

Save Money...DONATE TODAY!

Every December, people worldwide pause to reflect on the year that passed. This moment of reflection often inspires generosity. That is why year-end donations have become one of the most powerful ways for individuals and families to support causes they care about while also benefiting from potential tax advantages.

Experts note that strategic charitable giving can significantly maximize tax efficiency while helping nonprofits strengthen communities and respond to emergencies. Whether you are considering end of year donations, planning to make your first charitable gift, or hoping to restructure your philanthropy for greater impact, understanding the landscape of end of year charitable donations in 2025 is essential.



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The Importance Of Year-End Giving To Your Community

VANGUARD—It's always a good time to give to charity. Nonprofits depend on donor support to pursue their charitable missions and make the world a better place.

However, there is a time of year that is the most popular for charitable giving: the end of the year.

Let's explore how nonprofits depend on year-end giving for fundraising, and why November and December are so important for donors and their philanthropy.

How nonprofits benefit from year-end giving

Americans are incredibly generous. And while donations and grants are given to charities throughout the year, 30% of annual giving is done in December and 10% occurs in just the last 3 days of the year.

Nonprofits know this, and they plan their fundraising goals accordingly. While a nonprofit will happily accept donations any day, they know that there's only so much they can raise in July compared to December. Organizations rely on the end of the year to get the donations they need to run their programs.

While giving increases in December,

that doesn't mean nonprofits can sit back and watch the funds come through. Nonprofits must communicate with donors to continue encour-

aging year-end giving and increase awareness of their mission. Some people might slow down toward the end of the year, but those at nonprofit

will often be working even harder to maximize their outreach during this time period.

So, if you've noticed an uptick in

communications from your favorite charities in November and December, you now know why! December is their short window of time to best reach their fundraising goals, and they're looking to their reliable donors like you to continue their support.

Why donors tend to give at the end of the year

Nonprofits respond to the increased giving of their donors in December, but they didn't necessarily create this timeline.

So why do donors give more in December? There are several reasons, and while everyone is different, these trends below are the most popular motivators for donors.

Tax deduction deadlines Giving to a charity is a tax-deductible activity. In addition to supporting causes that they care about most, donors often have tax goals they're trying to reach as well and enjoy the tax benefits of charitable giving.

However, to achieve their tax goals for a specific year, they need to ensure all activities intended to affect the current year's taxes must be completed before the new year.

For example, if your goal is to give enough to charity that you can take a charitable tax deduction, you'll need to give before January 1st in order for your donation to affect the current

(See **YEAR-END GIVING**, P. 4)



NEW GOP-CONTROLLED LOCAL ELECTION BOARDS REJECT EARLY VOTING SITES ON SOME NC COLLEGE CAMPUSES

CAROLINA PUBLIC PRESS – Disagreements have always existed over early voting sites in North Carolina, no matter who is in power. County election board members regularly debate over whether to allow Sunday early voting, how many sites to use, where they should be located and how long they should be open.

But in Jackson and Guilford counties, Democratic board members are raising concerns over the exclusion of early voting sites that serve college students from 2026 primary election plans.

In Jackson County, Republican board members voted against Democratic board members to remove an early voting site from Western Carolina University's campus. In Guilford County, Republicans denied Democrats' request to add early voting sites on North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University and University of North Carolina-Greensboro's campuses.

In Cumberland County, Democratic and Republican board members agree about the inclusion of a site across the street from Fayetteville State University, but one Democratic member wants to remove another site next to a community college in a wealthy part of town to make room for a site in the northernmost part of the county.

So far, at least 65 counties have submitted their 2026 primary early voting plans to the State Board of Elections, according to spokesperson Jason Tyson. Sixty had unanimous approval, meaning that they're essentially good to go. Five were not, which gives the State Board the final say. County boards have until Dec. 19 to send their plans to the state board.

Tyson said he expects the board to take up the non-unanimous plans during one of the first meetings of 2026.

Placing early voting sites on college campuses is popular; according to a recent survey commissioned by Common Cause, 79% of voters support lo-

(See **REJECTED EARLY VOTING SITES**, P. 2)

UPDATES FROM VETERAN'S AFFAIRS: VA HITS SEVEN-YEAR HIGH IN HOUSING HOMELESS VETERANS

By Jheri Hardaway

Staff Writer

DURHAM, N.C. — The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced this week that it has permanently housed 51,936 homeless veterans across the country in Fiscal Year 2025, marking the largest number of veterans housed in a single year since 2019. This national milestone had a significant impact here in North Carolina. According to recent data, 1,379 North Carolina veterans were permanently housed this fiscal year. Locally, the Durham VA Health Care System played a pivotal role, helping 394 veterans in our region find permanent homes.

The nationwide total represents an increase of more than 4,000 veterans compared to last year. Officials attribute the success to a more rigorous tracking methodology and aggressive new outreach campaigns. "This is life-changing and in many cases life-saving work," said Dr. Alyshia Smith, Executive Director of the Durham VA Health Care System. "We are proud of the progress Durham VA is making to get Veterans off the streets and are redoubling our efforts to continue this momentum moving forward."

In May 2025, the VA launched the "Getting Veterans Off the Street" initiative. This nationwide surge saw VA healthcare systems hosting dedicated outreach events to locate unsheltered veterans and offer them immediate access to housing programs, healthcare, and benefits. This specific initiative alone helped move over 25,000 veterans into interim or permanent housing. These efforts align with a broader federal push, including President Trump's May executive order establishing a National Center for Warrior Independence for Homeless Veterans. Located at the West Los Angeles VA Medical Center, the center aims to support up to 6,000 homeless veterans by 2028.

