing council members of betraying their 2024 vote and leaving the Black community without a formal voice in city government. The core of the frustration stems from two conflicting council actions.

According to Laws, his commission was formally tasked by then-Councilwoman Mary Black to do the groundwork to establish the AAAB. This came after years of community requests for a task force to address systemic issues. After extensive work drafting bylaws and structure,



the HRC presented its final recommendation. “Last year, on July 2nd, we presented our recommendation for the African American Affairs Board,” Laws stated. “Councilman Corey Branch made the motion, Mary Black seconded it, and it was voted for unanimously”.

That victory was short-lived. This year, the council’s position has changed. “The three who did not vote for it this time—Stormie Forte, Jonathan Melton, and Corey Branch—are the same ones who voted for it last year,” Laws said, noting they are now “okay with the African

American Affairs Board not being established or seated”.

This reversal came under the guise of consolidation. “The excuse they gave was that there are too many boards and commissions and we need to consolidate,” Laws explained. He called the justification baffling, pointing out that the council recently established the Hispanic and Immigrant Affairs Board into the HRC as a subcommittee, while leaving the AAAB in limbo. “You all ran for these positions, and you knew what you were signing up for,” Laws said, pushing back on the

idea that council members were too “stretched thin” to serve as liaisons. Laws argues this is part of a disturbing pattern by the city to dilute the power of community voices. He cited the Police Advisory Board (PAB), another body born from the HRC.

“Community members wanted that board to have subpoena power... so they could really hold police accountable,” Laws said. “Of course, that didn’t happen. The subpoena power piece got removed. So at this point, we have a board that does not hold police accountable. That’s why it’s advisory”.

He also pointed to the dismantling of the city’s Community Advisory Councils (CACs). “Developers were required to go to your CAC first before it went to the planning commission,” Laws said, explaining that this gave small groups of residents real power to stop or shape development. The council dismantled the CACs and, though they have been brought back, Laws says they are powerless. “Developers are no longer required to go to those meetings first”.

He believes the council is now “using the CACs as a reason why you don’t give the African American Affairs Board establishment,” which he called a false narrative.

The push for the AAAB began as part of a “Restorative Justice document” presented to the city by community members and non-profits, asking for accountability for historical “intentional acts of oppression.” While the council issued a formal apology, it did not initially approve the task force.

For Laws, the council’s reversal is a personal betrayal, especially from his own District C representative, Corey Branch. “Corey Branch led the motion for the vote last year... if you don’t think it’s going to have enough votes to pass, you still could have voted for it and stood with the community,” Laws said. “We still

deserve that board. The African American community still needs that board.”

Laws’s message to the community is to pay closer attention to local politics, where voter turnout is often low. “It’s important that you get involved,” he urged. “We’ve been fooled in regards to you participate in the presidential election... but people don’t understand the things that impact you the most... are happening locally, in your city, your town hall”.

“As it stands,” Laws concluded, “we still don’t have a place for us to be formally heard or recognized by the city”.

MS. CATHARINE FERRELL CELEBRATES TURNING 113

By: Jordan Meadows

Staff Writer

On October 10th, Ms. Catharine Ferrell marked her 113th birthday, making her the oldest (known) living person in North Carolina and the fifth oldest living person in the entire United States, according to the Gerontology Research Group.

Ms. Ferrell has an inspiring family history. Her grandmother emerged from slavery, and her mother, born in 1884, moved to Warsaw, NC, with her husband to acquire a small piece of land—an estate that Ms. Ferrell still holds today.

At the age of 100, Ferrell had her first air travel experience when she went to Israel, where she was baptized in the Jordan River and visited the iconic Mt. Sinai. Her faith, she claims, is the key to her remarkable longevity.

Ms. Ferrell has vivid memories of major political milestones, including the election of Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1932. She has witnessed significant historical events throughout her lifetime, from the creation of the assembly line and the opening of the Panama Canal to the advent of long-distance telephone service. She



has also seen over 100 countries gain independence, experienced the impacts of two worldwide influenza pandemics, and witnessed the adoption of the national anthem and the creation of Social Security.

An active member of her community, Ms. Ferrell participates in organizations such as AARP, NAACP, the Durham Seniors Exercise Group, the Durham Seniors Traveling Group, and the Durham Women’s Missionary Department.

Sherita Walton Launches Bid for Wake DA

By Jordan Meadows

Staff Writer

Sherita Walton, a seasoned attorney and public servant with more than two decades of experience across public and private sectors, has officially launched her campaign for Wake County District Attorney. Walton, a former prosecutor and defender, and now a legal advisor to the Raleigh Police Department, joins a growing field of candidates aiming to succeed current Wake County District Attorney Lorrin Freeman, who is not seeking reelection in 2026. Freeman has publicly endorsed Walton, calling her “impressive” and praising her “diverse experience”.

Walton, 47, grew up in Brooklyn, New York, and is a first-generation college and law school graduate. She earned her undergraduate degree from Binghamton University and her law degree from Pace University in White Plains, NY. She began her legal career in private practice and later became a prosecutor in Manhattan before moving to Wake County in 2016 with her husband and two children.

In Wake County, Walton spent five years in the District Attorney’s Office under Freeman, where she prosecuted a range of cases, including violent crime. In 2021, she transitioned to the City of Raleigh’s legal department, where she advises the police department on high-stakes matters, including critical incidents and public records requests for law enforce-



ment video. “Those skills are very helpful, and I’ve been able to sharpen what I think I’ll be needing in this role if elected by being directly involved with the police department,” Walton said.

Walton said she didn’t initially plan to run for DA. That changed after a shoutout and subsequent lunch with Freeman, who listed her as a possible choice for the role. That call to service was also influenced by the events of 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic and a national reckoning around policing and racial justice.

“I really felt like I needed to be doing something else, beyond the case file that was in front of me,” Walton said. “I said, ‘Where can I make a meaningful impact here?’ And given what’s happening in terms of the tensions

between policing and communities of color, it made sense to go into a police agency.” Her current role, she clarified, is not as a litigator nor as a representative of individual officers. Instead, she provides in-house legal counsel to multiple departments within the city, working to ensure citywide compliance with legal standards and community values.

“The role is about protecting the city of Raleigh, the community, as a whole—not any individual department,” Walton said.

If elected, Walton said her first priority as district attorney would be to focus on crimes that threaten public safety, particularly violent offenses and sexual assaults. She also wants to lead with integrity and compassion, ensuring that both victims and defendants understand how they should be treated within the justice system. Her platform emphasizes transparency, public trust, and community engagement. Walton said the DA’s office has historically lacked a clearly defined vision and sees an opportunity to change that.

“There should be a collective mission for everyone in the office: objectives to memorialize so the community knows what we’re striving for, so everyone knows what we’re doing in the office, and then the community can then hold us accountable for acting outside of that,” she said. “Wake County houses the capital city: we should be the premier DA’s office. We can do better in that area, we have

the potential to do it.”

Walton said she hopes to connect with local organizations, attend community events, and create new paths for transparency that go beyond traditional methods.

“You can’t be connected with the community from inside your office... We can be creative enough where it shows that we are thinking through these issues.”

Some Black activist groups have expressed concern that Walton, due to her ties to law enforcement and Freeman may be too entrenched in the establishment. Walton acknowledges the skepticism but sees her insider experience as a strength.

“My experience has shown me that you can affect more; you have the ability to let your voice be heard if you’re in the room,” she said. She also spoke about the broader need to rebuild public trust in institutions that have lost credibility with some communities. “My journey of being a first-generation college graduate and law school graduate, all the things I’ve had to endure in my life, has been an uphill battle,” she said. “It’s difficult being in spaces where there’s not a lot of people who look like you, trying to assimilate but also trying to make sure people recognize who you are and what you bring to the table.” Walton said her commitment to Wake County is deeply personal. After a decade living in the area, she considers it home and is ready to serve its people in a deeper capacity.