For veterans and their families in the Carolinas who may still be struggling, the VA and local partners have highlighted several critical resources available right now:

- Housing Assistance: The central hub for all housing resources is available at VA.gov/homeless.
- Heating and Energy Bills: With winter approaching, veterans with limited income who are struggling to pay heating bills are encouraged to apply for the Low Income Home and Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). More information is available through the NC DHHS website.
- Food Insecurity: Veterans facing food shortages have multiple local options:
- Dial 2-1-1: By dialing 2-1-1 on any phone, operators can connect veterans to the nearest veteran-friendly pantry or emergency food program.
- Find a Food Pantry: A complete map of food pantries and distributions in North Carolina can be found at foodfinder.foodbankcenc.org. Community members aware of a veteran in need are urged to share these resources or contact the local VA for assistance.

Exhibition Explores Photography's Role In The Black Arts Movement

The National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., is presenting the first exhibition to explore photography's impact on a cultural and aesthetic movement that celebrated Black history, identity, and beauty.

The exhibition, titled *Photography and the Black Arts Movement, 1955-1985*, focuses on the contributions of American and Afro-Atlantic diaspora photographers in creating a distinct Black visual culture and identity. This is the first exhibition to specifically explore photography's role within the Black Arts Movement, a creative initiative with influence comparable to the Harlem Renaissance, which developed alongside the civil rights and international freedom movements.



The exhibition highlights the ways artists used photography to engage communities and promote self-representation, establishing approaches to socially engaged art that continue to influence contemporary practices.

"Photography and photographic images were crucial in defining and giving expression to the Black Arts Movement and the civil rights movement. By merging the social concerns and aesthetics of the period, Black artists and photographers were defining a Black aesthetic while expanding conversations around community building and public history," Deborah Willis, guest co-curator, university professor and chair

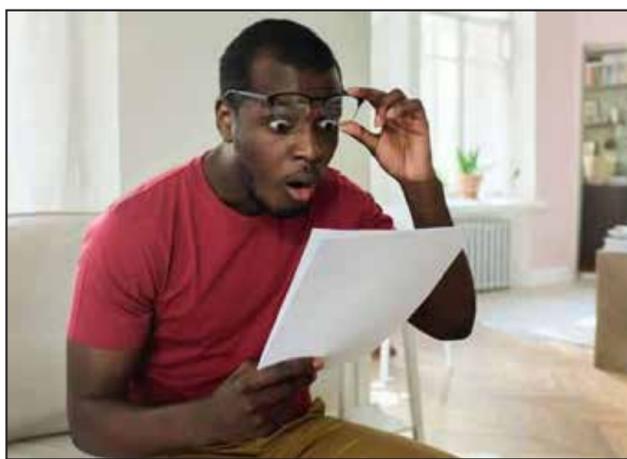
(See **EXHIBITION**, P. 2)

Black Households Face Higher Heating Bills Than Other American Demographics

THE CONVERSATION – Rising energy costs consume a bigger and bigger chunk of family budgets in the United States. Our research has found that for many African American families, those costs take an extra big bite out of their incomes. This bite, the percentage of a household's income used to pay energy bills, is called a household's "energy burden."

Households with high energy burdens struggle to adapt to rising prices. The U.S. Energy Information Administration reports that more than 12 million households keep their homes either colder or hotter than is actually comfortable, specifically in an effort to keep control of energy costs. And 24 million households report having had to forgo food or medicine at least once in the past year to pay utility bills.

Also, studies indicate that people facing high energy burdens often turn to unsafe heating sources, such as space heaters, stoves or fireplaces, and are at higher risk of asthma, depression, premature mortality and poor self-reported health. Our recent



study of 2019 data found that those burdens are not spread evenly across the country or across society.

Specifically, families living in majority-Black census tracts spent 5.1% of their income on energy – significantly higher than the 3.2% share

spent by average American households. Census tracts dominated by other racial groups in our study – whites, Latinos and Asian Americans – were much closer to the overall average.

Energy injustice

Often, disparities like this are attributed to income, which is indeed a factor given that Black households have a median income of \$53,444, while the overall median in the U.S. is \$78,538. However, our study found that even when a majority-white and a majority-Black census tract had the same median household income, the average share of household income spent on energy was higher in the majority-Black census tract.

We found two possible reasons for this difference, both rooted in race and housing situations.

First, our analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data finds that African American-majority census tracts have older homes on average than other census tracts. Older homes often have lower energy efficiency due to less insulation, single-pane windows, and gaps and cracks in the building's structure, especially around windows, doors and chimneys. So even if a Black family earns the same income as another family, the Black

(See **HIGHER HEATING BILLS**, P. 2)

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Rejected early voting sites —CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

cating early voting sites at locations accessible to student voters, including on campus. Younger voters and Democrats support campus early voting sites at higher levels.

Among some Republicans, there's a perception that helping student voters is synonymous with helping Democrats.

As county boards now have Republican majorities, the question for election watchers is whether the exclusion of primary early voting sites located on or close to campus is part of business as usual or an emerging pattern driven by politics.

Jackson County and WCU Zach Powell left Jackson County's Dec. 9 election board meeting disappointed.

Powell, president of the Western Carolina University College Democrats, heard that the board might remove the WCU early voting site a few weeks ago.

Republicans claimed that the site wasn't accessible, lacked ample parking and was intimidating to the broader community, Powell said. Board Chair Bill Thompson also implied that the university wasn't politically neutral, he added.