NC Groups Sue Over Registration Law

88.5 WFDD - PUBLIC RADIO FOR THE PIEDMONT – A legal challenge to North Carolina’s same-day voter laws began yesterday in Winston-Salem.

The bench trial at the Hiram H. Ward Federal Building, presided over by Judge Thomas Schroeder, focused on a lawsuit filed by the League of Women Voters, Democracy North Carolina, and the North Carolina Black Alliance. The suit

challenges provisions in the state’s omnibus election law, SB 747.

Those provisions allow elections officials to cancel the registrations and votes of individuals who registered and voted on the same day if a single address verification mailer is returned as undeliverable.

During testimony, Marcus Bass, deputy director of the North Carolina Black Alliance, highlighted the vulnerability of college-aged voters

due to multiple address changes. Bass also noted the frequent absence of on-campus polling locations at Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

Tim Tsujii, Forsyth County Board of Elections director, mentioned that while his office provides educational resources to help students navigate the law, such practices are not mandated by the North Carolina State Board of Elections.

Testimony also came from a Wilmington, North Carolina college student, who shared her experience of attempting to vote on the same day she registered. She testified that her ballot was excluded. Attorneys argued that the provisions in question directly affect students like her.

According to Judge Schroeder, the trial is set to conclude by the end of this week.

JCSU Dominates Shaw 52-0 In Their Homecoming Blowout Matchup

DURHAM, N.C. — Johnson C. Smith University made a commanding statement on the road Saturday, shutting out Shaw University 52-0 in a decisive CIAA conference victory during Shaw’s Homecoming matchup on October 18, 2025.

From the opening whistle, the Golden Bulls controlled the tempo on both sides of the ball. Running back Antonio Crim Jr. (26) proved nearly unstoppable, repeatedly breaking through Shaw’s defensive front for long gains. Crim’s relentless ground attack was a highlight of the afternoon, showcasing his speed, agility, and power as he weaved past defenders like Jaden Perkins (1) and Jayonte Wilson (18) in the first half alone.

Shaw struggled to find offensive rhythm throughout the game. Quarterback Alexander Marsh (10) faced consistent pressure from the Golden Bulls’ defense, including a punishing sack by linebacker Vincent Hill (0) that halted one of Shaw’s few promising drives. Running back Fabian Diggs attempted to generate mo-



mentum with several strong carries, even stiff-arming TyQuereon Hines (8) on a first-half run, but the Bears were unable to convert opportunities into points.

By halftime, Johnson C. Smith had already built a commanding lead, and they showed no signs of slowing down. Their defensive unit smothered Shaw’s offense, forcing



turnovers and limiting the Bears to minimal yardage. The Golden Bulls’ dominant performance on both sides of the ball secured their emphatic 52-0 win — a defining moment in

their CIAA campaign and a tough loss for Shaw on what was supposed to be a celebratory Homecoming weekend.

Photos by: Steve Worthy



PARTNER IN EDUCATION: CARY OMEGAS SUPPORT ROLESVILLE MIDDLE SCHOOL

Rolesville, N.C., October 19, 2025: Members of the Xi Mu Mu Chapter (Cary, N.C.), of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Inc., recently partnered with Rolesville Middle School’s Career and Technical Education (CTE) department business classes by sharing with the students, engaging and real-world lessons on decision making and business planning.

The chapter’s Issa Smith and Wes Wills served as guest speakers, sharing valuable experiences into the classroom. Brother Smith, a retired Raleigh Police Officer, spoke to a group of 25 eighth graders about the importance of making smart decisions and making the right choice, the first time. His message emphasized responsibility and foresight in every day life.

Additionally, Brother Wills led an interactive workshop with seventh graders business students on creating effective business plans. The hands-on session gave students the opportunity to think creatively and strategically, leaving them with practical knowledge they can apply in future projects.

The partnership between Xi Mu Mu and Rolesville Middle highlights the powerful impact of community involvement in education, giving students access to real world perspectives that inspire and prepare them for success.

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Church

SERMON of the WEEK



31ST PASTORAL ANNIVERSARY PART II
Celebrating Bishop-Elect Overseer William Eli Ratcliff
Morning Message – “Don’t Give Up Now”
Speaker: General Mother-Elect Eldress Belinda McKoy
Scripture: Galatians 6:9; Joshua 24:14–15; Daniel 3
Eldress Belinda McKoy opened the Sunday morning service with a powerful and encouraging message centered on perseverance and unwavering faith. Drawing from Galatians 6:9 – “Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up” – she reminded the congregation that despite challenges, doubts from others, or personal struggles, God calls us to remain steadfast and committed to the work He has assigned to us.
Using Joshua’s call to serve the Lord wholeheartedly and the example of the three Hebrew boys who stood firm in their faith despite fiery

trials, McKoy urged believers to:

- Stay focused on their divine assignment – no matter who doubts or opposes them.
- Do their best in all God has entrusted to them – trusting that their labor is not in vain.
- Hold on just a little while longer – because “help is on the way” and God will bring them through.

Her message was both a rallying cry and a reassurance: “It doesn’t matter who doesn’t believe in you – just don’t give up. Everything’s going to be alright.”
Afternoon Message – “I’m on the List”
Speaker: Pastor Darryl Jones, True Way Holy Church (Durham, NC)
Scripture: Acts 10:1–4; Matthew 8:22; Psalms 40:1; Psalms 46:1; Isaiah 53
In the afternoon service, Pastor Darryl Jones delivered a dynamic message that both celebrated Overseer William Eli Ratcliff’s ministry and encouraged the congregation

with the reminder that God sees, remembers, and rewards the faithful. Using the story of Cornelius in Acts 10, Jones highlighted how Cornelius’ prayers, generosity, and devotion caught God’s attention – placing him “on the list” of those remembered and favored by God.
Pastor Jones compared Overseer Ratcliff to Cornelius and other faithful servants of scripture, describing him as:

- A devoted and God-fearing man who leads with discipline and integrity.
- A praying man whose consistent communication with God has sustained his ministry.
- A good man through whom God’s work is accomplished, demonstrating that “God can use anybody He wants.”

Jones built upon the theme of “the list” to emphasize the many ways God remembers His people. As believers, we are:

- On the rescue list – God delivers us.
- On the protection list – God shields us.
- On the healing list – God restores us.
- On the restoration and blessing lists – God renews and provides for us.

Even when earthly systems falter – “even if the government shuts down” – God’s list remains unchanged. Pastor Jones concluded with a resounding declaration of hope and perseverance: “I can’t give up now because my name is on a special list!”
Final Reflection
Together, the two messages formed a powerful tapestry of encouragement and faith. Eldress McKoy challenged the congregation to keep pressing forward and never give up, while Pastor Jones reminded them that their faithfulness does not go unnoticed – God remembers them and has them on His list. Both sermons echoed a central truth of the anniversary celebration: that steadfastness, obedience, and trust in God’s promises will always lead to victory.
Article written and edited by Jamar McKiver and Peggy Tatum

Obituaries

James Monroe, of Raleigh, NC, passed away peacefully at the age of ninety-four on Monday, Oct. 6, 2025, at Parkview Health and Rehabilitation Center in Chapel Hill, NC. James was born on July 16, 1931, in Wagram, NC to the late Henry Green Monroe and the late Cora Pouncey Monroe.
James was preceded in death by his beloved wife, Candida Monroe, of 49 years. He leaves to cherish his memories, a daughter, Dr. Cora Anna Monroe and a son, Dr. James Joseph Monroe; three sisters, Mrs. Ellen Powell, Mrs. Larah Fuller, and Mrs. Mary Ann Williams; two brothers, Mr. Linwood Monroe and Mr. Henry Green Monroe, Jr.; numerous nieces, nephews, cousins, and family friends.
James Monroe began his education in the public schools of Scotland Co., and attended Raleigh Public schools. He graduated from Washington High School in Raleigh, NC. He earned an Associate’s Degree in Applied Science

at Burlington Community College of New Jersey. He attended NC A&T State University for two years.
James joined the United States Air Force Noncommissioned Officers Academy, and served his country until his retirement. He was a Technical Sergeant Aircraft Jet Engine Mechanic, Quality Control Inspector/Evaluator, United States Air Force; and served as an Aircraft Engine Mechanic Leader at the Naval Air Propulsion Test Center after retirement.
As a civil servant, James worked with State Representatives of North Carolina to have his alma mater, Washington High School recognized as a National Historic Landmark in the National Registry of Historic Places. He was a member of the Washington High School Graduating Class of 1951.
Interment with Military Rites was at Carolina Biblical Gardens, Creech Road, Garner, NC.