"I'm not really sure where the chair is coming from," he said.

The university hosts many community events for both students and the broader community, for one. While there may not be a ton of parking as it stands, the university was willing to reserve additional spots to make the site work, Powell explained.

"I definitely think that some of them, probably they have preconceived notions about college students and the way that they vote that aren't necessarily reflective of the reality in Jackson County, on WCU's campus, because Republicans and Democrat students use the polling site at roughly the same rate," he said.

WCU is unique in another aspect:

it's taken the top spot for early voting sites with the highest proportion of same-day registrations in eight of the nine past elections, according to an analysis by Chris Cooper, WCU political science professor.

Undeniably, the site has increased youth early voting turnout since it began being used in 2016 for primary and general elections, he found.

Board members also brought up finances. They said they would save money by removing the WCU site. But Powell isn't buying it. If they're able to transport students to the nearest site, the Cullowhee Recreation Center, then that site will inherit the large volume of same-day registrants and student voters.

"The chair, Bill Thompson, claims that they'll save \$20,000 by closing the WCU site," Powell said. "I'm not really sure where that number comes from. When you account for the labor and the infrastructure that will be needed, I think they'll actually save a lot less than that."

There's a lot of handwringing about students helping Democrats win elections, but that's not the full story. Sure, college students tend to lean more liberal, but there are plenty of Republican students too, and actually, many are registered unaffiliated now, Cooper said.

Students have a stake in the local and state government, even if they are temporary residents, Powell said.

"They live there, they learn there, they work there," he said. "In a lot of cases, they contribute to the local economy. They're there for more than half of the year, and there are decisions made at the state, local and federal level that affect college students."

Cumberland County and Fayetteville St.

In Cumberland County, one Democratic board member wants to switch things up.

Election board members decided not to use the county board of elections office as an early voting site for next year's primary election. So, they had to designate a replacement site fairly close to the office.

Republicans wanted to use Kiwanis Recreation Center, which is located close to a community college and has historically been used.

Irene Grimes, a Democratic board member, wanted to use the Smith Recreation Center, located across the street from Fayetteville State University, a historically Black university.

The board did not agree on a plan, but several proposals are out there. Both the majority and minority plan include the site across from Fayetteville State University. A plan brought up by the director, but quickly dismissed by board members, would have eliminated that site, Republican board chair Linda DeVore said.

Grimes and the other Democratic member want to exclude Kiwanis Recreation Center to make room for a Spring Lake site in the northernmost part of the county, since the county only uses seven sites nor-



ally. That would mean the Smith Recreation Center would replace the Kiwanis Recreation Center as the county board office replacement site. That's never been the case before.

Since the early voting plan was not unanimous, the State Board will have the final say on the various proposals. They could also go with their own proposal.

While both the Smith Recreation Center and Kiwanis Recreation Cen-

ter are close to colleges, Grimes said there's more nuance than that. The Kiwanis Recreation Center is in the second-wealthiest neighborhood in Fayetteville, while the Smith Recreation Center is in the poorest neighborhood.

The two sites are 2.6 miles apart; Grimes previously argued that there was no need for two early voting sites so close together when there are only so many sites they can

open. While the community college is a commuter school, which means students are able to drive to another site, not all FSU students can say the same, Grimes said.

Despite the director's plan not gaining traction, Grimes felt like the board tried to "horse trade Smith away" during the discussion. She's not confident in its future.

"Maybe I'm a little late to the party, but I have sensed this desire, move, whatever to strategically place early voting sites where it is politically convenient," she said. "And that's not how we should be doing elections."

Guilford Co. rejects some early voting sites

Guilford County Board of Elections Chairman Eugene Lester III started the Nov. 18 meeting with a statement. In the United States, he said, citizens have rights and privileges.

The right to be presumed innocent at trial, for example, is automatic, he said. But that's not the case with privileges.

"Voting is a privilege," Lester said. "Voting requires the citizens to actually take some action, to do some things, to discharge a duty, and it may require some work on the citizens' parts."

How AI is Reshaping The Way We Write, Speak

By Jordan Meadows

Staff Writer

Artificial intelligence is rapidly reshaping the way we communicate, influencing not only the tools we use but also the structure, tone, and rhythm of modern language. As these systems become more embedded in everyday life, they quietly redefine ideas of clarity, efficiency, and correctness in written English, raising questions about authorship, authenticity, and the future of language itself.

The paragraph you just read was written entirely by artificial intelligence. Did you notice? If not, how could you have? What would you even be looking for?

As AI tools have become woven into everyday life, the challenge of recognizing when a piece of writing or speech is shaped by a machine has grown more complicated.

Certain AI tools leaned heavily on lists and corporate-style concision, relying on bullet points and structure instead of the flexible rhythm typical of human writing. Sentences often sounded oddly polished yet slightly off, built from grammatically perfect wording that didn't quite match how people normally talk.

Repetition of sentence patterns and an over-reliance on familiar linguistic templates further hinted at automated origins. Buzzwords and jargon frequently crept in, especially in contexts where the system lacked deeper knowledge. Even immaculate grammar could be a giveaway, since real writers occasionally bend or break rules to emphasize an idea. Some models also showed consistent habits, such as favoring terms like commitment or perseverance, and sprinkling em dashes everywhere.

What complicates the picture today is that these patterns no longer belong to AI alone. Research from Florida State University shows that

the language used by tools like ChatGPT has begun to seep into everyday speech.

This "seep-in effect" emerged after researchers analyzed more than twenty-two million words from unscripted podcast conversations before and after 2022. They found that certain terms favored by AI systems—words such as surpass, boast, and strategically—appeared far more often in spoken English after the release of ChatGPT, while similar synonyms remained steady.

The study revealed that people weren't simply using new vocabulary because of cultural events, as happened with terms like Omicron during the pandemic. Instead, they were echoing the very language patterns introduced to them by AI tools. In academic and educational contexts, words like delve and intricate climbed in frequency, and the trend continued with others such as garner.

Nearly three-quarters of the tracked words increased in usage, with some more than doubling. One of the clearest examples came from the word underscore, which rose sharply, while its synonym accentuate did not.

To understand this shift, researchers first prompted ChatGPT to polish a massive body of text—emails, essays, news stories—and then extracted the words it inserted most often, dubbing them "GPT words." When they traced these terms across hundreds of thousands of YouTube videos and more than seven hundred thousand podcast episodes across multiple years, the influence of these words was unmistakable.

According to outside experts, tracking single-word frequency is the right approach at this moment in AI's evolution, because it captures the earliest signals of technological influence. As future models improve and grow more varied, the linguistic fingerprints will likely become harder to



detect, pushing researchers to study deeper patterns such as sentence design and modes of presenting ideas.

Most people turn to AI for practical tasks: seeking information, drafting text, and sorting through everyday decisions. About half of all messages involve asking for guidance, reflecting a growing reliance on AI as an advisor rather than just a tool for doing work. Task-oriented exchanges make up roughly 40%, while 11% center on personal expression or reflection. Only a little more than one-quarter of interactions are directly tied to work, even though 30% of consumer usage has some professional connection.

This hints at a broader trend: AI generates value in ways that traditional metrics like GDP do not fully capture, especially by helping people think, decide, and communicate more efficiently.

Other patterns paint a picture of how people relate to these tools. Ten percent of conversations revolve around teaching and learning, a sign that many trust AI as a source of knowledge despite ongoing issues with hallucinations. A smaller share touches on relationships and

introspection, illustrating how humans increasingly invite AI into their emotional and interpersonal lives. A tiny fraction even consists of casual chatter—a reminder that despite the heavy discussion surrounding AI's societal impact, sometimes people simply talk to it for fun.

The topics dominating nearly eighty percent of all conversations—practical guidance, writing help, and seeking information—show how these tools are beginning to replace traditional search engines by gathering, organizing, and synthesizing information in one place.

Taken together, these shifts show why recognizing AI-generated language has become so tricky. The stylistic markers that once made AI obvious are now circulating among millions of everyday speakers and writers.

Language is changing because AI has become a participant in the language system itself. As these patterns continue to spread, distinguishing between human and machine may become less about spotting mechanical quirks and more about understanding how both are influencing one another.

HIGHER HEATING BILLS

Continued from page 1

family might live in an older house, requiring them to use more energy to warm or cool their homes, cook food, heat water and so on.

Also, we found that Black families are more likely to live in rental properties, where they cannot easily make energy-efficiency upgrades — such as installing new windows, insulation or appliances. At the same time, most landlords do not have an incentive to spend money to improve building efficiency because tenants usually pay utility bills. In the United States, 9 in 10 rental households pay for all or some of their energy bills and therefore face this split-incentive problem.

Many of these challenges can be attributed to the structural racism inherent in redlining. This early 20th century practice made it harder for prospective homeowners to get mortgages to buy homes in neighborhoods with high concentrations of Black people, immigrants or other minorities. That left more of the homes in those communities owned by landlords and occupied by tenants.

Even though redlining was banned in 1968, it left a legacy of underinvestment in properties, decreased property values and worse health outcomes.

Intersecting inequities

Other factors also likely intersect to impose a higher energy burden on Black families. Many of these were beyond the scope of our study but are well documented. For example, energy support programs are notoriously underfunded and often hard to access, especially for families without the time or connections to know about them or understand application requirements.

These are just some possible factors that increase the energy burden for Black families. The main lesson for policymakers is that communities are complicated. Energy efficiency upgrade programs that also seek to alleviate high energy burdens cannot be one-size-fits-all. A program for middle-class families in one neighborhood may not work in another community with older housing stock or large numbers of rental units.

To be successful, local officials designing programs that are aimed at families' energy burdens will have to learn about the different challenges facing each distinct community — whether it's leaky older homes, outdated water heaters, low incomes or rental split incentives. Reducing energy burdens for Black families will take more than technical fixes; it will take policies based in community engagement to build a deeper understanding of place.

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Exhibition Explores —CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

of the department of photography and imaging at the Tisch School of the Arts and founding director of the Center for Black Visual Culture at New York University, says in a press release. "The artists and their subjects helped to preserve compelling

visual responses to this turbulent time, and their images reflect their pride and determination."

Photography and the Black Arts Movement presents roughly 150 works, including pieces that have rarely or never been publicly dis-

played. The exhibition demonstrates the cultural dialogue among writers, musicians, filmmakers, photographers, and visual artists of diverse backgrounds who, during the mid-20th century, addressed social and political change, the strug-

gle for civil rights, and the rise of the Pan-African movement through art. Photographers are central to this presentation, revealing how visual documentation and artistic expression shaped the movement's identity.



Doris A. Derby, Member of Southern Media photographing a young girl, Farish Street, Jackson, Mississippi, 1968



Ernest C. Withers, I Am A Man, Sanitation Workers Strike, Memphis, Tennessee, March 28, 1968



Bruce W. Talamon, Marvin Gaye, Topanga Canyon, 1979

Business & Finance

Expert Tips To Ease Financial Pressure And Avoid Holiday Overspending

NEW YORK (AP) — Are you feeling overwhelmed by the pressure to spend money on gifts, parties, and travel this holiday season?