JAMES MONROE

Dunn Chapel Celebrates 140 Years

By Jheri Hardaway
Staff Writer

Dunn Chapel Freewill Baptist Church in Dunn, North Carolina, celebrated their 140th Homecoming. The church began in the 1880s, located on the same land where the new building still stands. Originally praising God by clapping their hands and stomping their feet law enforcement was called due to a noise complaint. As time went on the church community continued to organize and raised funds to build a church. With four walls and a safe space, the church grew and began to make an impact on a firm foundation. This church family truly embodies Ephesians 4:16, “joined and held together by every joint” and, when each part is working properly, it “makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.” Under the loving leadership of Elder Timothy L. Thomas, Dunn Chapel continues to thrive and build community.
A highlight of the homecoming celebration was a sermon by Sampson Chapel’s Eldress Dr. Laeulia Lisane, who entitled her sermon



“Where My People At?” She reminded us that when you’re chosen by God you don’t have to worry about who shows up. The Lord shows up with you and that is all that truly matters. The word was well received and highlighted with a delicious meal in the fellowship hall. Dunn

Chapel continues to open its doors to the community and expressed immense gratitude for the visitors awarding a plaque to the member who brought the most guests to their homecoming celebration. Worship is alive and well in Harnett County at Dunn Chapel.

Practical Biblical Principles

SPIRITUAL WARFARE FOR THE WOUNDED
Read: Isaiah 61:1-3
By: John L. Caldwell, Pastor
New Jerusalem Baptist Cathedral
Often the devil is painted as a being whose whereabouts and tactics will forever remain a mystery. Nothing could be further from the truth. As soldiers, our response to satan’s encroachment on God’s territory should include an ability to see satan’s tactics and to understand how God’s Word applies to our lives. In addition, we must be able to cry out to God in prayer. One area of spiritual warfare is found in the lives of people who have suffered from abuse and neglect as a child or an adult. Another area of spiritual warfare in the lives of God’s people is that of unforgiveness. When there is no godly discernment in one’s life, the devil sets up shop and harasses the individual for a lifetime without the person realizing what is happening to them (1 Corinthians 2:14; Ecclesiastes 8:5).
When one does not carry the “knowledge of the truth,” a “strong conviction” of God’s Word, a “boldness and willingness to fight back” and “forgiveness and willingness to let go of the hardships of the past” then one can expect to be in spiritual battles for a lifetime. When we carry fear of whatever, we are in spiritual warfare. When one is constantly beating up on oneself for some stupid error done in the past this is for sure spiritual warfare. When one cannot figure out why things seem to always go wrong in one’s life when one is trying to do good, that’s spiritual warfare.
The king of Syria was angry at the prophet, Elisha, and sent his men

to capture the prophet. When the servant of Elisha got up and went out early one morning, an army with horses and chariots surrounded the city. “Oh, my Lord, what shall we do? The servant asked the prophet. “Don’t be afraid, the prophet answered. “Those who are with us are more than those who are with them.” And Elisha prayed, “O Lord, open his eyes so he may see.” Then the Lord opened the servant’s eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha (2 Kings 6:15-17).
But God can slip his spiritual eyeglasses over our eyes, just as he did with Elisha’s servant and we then can see our adversary, then we fight. At times, the child of God cannot see that he or she is in spiritual warfare. Under these circumstances the devil has the advantage over God’s child. However, when fear and irritation come to us out of nowhere and you, like Elisha, we should look to and call on God rather than being afraid. We need to learn to see the invisible army of God ready to defend us. It is our faith which will help us look beyond fear and blindness in order to conquer the unseen enemy.
Second Timothy 1:7 says: God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. Also, scripture tells us to first acknowledge God then resist the devil and he will flee from you (James 4:7).
One of the most important gifts we can ask God for is the gift of discernment. Discernment is like head lights on a car; you can see your way while driving in the darkness of night (Ecclesiastes 8:5).
It is also a matter of faith and trusting God when one feels and

senses there is no one around to help them figure out what is going on in one’s irritating life. The devil cannot remain hid from God’s discernment gift to His children.
We must understand what Paul is telling us to do when he instructs us to put on the whole armor of God and then just stand and pray. So that we may be able to stand against the wiles (clever plans, crafty deceptions) of the devil. We cannot fight what we cannot see. God does the fighting for us. “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood (persons we cannot see), but against principalities (Ephesians 6:12). Like a military general, satan plans his attacks and directs his demon to attack us when we have no discernment, no faith, no conviction, and no desire to fight back.
In a sense when we put on the whole armor of God, we are taking on discernment (Ephesians 6:13). This armor consists of truth, righteousness, the gospel of peace, faith, salvation, the Holy Spirit (the word of God), and prayer. Once we clothe ourselves and have put on these pieces of armor by study, prayer, obedience, and faith, God does the rest and defeats the devil on our behalf. It is then that God puts the eyeglasses on us so that we can see that He is with us. Even when we cannot see or realize what is happening. God fights our battles even when we are not aware there is a battle going on for our souls.
Jesus reminds us like He reminded Peter. “Peter, the devil wishes to sift you like wheat, but I have prayed to the Father for your victory.” And when you have overcome this spiritual battle, go and strengthen your brothers” (Luke 22:31).

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Editorials

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.

Stein slammed for ‘politically motivated cuts’ on Medicaid funding



By Theresa Opeka

Carolina Journal

Gov. Josh Stein is facing sharp criticism for refusing to move his Oct. 1 deadline to fully fund North Carolina’s Medicaid rebase, even though House Speaker Destin Hall, R-Caldwell, says the program has enough money to last into early next year and that Stein and the Department of Health and Human Services have administrative tools to address the gap.

According to Stein, there will be cuts to Medicaid reimbursement rates starting today if no additional funding is received or the date is not pushed forward, potentially leading to healthcare providers laying off staff and people losing access to healthcare.

Hall and the chamber’s Health Appropriations chairs issued a press release, calling the governor’s actions a “political stunt that jeopardizes North Carolinians’ access to health care.”

“Governor Stein’s arbitrary Medicaid cuts are unjustifiable, clearly intended to manufacture a crisis,” Hall said in the press release. “The legislature has given funds to sustain Medicaid well into 2026. This breathtakingly cynical move ignores years of precedent where the rebase has been supplemented even later in the fiscal year.”

On Sept. 23, the House voted 111-0 in favor of passing a House committee substitute bill to SB 403, “Additional Medicaid Funds and Requirements,” that fully funds the Medicaid rebase.

The Senate passed its version of the bill on Sept. 22 after it was discussed in the Senate’s Appropriations/Base Budget Committee.

Rep. Grant Campbell, R-Cabarrus, who is also a physician, told the House last week that the Medicaid rebase has been increasing at a fiscally unsustainable rate for several years, with double-digit percentage growth becoming a regular occurrence.

“The proposed cuts are severe, anywhere from 3 to 10% for things like hospital stays, primary care, dental care, behavioral health. And I could go on and on,” Campbell said. “There are health care providers all over the state that are already planning layoffs, and some are trying to decide whether to even continue seeing Medicaid patients at all.”

The governor reiterated much of what he said in a press conference last week to reporters after Tuesday’s Council of State meeting, including that the legislature hasn’t given enough money for what is needed in the program and the need for a “clean Medicaid bill.”

“I understand that there are real disputes between the House and the Senate on a lot of issues, whether it’s the tax policy, or whether it’s what we’re paying teachers, or whether we have this Children’s Hospital,” Stein, a Democrat, said. “All of those are really important issues, and frankly, it’s a shame they have not come to a budget agreement. We’re one of only two or three states in the country that doesn’t have a budget to operate our government, but those issues are not relevant to this question of Medicaid.”

During Friday’s press conference, he said that NCDHHS determined that \$319 million is needed to fully fund the Medicaid rebase, even though both the House and the Senate agreed only \$190 million would be needed in their separate bills, based on analysis by the General Assembly’s Fiscal Research Division.

The governor said another option would be to use some of the \$500 million in the Medicaid Contingency Reserve that is available for the legislature to appropriate.

Hall and the House’s Health Appropriations chairs stated that other options include redirecting lapsed salary funding from NCDHHS and other agencies or utilizing \$18 million through an intergovernmental transfer involving Local Management Entity/Managed Care Organizations (LME/MCOs).

They added that lawmakers invested \$600 million to sustain the program into 2026, and the House overwhelmingly passed another \$192 million in Senate Bill 403 last week to fund the Medicaid rebase.

“Last year, the legislature approved \$377 million for the Medicaid rebase in November 2024, clear proof that Stein’s October 1st deadline is unfounded,” the release said. Lawmakers will deliver additional Medicaid funding when necessary, but will not be forced into rubber-stamping Gov. Stein’s unproven rebase number.”

As in Friday’s press conference, Stein told reporters on Tuesday that if they extend the deadline, they will have fewer months to make up the difference.

“We’ve already pushed it from July 1...August 1, and we then pushed it to October 1, so we are now already three months into the fiscal year, so they don’t give us the \$300 million we need to fund the program,” he said. “We only have nine months to find those savings. If we keep pushing it off, then we only have eight months, or seven months, or six months. We cannot keep pushing these cuts off. What they need to do is give us the money that they know we need, so we can continue to provide these vital services to people who need them.”

“Gov. Stein is the only person threatening cuts today,” Health Appropriations Co-Chair Rep. Larry Potts, R-Davidson, said in the release. “It’s a callous political move, not a fiscal necessity, and North Carolina families will suffer because of it.”



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LEARNING TO SAY NO

Years ago, I found myself in a situation that was nobody’s fault but my own. I looked around and there were nine children in my house—seven of whom were not mine. Four really good friends had needed someone to keep their sweet little darlings while they shopped, had appointments, needed a break, or whatever else. They had asked me, the stay-at-home mother of the group, if I would keep them, and I had said yes.

Now, it wasn’t that they all asked me at the same time, so it wasn’t a conspiracy. It wasn’t that they had said to themselves, “Who can I inconvenience so that I will not be inconvenienced?” It wasn’t even that they said, “If you do this for me, I’ll take yours such-and-such a day.” Nor had I even thought to ask for such a thing. It was simply that they asked—and I said yes.

The kids were all really sweet darlings, but they all had needs. Some required more attention than others. They were all four or younger, so for about four to six hours I was changing diapers—both of mine were potty-trained—wiping tears, and tending to little ones who wanted their mommies or were sleepy but wouldn’t or couldn’t nap.

None of them had brought their own toys, so equal sharing was not an option. Some wanted my one laugh at a time, and all were at various stages of “Can I have?” and “I don’t want to.” There were nine of them, and I was not a daycare teacher. By the end of the day, I was exhausted.

How did anyone ever have nine children—even if they weren’t all under the age of four? Being a person who wants to stay sane, and one who believes that most problems are best solved by looking inward, I reflected the next day. The questions kept coming: How did that happen? What were you thinking?

The answer came: I was trying to be nice. I said yes four times because I was trying to be nice. As with all questions, the answer came, and I learned that I am nice—period. I don’t have to prove that to anyone on earth but myself. Of course, that didn’t completely solve my problem, but it was a beginning.

The Bible tells me that each of us has a guardian angel. I don’t know if that’s true for you, but I know I have one. A few days later, I was at Kmart and looked to the right, where there was a pile of discounted books at the wonderful price of fifty cents. On top was a book titled How to Say No Without Feeling Guilty. My angel had come ahead and placed that book there in all of its hardback splendor—and there was only one copy. I know it was meant for me.

I confess, I only read one chapter, because I was ready for the lesson and it stuck. The author suggested that you look at your life and find ways to practice saying no—and boy, did I. It was actually fun.

Here’s how you do it: when you’re sure you don’t want to do something, you say no. Say it quietly but firmly—loud enough to hear. You don’t give reasons, and you certainly don’t add a but, because if you do, you’re feeling guilty for saying no. That means you still want the other person to think you’re nice. You want to think you’re nice too—but remember, you’ve already decided that you are. Saying yes to something you don’t want to do doesn’t make you nicer. Sorry to say this, but it makes you a liar and a hypocrite. When you say yes but want to say no, you’re not being honest—with them or with yourself.

There was once a woman in my life—she’s deceased now—who was a perfectionist at getting people to do for her what she could do herself. She called me one day and said she was going to have a colonoscopy, and that after work she might like some chicken and dumplings. As her church member, she expected me to cook some. I said, “No.”

She asked again. I didn’t repeat myself, because I knew she’d heard me. It took a while for the requests to stop, but they finally did. Not that she didn’t continue to try other times, but I never got angry with her for asking. Asking was her job—and saying no was mine. So what was there to get angry about?

Somebody out there needs to hear this. How do I know? Because I asked God, as I often do, what to write about—and this is what He gave me.

Why would God want me or anyone else to get this lesson? I think it’s because He wants us to be honest, authentic, and not promoters of codependence. Jesus said, “The truth will set you free.” That’s not just about hearing the truth, but also telling it and living it.

We are all here for a purpose, and that’s to be who God wants us to be. Lying to ourselves and others takes us off that path. Standing up for oneself is the beginning of standing up for others.

Another example: I have a friend who has a mental illness. She knows it, I know it, but she’s not more worthy than I am. She wants peace—and so do I.

About five years ago, she started calling me sometimes three times a day for about two weeks. I began resisting answering the phone, and I prayed about it, admitting that it was disturbing my peace. I had known her over fifty years ago, and she thought we were best friends. That wasn’t true, but now I thought I needed to be her friend.

I told her that she called too much, and she said, “No, I don’t call you enough.” I said, “Well, I can’t keep doing this.” She said, “But you’re helping me.” I replied, “But you’re not helping me—and I’m not really helping you either.”

That silenced her for a moment, and I found the courage to say, “Look, I’ve decided that I’m not going to talk to you three times a day, or even three times a week. I will call you every Sunday, and we’ll talk. But if you call me more than that, I’m not going to answer.”

It’s true—the truth does set you free. In this case, it worked. She actually told me I was being mean, but I knew I was nice, so I could

hear that without judging either of us.

Five years later, we still talk every Sunday. One day, she thanked me. I asked her what changed. She said that now, in a care facility in another state, she goes to exercise every day, takes her medicine, sees her therapist once a month, and goes to church every Sunday.