The job market is tough, student loan and credit card debt are rising, and prices for many items remain high due to inflation. If you're feeling financially strained, know that you're not the only one feeling that way, said Lindsay Bryan-Podvin, a financial therapist and host of the Mind Money Balance podcast.

To avoid putting additional pressure on your finances, use the holidays as a time to be extra-mindful of how you spend. Remember that spending money isn't the only way to show your love to your friends and family.

"We add on all of the years of nostalgia and pressure that we put on the holidays to meet some sort of picture-perfect version," Bryan-Podvin said.

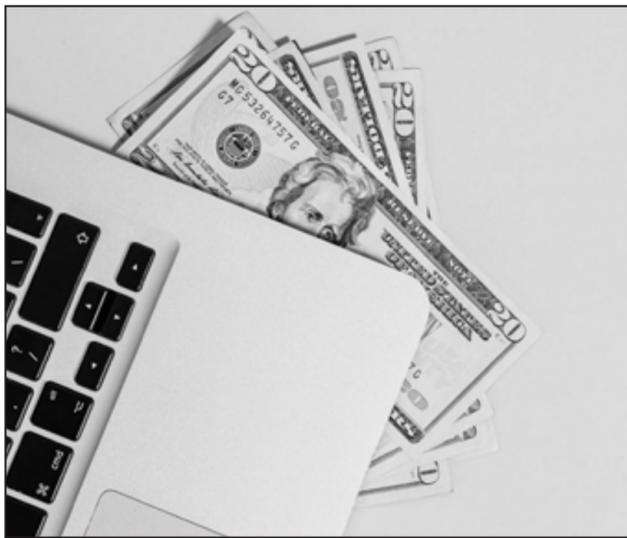
From setting a budget to creating your own traditions, here are expert recommendations to avoid financial stress this holiday season:

Start with a budget

What is marketed as "the most wonderful time of the year" can quickly become stressful, Jennifer Seitz, director of education at family finance app Greenlight, said. Setting a budget can help you avoid overspending on gifts, decorations, or any other holiday expenses.

"Be sure to include your travel, your shipping, your seasonal tipping, knowing what you plan to spend in each category and then having a cap in place can make it easier to avoid debt in January," Seitz said.

While having a budget is the first step, sticking to it is equally essen-



tial.

Bryan-Podvin also recommended that you include your regular debt payments in your holiday budget. That way, you avoid falling behind or acquiring more debt.

Shop around for the best deals

When you're doing your holiday gift shopping, look for sales, coupons or other holiday discounts so you can reduce your overall costs, said Trae Bodge, a shopping expert.

"I'm always looking for maybe a coupon code so I can save a certain percentage off, or I can earn cash back, or I can get a free shipping offer. I really believe in those tools and use them every single time I shop," Bodge said.

Bodge also recommends you try finding deals with browser extensions such as PayPal Honey and Rakuten.

Decide what matters most to you. The holidays are the season of giving, but spending too much money and energy can have adverse effects on your mental health. Deciding what you care about most can help you avoid financial stress.

Bryan-Podvin recommends that you write down your holiday expenses: travel, celebrations, gifts, etc. Then ask yourself if buying or participating in all of those activities and costs feels good.

"That helps you prioritize what are the things that are most important to

you this holiday season," she said.

While many people equate how much they spend on gifts or how many events they attend with how much they care for their loved ones, that is not the best way to approach the holiday season if you're financially strained.

Don't be afraid to say no

Between work parties, family functions and gatherings with friends, the holiday season can quickly become overwhelming both emotionally and financially. If you're feeling stressed, don't be afraid to place a boundary and say no to an event or a gift exchange.

"Most people who you say a boundary to are going to understand and (some) are going to be relieved," Bryan-Podvin said.

Being open about your money can be difficult, but sharing if you are struggling with debt or other financial issues can help family and friends understand that they should prioritize low-cost gifts or activities.

Create your own traditions

In recent years, Seitz has noticed a shift away from spending money on goods and more of a focus on creating meaningful experiences with family.

"I think it's really important for families to create alternative forms of joy that aren't necessarily tied to buying. Kids often remember those memories and those traditions, most of all," Seitz said.

New ways of celebrating don't have to include a greater expense, they can be as simple as organizing a pancake-making morning with the entire family, playing a new board game, or doing a homemade gift exchange.



WAKE COUNTY AND TRIANGLE LAND CONSERVANCY PROTECT 28 ACRES OF FORESTLAND NEAR WENDELL

Along a quiet tributary to Marks Creek, 28 acres of pines, hardwoods and streambanks are now protected in perpetuity and connected to a growing network of open space thanks to new conservation easements completed by Wake County's Farmland Preservation Program, Wake County's Open Space Preservation Program and Triangle Land Conservancy. This is the first project to combine funding from the Wake County Farmland Preservation Program and the Wake County Open Space Preservation Program.

This privately owned property sits next to existing county-owned open space, creating one continuous stretch of protected land. The agreement also allows for a future greenway, which could one day link Wake County's Turnipseed Nature Preserve to Triangle Land Conservancy's 447-acre Bailey and Sarah Williamson Preserve and its 17 miles of hiking and multi-use trails in eastern Wake County.

"Conservation isn't just about protecting land, it's about creating spaces where people, farms, forests, wildlife and the environment can thrive together," said Donald Mial, chair of the Wake County Board of Commissioners. "These properties help us do just that and create new opportunities for people to experience the benefits of nature close to home."