She’s free. I’m free. And I’m thankful to have learned that discouraging codependence is good for both you and others. We are in each other’s lives for relationship, and treating one another with respect and understanding of our roles is what makes a good relationship.

Often, if you look closely at these things, you’ll learn—humbly—that sometimes the teacher becomes the student, just as the student becomes the teacher.

I don’t know who you are, but I pray that this helps. It starts with learning to say no—with a sweet, old smile.

PUERTO RICO

Continued from page 2

education. A short drive from Caguana on the 111 east will drop you out onto the 10, which connects Arecibo, Utuado and Ponce. Once on the 10, drive five minutes north to Río Abaja, which is in what locals refer to as “karst country.” Its protected lands allow the Puerto Rican parrot—on the endangered list—to live in their natural environment and fly freely. Jayuya (pronounced Hi-yu-ya) Also known for having once been home to the Taino, in Jayuya you’ll find numerous historic sites and the annual Festival Nacional Indígena. Jayuya also boasts the tallest peak on the island, called Cerro Punta, which is a surprising 4,389 feet. Also, a favorite for both tourists and locals is the hot air balloon. If you’re into them, The Globo Aerostático de Jayuya is a must! It’s accessible via an undulating road that opens to some of the most spectacular views available on the island with temps often dropping into the low 50s in “winter.”

Adjuntas (pronounced A-hoon-tas) I was surprised to learn that much of Puerto Rico’s coffee comes from Adjuntas. Each coffee producer has its own flair. Adjuntas is perfect for coffee because its mountains are high and the weather is cool. It’s the second coldest municipality on the island. Also in Adjuntas are Lago (Lake) Garzas and Casa Pueblo. The former is a man-made reservoir that supplies many in the town with its drinking water along with hydroelectric power. The latter was founded in 1980 and has, over time, become a model of sustainable development and environmental protection. Utuado, Jayuya and Adjuntas were all instrumental in the 1950 uprising, with lots of references throughout these towns to commemorate the important date in Puerto Rico’s history. Between its majestic appeal and the history, I believe the mountains of Puerto Rico are truly spectacular. Driving can be a vacation all its own, given the thrill factor, but for those who like destinations, it’s impossible to cover them all. I’ll just have to return. The sojourn through the mountains is quite unique and an experience to itself. After driving in the Puerto Rico Mountain Range, driving the North Carolina Mountains will forever be a walk in the park! Trust me! Choosing to drive on Highway 2 toward Ponce, with the sea to the South of the Highway gives another spectacular view where it’s irresistible to not look at it but have to keep eyes on the road! Make a stop in Yauco for coffee and take in Yaucromatic! Colorful buildings painted by local artists, along with murals and the crocheted tree. Definitely a must-see. Take a drive up the hills to see the colorful buildings or can park & walk to the destinations. Once in Ponce, make a trip to the eastern part of the city on the Autopista to see the large letters, which serve as the gateway to the City. I tried getting a photograph of all of the letters in one unstitched panoramic photo, but it is difficult when off the road. Do NOT try to photograph when on the road facing it as it can be dangerous. I considered it but did not do it! In Ponce (pronounced pawn-SAY), if fortunate to stay in the historic downtown area at one of the historic hotels around the Plaza de las Delicias (Plaza of Delights or Delights Square), you will see the main cathedral, The Cathedral of Our Lady of Guadalupe. This is a must-see with its architecture, historic fountains and monuments to famous Ponceños (people of Ponce) who contributed to the City. Restaurants, gift shops are around the square with the Alcalde (town hall) on one side. On one end of the square behind the cathedral, there is the Historic Parque De Bombas firehouse painted in red and black from the 1800s. It stands as a memorial to firefighters in Ponce.

If there on a Sunday Night, take part in the concert by the Banda Municipal de Ponce (Ponce Municipal Band) that has played at the Square since 1883 after its founding by Juan Morel Campos. Each Sunday, if not raining, the street in front of the historic firehouse closes, people bring their outdoor chairs and listen to the smooth sounds of the Band. You will hear anything from Broadway tunes, Plena (style of music originated in Ponce), salsa, danzas by Morel Campos himself, and the band was known to take on music from Bad Bunny! At times, the town choir may fit into the outdoor free concerts. When I am in Ponce, I try to set my vacation to listen and enjoy! Grab ice cream cone or cup from Kings Cream, a Ponce institution(!), and enjoy the concert! Similar to Utuado, Ponce has a historic Indigenous Peoples Park called Tibes (Tee-BESS). Taking a walk through the grounds reveal petroglyphs, a ceremonial and living area, and see trees the Taino (the inhabitants of the Island before Columbus) used for natural remedies and still used by many on the Island today. Like anything historic, be it in the USA or in Puerto Rico, please take care to enjoy and not damage the natural area. From here, you have the option to drive back to San Juan and fly back home depending on how the trip is set up. As I experienced, I was extremely happy to go to Puerto Rico but felt I missed much and have planned successive trips! I am planning my fifth (!) trip in two years and each time, meeting more people and finding very unique places to travel and loving it each time. Yes, there’s much more to what is in Puerto Rico than what I mentioned here but the only way to find out is to get out and discover! Oh yes, don’t forget to bring back some coffee! Get it in the grocery stores as it much cheaper than the airport! Finally, be sure to take many photos as you will want to remember your tropical vacation. When back, don’t say Debí Tomar Mas Fotos (I should have taken more photos!) when you return home. Also, if inclined to write, keep a travel journal as another way to remember the trip. Co-author Sarah Ratliff is a corporate America escapee turned eco-organic farmer and writer. She and her husband, Paul, own Mayani Farms: a self-sustaining and organic farm in Utuado, Puerto Rico. <https://mayanifarms.com/>

Classifieds

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF HORRY
IN THE COURT OF COMMON
PLEAS FOR THE FIFTEENTH
JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
CASE#2025CP2200959
Jerome Bailey, Plaintiff v.
Alice Mae Christian, Defendant.
SUMMONS
TO THE DEFENDANTS ABOVE
NAMED:

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED
and required to answer the
Complaint in this action, a copy
of which is herewith served upon
you, and to serve a copy of your
Answer to the said Complaint on
the subscriber at 11054 Highway
707, Murrells Inlet, South Carolina
29576 within thirty (30) days after
the service hereof, exclusive of the
day of such service; and, if you fail
to appear and defend by filing an
Answer to the Complaint within the
time aforesaid, judgment by default
will be rendered against you for the
relief demanded in the Complaint.

COMPLAINT
(Jury Trial Demanded)
Comes Now the Plaintiff,
complaining of the Defendant, and
alleging as follows;