The landowners, Triangle Land Conservancy and Wake County worked together to complete the project. TLC will hold a conservation easement over the entire 28 acres. Wake County will also hold a separate conservation easement on 4.5 acres of the property allowing for the construction of a future greenway. "This property is located in the heart of the Marks Creek Rural Landscape, which has been a high-priority conservation area for more than 30 years," said TLC's Senior Land Protection Manager East Brenna Thompson. "We are thrilled to add this 28-acre property to the more than 2,500 acres that Triangle Land Conservancy, Wake County and other partners have protected in Marks Creek. We are immensely grateful to the landowners for deciding to permanently protect their property and to Wake County for funding this important land protection project."

Conservation easements are voluntary, binding legal agreements that permanently protect natural resources, including farms and forests, by limiting development, subdivision and other incompatible land uses. The landowners will retain fee-simple ownership of the property, and it is not open to the public at this time.

The land is almost entirely mature pine and mixed hardwood forest and includes about 3,150 feet of stream flowing into Marks Creek. The total cost to Wake County is \$670,500, roughly 75 percent of the easement value. The landowner contributed the remaining 25 percent.

This action supports Wake County's Growth, Land Use and Environment Goal 3: Protect 1,000 acres of green space, including open space, parks, greenways, farmland and forests by 2029.

A New USW Leader Prepares To Take Office And Is Also Making History

PITTSBURGH — A historic new slate of officers will take over leadership of the United Steelworkers (USW) in March following the union's regular four-year nomination and election process that took place this fall.

Roxanne Brown, currently serving as USW international vice president at large, will be sworn in March 1, 2026, as the union's next international president. Brown replaces David McCall, who did not seek reelection, having served as USW international president since September 2023.

"Roxanne has devoted her life's work to advancing the interests of working families, fighting for fair wages, affordable health care, dignified retirements and strong labor rights," said McCall. "I can think of no one better qualified to lead our union as we navigate this unprecedented era of largely unchecked

corporate greed."

"I am beyond humbled and honored to serve as the USW's next president," said Brown. "I'm committed to the work ahead and pledge to live up to the trust our members have shown in me. Together, we will build an economy that works for all of us, a system that rewards workers rather than corporations, and a bright future for generations to come."

Brown will be the USW's tenth international president and the first woman to lead the union.

Also reelected to new four-year terms were Myles Sullivan as secretary-treasurer; Emil Ramirez as vice president (administration); Kevin Mapp as vice president (human affairs); Marty Warren as national director for Canada; and Luis Mendoza as vice president, as well as directors for each of the union's twelve districts.

Amber Miller will take Brown's



role as international vice president at large. Miller for the past six years has directed the USW's grassroots, nonpartisan Rapid Response network.

"I had the pleasure of working

with Amber for a long time, watching her grow from a young activist serving as president of her local in northwest Ohio to an extremely capable leader who will be an essential part of moving our union forward," said McCall.

USW National Director for Canada Marty Warren congratulated the new and reelected officers, noting that the union's long tradition of democracy is what has helped ensure its strong leadership.

"Our union is based on the principle that all workers, regardless of industry, gender, race or any other consideration, deserve a voice. It's a simple idea and yet one that is constantly under attack. I'm proud to be a part of a union that lives this ideal every day, and I know that under our new leadership, we will continue empowering workers across North America to stand strong in their workplaces and their communities."

Novartis Breaks Ground On \$771 Million Manufacturing Hub Expansion In Durham

By Jheri Hardaway

Staff Writer

DURHAM, N.C. — In a major victory for North Carolina's biotechnology sector, global pharmaceutical giant Novartis and DPR Construction broke ground this week on a massive expansion of its manufacturing capabilities in Durham and Morrisville. The event, attended by Governor Josh Stein, FDA Commissioner Dr. Marty Makary, and Novartis CEO Vas Narasimhan, marked the beginning of a \$771 million investment projected to bring 700 new, high-paying jobs to the region by 2030. The ceremony underscored North Carolina's status as a global leader in life sciences, with state and federal officials praising the initiative as a critical step toward bringing essential drug manufacturing back to American soil.

Victor Bulto, President of Novartis U.S., kicked off the event by highlighting the company's return to the region. He noted that while Novartis had previously built a facility in Holly Springs in 2006, this new expansion in Durham represents the largest expansion of U.S. manufacturing for the company in 20 years. "We learned about what an incredible ecosystem exists in this state, with a combination of world-class talent, world-class universities, and [organizations] that really want to get talent that enables you to fill these manufacturing facilities with the best people," Bulto said.

The new hub will focus on the latest technologies, ranging from small molecules to biologics and gene therapies, ensuring that breakthrough



treatments are not only discovered but also manufactured within the United States.

Governor Josh Stein took the stage to champion the economic benefits of the project, labeling economic development as "the ultimate team sport." "Novartis is going to invest \$771 million in the City of Durham and the town of Morrisville," Governor Stein announced. "We are talking about big and meaningful numbers." The Governor noted that the 700 direct jobs created by this expansion will carry an average wage of approximately \$110,000—salaries capable of supporting families and strengthening the local economy. Additionally, the project is expected to generate 3,000 indirect jobs within the supply chain and contribute an estimated \$3 billion to the state's

economy. "North Carolina is ripe to be the place," Stein said, referencing the state's recent accolades as a top state for business.

A significant portion of the event focused on national security and supply chain resilience. FDA Commissioner Dr. Marty Makary delivered a passionate address about the "American First" agenda in healthcare manufacturing. "For decades, manufacturing jobs went overseas, and people said it was impossible to bring it back. And here we are," Makary said. He emphasized that domestic manufacturing is a national security issue, citing the shortages of PPE and medications experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic as a scenario that must never be repeated. Makary promised that the FDA would be a partner rather than an

obstacle, citing new initiatives to cut red tape, utilize AI in reviews, and streamline inspections for domestic plants to encourage companies to build in the U.S.

While the numbers were impressive, the event was grounded by the personal story of Craig Spinale, a Novartis employee and patient who battles Chronic Myeloid Leukemia (CML). Craig shared his journey of treatment using three generations of Novartis drugs—Gleevec, Tasigna, and Scemblix—which have allowed him to live a full life, including running the New York City Marathon and climbing Mount Kilimanjaro. "For me, it isn't just about surviving. It's about thriving," Craig told the audience. "Being on the right medicine has allowed me to do that."

The event also highlighted the strong diplomatic ties between the U.S. and Switzerland. Swiss Ambassador to the U.S., Ralf Heckner, noted that Switzerland is the largest foreign direct investor in American research and development. "This Novartis production investment speaks to a shared commitment between our two countries," Heckner stated, emphasizing that innovation does not pause during policy transitions. When complete, the integrated hub will handle everything from specialized science to sterile filling and packaging, speeding up the delivery of medicines to patients. As shovels hit the dirt, the message was clear: The Research Triangle Park remains a premier destination for global innovation, and the pipeline from laboratory to patient is becoming shorter, stronger, and more local.

Classifieds

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McDavid Associates, Inc., 3714 North Main Street, Farmville, NC 27828-049

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

A pre-Bid conference will be held at 10:00 am on December 10, 2025 in the Dover Town Hall, 105 N. Main Street, Dover, NC 28526. Prospective BIDDERS are encouraged to attend this pre-bid conference as part of their good faith efforts.

December 4, 2025
William R. Mitchell, Jr.
Mayor

Town of Dover

Year-End Giving — CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

year's tax deduction.

A spirit of goodwill
For many Americans, December is a special time of connecting with family and remembering what's most important. It's a time of reflection as we consider the state of the world and what we would like the next year to look like, whether that's less hunger, more support for those affected by disasters, a cleaner environment, or any other cause that sparks the urge to give.

As this spirit of goodwill stirs us to act, we might volunteer or give to a friend in need. And of course, people give to charities, contributing to the significant increase of giving during this time of year.

A better sense of budget needs
Perhaps a donor saved for a trip that didn't happen or they received an unexpected bonus from their company. When giving is a priority, these types of scenarios can inspire a gift to charity.

Whether you follow a tradition of giving 10% or just find a little extra in your savings at the end of the year, a donation to charity could make a significant difference for someone. And

when you have a little extra, there's nothing better than sharing it with those in need.

This is particularly important when you have clear tax goals that a financial windfall could disrupt. By December, donors have a better idea of exactly what assets need to be given to charity to fulfill their financial plan and prepare for the upcoming tax season by giving before the end of the year.

Should you wait until the end of the year to give?

We've discussed some reasons why a donation in December might make more sense for a donor than another time of year. By December, you have a better sense of your budget and the year's financial events.

However, that doesn't mean you should wait until the end of the year. Vanguard Charitable donors are strategic, thoughtful philanthropists, and they use their donor-advised funds (DAFs) to grant to charities year-round.

With a DAF, donors can contribute to their philanthropic account when it makes the most sense financially to give. While funds are in their DAF ac-

count, they're charitably invested, offering the potential to generate more dollars for charity. Then donors can recommend grants to charities when the funds are needed most.

Because of this giving flexibility, Vanguard Charitable processes thousands of grants every week. This has resulted in tens of billions of dollars going to charity since our founding in 1997.

So don't feel limited to December. When the timing is right for you and your financial plan to respond to charitable need, you can act, no matter the time of year.

And if you want to take advantage of the strategic tax benefits of giving while also having the flexibility to support charities year-round, consider opening a Vanguard Charitable DAF as your flexible giving account.

Conclusion

Most giving occurs at the end of the year as donors are inspired to support charities and motivated by year-end tax deadlines. However, nonprofits need your support, and you don't need to wait until December to act. And with a donor-advised fund, you can maximize both the advantages and flexibility of giving.



The North Carolina Black Women Empowerment Network (NCBWEN) And The Carolinian Legacy Foundation Joined Forces To Make This Holiday Season Special

On Saturday, December 13th, the NCBWEN hosted a wonderful group of young ladies during their holiday event. The young ladies are referred to as "Diamonds" in the organization, because they are valuable gems made by the pressures of life. The group prides itself on exposing the Diamonds to different aspects of life. As we all know, if you can see it, you can be it!

The founder of NCBWEN, Mrs. Sonia Barnes, said that this organization came about through love and faith. She has been so blessed in her life, and she wants to share all that she can with like-minded women and people in the community that can benefit from what she and the other members have to offer. This organization puts UNITY in the word community. They focus on the average and the forgotten.



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Health and Wellness

My Prescription Costs What?! Pharmacists Offer Tips And Tricks That Could Reduce Your Out-Of-Pocket Drug Costs

THE CONVERSATION – Even when Americans have health insurance, they can have a hard time affording the drugs they've been prescribed.

About 1 in 5 U.S. adults skip filling a prescription due to its cost at least once a year, according to KFF, a health research organization. And 1 in 3 take steps to cut their prescription drug costs, such as splitting pills when it's not medically necessary or switching to an over-the-counter drug instead of the one that their medical provider prescribed.