- JURISDICTION
- The Plaintiff, Jerome Bailey, (hereinafter "Plaintiff"), is a citizen and resident of Horry County, South Carolina.
 - Upon information and belief, the Defendant, Alice Mae Christian, (hereinafter, "Defendant") is a citizen and resident of Wake County, North Carolina.
 - The accident at issue in this Complaint occurred in Horry County, South Carolina.
 - Therefore, jurisdiction is proper in Horry County, South Carolina. FOR A FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION (Negligence, Gross Negligence, Negligence Per Se)
 - The Plaintiff realleges all allegations contained herein as if set forth verbatim.
 - That on or about January 14, 2024, Defendant was operating a 2014 model Ford sedan, in Horry County, South Carolina, and struck pedestrain Plaintiff with her vehicle.
 - That Defendant left the scene of the accident after striking Plaintiff.
 - Upon information and belief, Defendant was operating a Ford sedan bearing vehicle identification number (VIN): 1FADP3K25EL285593.
 - As a result of the accident, Plaintiff suffered severe injuries, causing great bodily harm. The actions of Defendant, were negligent, grossly negligent, willful, wanton, and reckless in operating her vehicle in such a manner as to cause Plaintiff harm in one or more of the following particulars to wit:
 - In failing to keep a proper lookout; and/or
 - In failing to keep her vehicle under proper control; and/or
 - In driving too fast for conditions; and/or
 - In operating a vehicle under distraction; and/or
 - In failing to yield right of way; and/or
 - In failing to obey traffic laws and/or signs; and/or
 - In failing to keep a safe distance from Plaintiff; and/or
 - In failing to stay at an accident scene and render aid to Plaintiff; and/or
 - In negligently and carelessly operating Defendant's vehicle at a rate of speed which was improper under the circumstances and conditions then and there existing; and/or
 - In operating Defendant's vehicle in a negligent, grossly negligent, negligent per se, careless, reckless, willful, wanton, and unlawful manner so as to create a dangerous situation; and/or
 - In failing to use that degree of care and caution a reasonably prudent person would exercise under the conditions then and there existing. One or more of which were the direct and proximate cause of injuries and damages sustained by Plaintiff, and all of which were in violation of the statutory and common laws of the State of South

- Carolina.
 - That, as a direct and proximate result of the negligence, gross negligence, negligence per se, carelessness, recklessness, willfulness, and wantonness of Defendant, as is set forth more fully above, Plaintiff was injured, has endured pain and suffering, has suffered mentally and emotionally, and has incurred, and will incur, various medical expenses, has incurred property damage, and has otherwise been damaged and injured.
 - That, as a direct and proximate result of the negligence, gross negligence, negligence per se, carelessness, recklessness, willfulness and wantonness of the Defendant, as is set forth more fully above, Plaintiff was jerked, thrown, and slammed to the ground, and, as a result of Defendant's actions, sustained serious and painful personal injuries and property damage.
 - That as a direct and proximate result of the negligence, gross negligence, negligence per se, carelessness, recklessness, willfulness, and wantonness of Defendant, as is set forth more fully above, Plaintiff has been damaged and injured in the following respects:
 - Plaintiff has been required to expend a significant amount of money for his medical care, treatment, and attendant services;
 - Upon information and belief, the nature of Plaintiff's injuries will require Plaintiff to expend a significant amount of money for her medical care, treatment, and attendant services in the future;
 - The pain of Plaintiff's injuries has resulted in Plaintiff's loss of enjoyment of life and change in Plaintiff's personality, all to permanent detriment to Plaintiff's health and physical well-being; and
 - Upon information and belief, Plaintiff was required to expend significant amounts of money to replace and repair property damage caused in the collision.
 - That Defendant's acts and omissions, as is set forth more fully above, show willful misconduct, malice, wantonness, and an entire want of care, raising a presumption of Defendant's conscious indifference to the consequences of such acts and omissions.
 - That, because of the Defendant's acts and omissions and the proximate harm resulting to Plaintiff, Plaintiff should be awarded punitive damages in an amount to be determined by the trier of fact in order to punish and penalize Defendant and to deter Defendant and others from similar behavior.
 - That, upon information and belief, Plaintiff is entitled to judgment against Defendant for actual, compensatory, exemplary, and punitive damages for Plaintiff's personal injuries and property damages set forth herein in an amount that is fair, just, and reasonable under the circumstances, plus whatever costs, interest, and attorney fees that Plaintiff may be entitled to be determined by a jury.
- WHEREFORE, Plaintiff prays for judgment against Defendant for an amount to be ascertained by the jury at the trial of this action as to all damages (punitive and actual), for the costs and disbursements of this action, both pre-judgment and post-judgment interest, and for such other and further relief, in law or in equity, in favor of Plaintiff as this Court may deem just and proper.
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Randerson I. Stephens, Jr.: SC Bar No.: 101868
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Tel: 843-232-0944
Fax: 843-238-1082
jm@jeffmorrislawfirm.com
rs@jeffmorrislawfirm.com
Murrells Inlet, South Carolina
FILED: September 5, 2025
10/16, 10/23, and 10/30/2025

DURHAM COUNTY

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
Having qualified as Personal Representative of the Estate of ESTHER LOUISE MOUSSETTE (25E001101-310), late of Durham County, North Carolina, the undersigned does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the estate of said decedent to exhibit them to the undersigned at PO Box 40, Hampstead, NC 28443 on or before January 27, 2026 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 23rd day of October, 2025.
Diana Jayne Luck, Personal Representative
c/o Shingleton Law, PLLC
PO Box 40
Hampstead, NC 28443
10/23, 10/30, 11/6, and 11/13/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File Number 25E000802-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 16th day of June 2025, as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of PEARL ELOZ MCGILL, 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 January, 2026 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 23rd day of October 2025.
Christopher Wayne McGill
Administrator
1110 Sweet Gale Drive
Durham, NC 27704
10/23, 10/30, 11/6, and 11/13/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File Number 25E001284-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 7th day of October 2025, as EXECUTOR of the Estate of RICHARD ALAN YENOFF, 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 January, 2026 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 23rd day of October 2025.
Elliot Irwin Klayman, Executor
8148 Avenida Navidad, #41
San Diego, CA 92122
10/23, 10/30, 11/6, and 11/13/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
The undersigned, Sharon Duncan Tilley, having duly qualified as Executrix of the Estate of DONALD EDWARD TILLEY, deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, hereby notifies all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the Estate to present them to the undersigned in care of Ronald G. Coulter, Attorney for the Estate, 3400 Croasdaile Dr., Ste 205, Durham, NC 27705, on or before January 15, 2026 or it will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons and legal entities indebted to the Estate will please make immediate payment.
This the 16th day of October, 2025.
Sharon Duncan Tilley, Executrix
C/O Ronald G. Coulter, Attorney
3400 Croasdaile Drive Ste 205
Durham, NC 27705
1-919-246-5775
10/16, 10/23, 10/30, and 11/6/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File Number 24E002494-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 20th day of November 2024, as ADMINISTRATRIX of the Estate of ROBERT LONG JR., 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 17th day of January, 2026 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 16th day of October 2025.
Vicki Long, Administratrix
608 Orindo Dr.
Durham, NC 27713
10/16, 10/23, 10/30, and 11/6/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 6th day of October, 2025, as Administrator of the Estate of DICK KENT WALT, 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 January 17th, 2026 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 16th of October, 2025.
SARAH M. COX
ADMINISTRATOR
ESTATE OF DICK KENT WALT
c/o Richard G. Long III, Attorney
Walker Lambe, PLLC
Post Office Box 51549
Durham, North Carolina 27717
10/16, 10/23, 10/30, and 11/6/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 21st day of August, 2024, as Ancillary Executor of the Estate of DUANE EDWARD PARRISH, Deceased, does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 17th day of January, 2026 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 16th of October, 2025.
April P. Daley
Ancillary Executor
ESTATE OF DUANE EDWARD PARRISH
c/o Richard G. Long III, Attorney
Walker Lambe, PLLC
Post Office Box 51549
Durham, North Carolina 27717
10/16, 10/23, 10/30, and 11/6/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File Number 25E003522-3 10
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 17th day of September 2025, as EXECUTOR of the Estate of SUSAN JO ALBERTSON, 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 9th day of January, 2026 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 9th day of October 2025.
William A. Albertson, Executor
1108 Steinbeck Drive
Durham, NC 27703
10/9, 10/16, 10/23, and 10/30/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
Estate of Marie Riggsbee Godwin
FILE NO. 25E001169-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 1st day of October, 2025, as Co-Executors of the Estate of MARIE RIGGSBEE GODWIN, Deceased, do hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before January 10th, 2026 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 9th day of October, 2025.
Gus Travis Godwin, III, Co-Executor
Kevin Thomas Godwin, Co-Executor
ESTATE OF MARIE RIGGSBEE GODWIN
c/o E. Jack Walker, Jr., Attorney
Walker Lambe, PLLC
PO Box 51549
Durham, North Carolina 27717
10/9, 10/16, 10/23, and 10/30/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File Number 25E000889-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 2nd day of July 2025, as EXECUTOR of the Estate of SHARON ANNE SKOLNICKI, 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 9th day of January, 2026 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 9th day of October 2025.
Beth A. Weese, Executor
6719 Hopewell Avenue
Springfield, VA 22151
10/9, 10/16, 10/23, and 10/30/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File Number 25E001268-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 2nd day of October 2025, as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of GERTRUDE ALLEN RITCHIE, 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 9th day of January, 2026 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 9th day of October 2025.
Lloyd W. Allen, Jr., Administrator
610 Ashe Ave
Cary, NC 27511
10/9, 10/16, 10/23, and 10/30/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File Number 25E001270-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 2nd day of October 2025, as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of TOMMY CHARLES EDWARDS, 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 9th day of January, 2026 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 9th day of October 2025.
Jane P Edwards, Administrator
1733 Wynne Rd.
Durham, NC 27713
10/9, 10/16, 10/23, and 10/30/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
The undersigned having qualified as Administrator of the Estate of NAOMI SCHERRYE WILLIAMS, deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the estate to present such claims to the undersigned at 2002 Knight Crossing Road, Durham, NC 27703 on or before the 7th day of January, 2026 or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said Estate, please make immediate payment.
This the 9th day of October, 2025.
Kiira Lyons, Administratrix
2002 Knight Crossing Road
Durham, NC 27703
(919) 406-4736
Dates of Publication:
October 9, 16, 23, 30, 2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
File Number 25E000410-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 2nd day of April, 2025, as Administrator of the ESTATE OF JASON STIRLING GARRARD, Deceased, do hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before January 10th, 2026 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 9th day of October, 2025.
Lorraine G. Ragsdale, Administrator
ESTATE OF JASON STIRLING

GARRARD
c/o Richard G. Long, III
Walker Lambe, PLLC
PO Box 51549
Durham, North Carolina 27717
10/9, 10/16, 10/23, and 10/30/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 1st day of October, 2025, as Executor of the Estate of FRANCES C. PATTERSON, also known as FRANCES RUBYLEE PATTERSON, Deceased, does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before January 10th, 2026 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 9th day of October, 2025.
Hal E. Patterson, Executor
Estate of Frances C. Patterson Aka Frances Rubylee Patterson
c/o Jennifer Dalman, Attorney
Walker Lambe, PLLC
240 Leigh Farm Road, Suite 100
Durham, North Carolina 27707
10/9, 10/16, 10/23, and 10/30/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION
In the General Court of Justice,
District Court Division
In re: DOE, 25SP000913-310
TO: The unknown father of a female child to be born on or about December 6, 2025, in Jacksonville, Onslow County, North Carolina. Respondent TAKE NOTICE that a Petition for Adoption was filed on the 23rd day of September 2025 day of October 2025, with the Clerk of Superior Court for Durham County in Durham, North Carolina, in the above-entitled special proceeding. The Petition relates to a female child due to be born on or about December 6, 2025, in Onslow County, North Carolina. The birth mother's name is Abigail Davis. She is a 22-year-old Caucasian woman with strawberry blonde hair and green eyes who is 5'7" tall. The child was conceived on or about mid-March 2025, in Jacksonville, North Carolina. It is the intention of Abigail to place the child for adoption. It is Abigail's belief that your consent to the adoption is not required. If you believe your consent to the adoption of this child is required pursuant to G.S. 48-3-601, you are required to make defense to such pleading no later than forty (40) days after the date of the first publication of this notice which is the 18th of November 2025 exclusive of such date. A copy of your notice must also be sent to the attorney listed below. Upon your failure to do so, the Petitioners will apply to the Court for relief sought in the Petition and the Court will rule that your consent is not required. Any parental rights that you may have will be terminated upon the entry of the decree of adoption. This, the 9th day of October 2025. Milan T. Pham, Attorney for Petitioners NC Bar # 27599 NicholsonPham PLLC, 113 Broadway Street, Durham, North Carolina 27701.
10/9, 10/16, and 10/23/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
File No. 25E001030-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 22nd day of September 2025, as Executor of the Estate of DONALD QUNICY FOZARD, SR., 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 3rd day of January, 2026 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 2nd day of October, 2025.
NORA LEE FOZARD, EXECUTOR
ESTATE OF DONALD QUNICY FOZARD, SR.
c/o Richard G. Long III, Attorney
Walker Lambe, PLLC
Post Office Box 51549
Durham, North Carolina 27717
10/2, 10/9, 10/16, and 10/23/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
Estate Of Heather Heekyoung Cho
File No. 24E002407-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 24th day of September, 2025, as Executor of the ESTATE OF HEATHER

Classifieds

DURHAM COUNTY

HEEKYOUNG CHO, Deceased, does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before January 3rd, 2026 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 2nd day of October, 2025.
Chuck C. Cho, Executor
E STATE OF HEATHER
HEEKYOUNG CHO c/o Shirley M. Diefenbach, Attorney
Walker Lambe, PLLC
240 Leigh Farm Road
Suite 100
Durham, NC 27707
10/2, 10/9, 10/16, and 10/23/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File Number 25E001247-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 25th day of September 2025, as EXECUTOR of the Estate of ANN WAUGH MURRAY, 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 2nd day of January, 2026 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 2nd day of October 2025.
Kimberly Parks, Executor
1008 Athena Drive
Durham, NC 27703
10/2, 10/9, 10/16, and 10/23/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File Number 25E001195-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 12th day of September 2025, as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of ALMA STRICKLAND, 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 2nd day of January, 2026 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 2nd day of October 2025.
Sharron Parker, Administrator
870 County Line Rd.
Timberlake, NC 27583
10/2, 10/9, 10/16, and 10/23/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File Number 25E001189-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 11th day of September 2025, as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of CANDY WHITT MCLAIN, 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 2nd day of January, 2026 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 2nd day of October 2025.
Gordon Claudius McLain, Administrator
8913 Roxboro Road
Bahama, NC 27503
10/2, 10/9, 10/16, and 10/23/2025

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 25E003893-910
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 6th day of October 2025, as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of ALICE HART BALL A/K/A ALICE HART PARTIN-BALL A/K/A

ALICE PARTIN BALL, 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 January, 2026 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 23rd day of October 2025.
Jammy Angela Ball, Administrator
2304 Dorety Place
Raleigh, NC 27604
10/23, 10/30, 11/6, and 11/13/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY

NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION
In the General Court of Justice,
District Court Division
File No. 25CV022844-910
CRYSTAL ANN BONE & JOSHUA BROSSEAU, Plaintiffs VS TONY BROWNE, 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 CHILD CUSTODY.

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 the Plaintiff will seek the relief sought herein, and a Judgment for Child Custody may be entered.

This, the 23rd day of October, 2025.
Crystal Ann Bone & Joshua Brosseau, Plaintiffs
112 Griffin St.
Garner, NC 27529
10/23, 10/30, and 11/6/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY

NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION
In the General Court of Justice,
District Court Division
File No. 25CV022291-910
Heydi Martinez Hernandez, Plaintiff v. Denis Mencia Velasquez, 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 CHILD CUSTODY.

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 the Plaintiff will seek the relief sought herein, and a Judgment for Child Custody may be entered.

This, the 9th day of October, 2025.
Heydi Martinez Hernandez, Plaintiff
313 Roselle Ct. Apt C
Raleigh, NC 27610
10/9, 10/16, and 10/23/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY

COMPLAINT TO ENFORCE POSSESSORY LIEN ON MOTOR VEHICLE
In The General Court Of Justice
District Court Division
Small Claims
File No. 25CV035087-910
HARWARD FARM, Plaintiff VS. UNKNOWN VIN: 31847A217782 1963 CHEVROLET, Defendant
TO UNKNOWN OWNER: TAKE NOTICE the petitioner has filed with the clerk a petition in proper form indicating that the petitioner has a valid lien against a 1963 CHEVROLET, ID No. 31847A217782 and that the petitioner shall have the right to sell to the highest bidder the motor vehicle listed on November 18, 2025 at WCCH, 316 Fayetteville St., 3rd Floor, Raleigh, NC 27601, at 1:30 p.m. You are required to make a defense to such pleading before such date and time.

This the 9th day of October, 2025.
Harward Farm, Plaintiff
3732 Koomen Lane
Raleigh, NC 27606
10/9, 10/16, and 10/23/2025
NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY

NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION
In The General Court Of Justice
District Court Division
File No. 22CV014645
JOSEPHINE EMMANUEL OPARAOCHA, Plaintiff VS. BENSON CHUKWUDI AGU, Defendant

To The Defendant: Take notice that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above entitled action. The nature of the relief being sought is as follows: The Plaintiff has filed a

COMPLAINT FOR JUDGMENT FOR ABSOLUTE DIVORCE. You are required to make defense to such pleading no later than November 10, 2025, thirty (30) days from the first date of the publication of this Notice, and upon your failure to do so the party seeking service against you will apply to the court for the relief sought.

This, the 9th day of October 2025.

Josephine Oparaocha, Plaintiff
5016 Babbling Brook Drive
Raleigh, NC 27610
10/9, 10/16, and 10/23/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION
In the General Court of Justice,
District Court Division
In re: DOE, 25SP000913-310

TO: The unknown father of a female child to be born on or about December 6, 2025, in Jacksonville, Onslow County, North Carolina. Respondent TAKE NOTICE that a Petition for Prebirth Determination of Consent was filed on the 23rd day of September 2025 day of October 2025, with the Clerk of Superior Court for Durham County in Durham, North Carolina, in the above-entitled special proceeding. The Petition relates to a female child due to be born on or about December 6, 2025, in Onslow County, North Carolina. The birth mother's name is Abigail Davis. She is a 22-year-old Caucasian woman with strawberry blonde hair and green eyes who is 5'7" tall. The child was conceived on or about mid-March 2025, in Jacksonville, North Carolina. It is the intention of Abigail to place the child for adoption. It is Abigail's belief that your consent to the adoption is not required. If you believe your consent to the adoption of this child is required pursuant to G.S. 48-3-601, you are required to make defense to such pleading no later than forty (40) days after the date of the first publication of this notice which is the 18th of November 2025 exclusive of such date. A copy of your notice must also be sent to the attorney listed below. Upon your failure to do so, the Petitioners will apply to the Court for relief sought in the Petition and the Court will rule that your consent is not required. Any parental rights that you may have will be terminated upon the entry of the decree of adoption. This, the 9th day of October 2025. Milan T. Pham, Attorney for Petitioners NC

Bar # 27599 NicholsonPham PLLC, 113 Broadway Street, Durham, North Carolina 27701.

10/9, 10/16, and 10/23/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY

NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION
In the General Court of Justice,
District Court Division
File No. 25CV007590-910
JAMES IRWIN STREET III, Plaintiff v. STACI ALLVIA BYRD, 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 CHILD CUSTODY.

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 the Plaintiff will seek the relief sought herein, and a Judgment for Child Custody may be entered.

This, the 9th day of October, 2025.

James Irwin Street III, Plaintiff
623 Pony Club Circle
Cary, NC 27519
10/9, 10/16, and 10/23/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk

File Number 24E001425-910
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 29th day of August 2025, as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of KATINA SHERELL LUCAS, 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 2nd day of January, 2026 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 2nd day of October 2025.
Ronald G. Lucas Jr., Administrator
5012 White Leaf Court
Raleigh, NC 27610
10/2, 10/9, 10/16, and 10/23/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File Number 25E003670-910

D/M/WBE

SUBCONTRACTORS/SUPPLIERS WANTED

T. A. Loving Company (NC General Contractor License No. 325) is seeking certified DBE, MBE, and WBE subcontractors for the **Big Rockfish Creek Outfall – Contract II** project for **Fayetteville Public Works Commission** and **T. A. Loving Company** which bids on **October 27, 2025, at 5:00 PM**. Plans and specifications for this project are available at the following locations: T. A. Loving Company; 400 Patetown Road; Goldsboro, NC 27530 * Fayetteville PWC Procurement website.

Potential subcontracting opportunities include but are not limited to 8" water main installation, and concrete flatwork (removal and replacement of concrete driveways). Please contact Jason Savage (jsavage@taloving.com) or Jeff Price (jprice@taloving.com) if you are interested in submitting a proposal on any portion(s) of this project. Contact via phone 919-734-8400; fax: 919-736-2148; or email. All quotations will be accepted up to the closing time of the bid date. T. A. Loving Company is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer.

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

WARREN COUNTY

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WARREN COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

All persons, firms and corporations having claims against STEWART K. SUTTON, DECEASED, are noticed to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before January 21, 2025, or this notice along with the appropriate general statute will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors the deceased are asked to make immediate payment. This the 23rd day of October, 2025. All correspondence should be to the Estate of Stewart K. Sutton, c/o William W. Browning, Attorney, 120 E. Main Street, Durham, NC 27701.

10/23, 10/30, 11/6, and 11/13/2025.

Classifieds



ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS

The North Carolina Department of Adult Correction has the following contract in Catawba County out for bid: C- 11787 Catawba CC Air Conditioning Information . The bid opening is scheduled for: Thursday, 11/20/2025 . To obtain the Notice to Bidders, any Pre-Bid Requirements, and any Addenda visit: North Carolina Department of Adult Correction · eVP



ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS

The North Carolina Department of Adult Correction has the following contract in Lincoln County out for bid: C- C11750 Lincoln AC installation . The bid opening is scheduled for: Thursday, 11/20/2025 . To obtain the Notice to Bidders, any Pre-Bid Requirements, and any Addenda visit:https://evp.nc.gov/solicitations/details/?id=e2381dfa-1b8f-f011-b4cc-001dd8062c20

D/M/WBE

SUBCONTRACTORS/SUPPLIERS WANTED

T. A. Loving Company (NC General Contractor License No. 325) is seeking certified DBE, MBE, and WBE subcontractors and suppliers for the **Water System Improvements – Contract No. 3** project for the **Town of Ramseur** which bids on **October 28, 2025, at 2:00 PM**. Plans and specifications for this project are available at the following locations: T. A. Loving Company; 400 Patetown Road; Goldsboro, NC 27530 * Town of Ramseur, Town Municipal Building; 724 Liberty Street; Ramseur, NC 27316 * The Wooten Company; 119 Brookstown Avenue, Suite 100; Winston-Salem, NC 27101 * Dodge Data and Analytics website * ConstructConnect website * North American Procurement Council website.

Potential subcontracting opportunities include but are not limited to surveying, clearing and grubbing, hauling, asphalt paving, striping, traffic control, erosion control, seeding, line-work/pipe installation, jack & bore, bypass pumping, and flat-work. Please contact **Jeff Price (jprice@taloving.com)** if you are interested in submitting a proposal on any portion(s) of this project. Contact via phone 919-734-8400; fax: 919-736-2148; or email. All quotations will be accepted up to the closing time of the bid date. T. A. Loving Company is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer.

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



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Kari

Kari Stoltz
President, Bank of America Triangle

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