As pharmacy professors who research prescription drug access, we think it's important for Americans to know that it is possible to get prescriptions filled more affordably, as long as you know how before you go to the pharmacy.

Cost of copays ranges widely. When you have health insurance and have to pay for a prescription drug at the pharmacy, you're usually covering the cost of your copay. This is the amount patients or their caregivers are expected to pay after insurance covers the rest of the tab. If you get your health insurance through Medicaid, the government

program that covers low-income Americans and people with disabilities, you should not have to pay anything at all to obtain prescription drugs. If there is a copay, it should be low – probably less than US\$5.

And if you're insured through Medicare, the government program that mainly covers people who are 65 and older, or get your coverage through a private health insurance company, it's important to understand what to expect when you visit a pharmacy.

Most private insurance companies charge US\$5 to \$50 for prescription drug copays. The copays are tiered based on what the drug costs. Brand-name and specialty medications have higher copays; older generics have lower copays.

Some generic drugs and vaccines may even require no copay at all. While a copay is a flat fee, it can change over the course of the year based on whether or not you have met your deductible. The deductible is the amount of money you have to pay out of pocket before your insurance starts covering your prescriptions. Before your deductible is fully paid, you may be responsible for the full cost of your medications. After you've met your deductible for the year, you will only



be required to pay the copay.

As newer, more expensive drugs enter the market, cost-sharing at the pharmacy has increasingly shifted from a copay to coinsurance.

In contrast with a flat copay, coinsurance means your insurance company will cover a certain percentage of the drug's cost, and you'll pay

the rest. Since the patient's share is based on a percentage of the medication's price, coinsurance often results in higher out-of-pocket costs than copays do.

New help for patients with Medicare coverage

Two new government programs could help make prescription drugs

more affordable for millions of older Americans.

Starting in 2026, people who are insured through Medicare will pay no more than \$2,100 out of pocket on prescription drugs over the year. That cap may be much lower than \$2,100 due to a quirk in Medicare's rules. Prescriptions filled after someone has paid the maximum allowable amount will cost them nothing at all.

In addition, the government launched the Medicare Prescription Payment Plan in 2025. This program, which is available to people over 65, helps spread what patients spend out of pocket on prescription drugs throughout the year, making that expense more predictable and easier to budget for.

Early data indicates that very few Americans are enrolled in the Medicare Prescription Payment Plan. Patients insured through private companies do not have similar opportunities.

Coupons and discount cards. What if you can't afford a copay for your prescription drug?

Before giving up on ever getting it, ask the pharmacist about your options.

It may be worth trying to use a free online tool, such as RxAssist, sponsored by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, or a discount card from GoodRx, which is a publicly traded company.

GoodRx cards are free. They help people compare local pharmacy prices and to locate coupons that make prescriptions more affordable.

GoodRx works by searching for the lowest available price for the prescription at various pharmacies. Other copay coupons provided by the drug manufacturer may also work similarly by lowering the cost of the medication. On some occasions, the cash price at the pharmacy may actually be cheaper than the copay, and the pharmacist should be able to help you navigate these options.

Here's what you should know before giving GoodRx a try:

GoodRx collects individual data on

(See **PRESCRIPTION TIPS** P. 12)



TIPS ON STEPPING BACK FROM SCREENS AND STARTING A NEW HOBBY

AP NEWS – During the winter of 2024, Rachel Martin came to a startling realization: She spent most of her free time staring at screens. "I couldn't really think of hobbies or things that I did that took a break from the digital world," she said.

With pastimes like watching television, playing video games and creating digital art, Martin, 33, sometimes spent more than 12 hours per day looking at screens. She longed for an analog alternative.

After some trial and error, she found one: journaling with fountain pens and specialty inks. "It's quite a cool tactile experience," she said, and one that unexpectedly turned social when she started attending meetups for fountain pen enthusiasts in her city of Sydney, Australia.

"It's something that I definitely didn't expect to love," she said, "but that actually really helped me with going (mostly) screen-free."

Martin had extra motivation for avoiding devices – she has chronic migraines, and screens are a trigger for her – but many people share her goal.

Adopting a new hobby can be an effective way to get a break from screens. (Martin is even looking into selling her TV.) And as an added bonus, enjoyable pastimes can reduce stress and improve mental and physical health, research suggests.

Finding a screen-free hobby that sticks, though, can be easier said than done. Here's where to start:

A mix of enjoyable activities is fine

Some people feel pressured to find the "ideal" hobby that will perfectly optimize their free time – but there's no such thing, said Sarah Pressman, a professor of psychological science at the University of California, Irvine who has studied leisure time.

"Having a mix of small enjoyable activities – a little bit of pickleball, cooking something new, chatting with a friend over coffee, spending some time in your garden – can have a cumulative effect on your mood and health," she said. "So rather than putting pressure on yourself to find the perfect pastime, just ask, 'What brings me a little joy today?'"

Similarly, hobbies don't have to fill hours upon hours of time to be beneficial, said Matthew Zawadzki, an associate professor of psychological sciences at the University of California, Merced who has studied hobbies.

Start small by thinking about activities that would be fulfilling for 20, 10 or even five minutes at a time.

"We really need to embrace small engagements with our leisure," he said, particularly given how many other demands there are on our time.

A pastime may not reset your life, "but instead it's going to reset the next hour," Zawadzki said.

Try lots of things

Cast a wide net.

"Test out a few activities for 30 minutes each and just notice how they make you feel," Pressman said. "Think of it like dating. You may have to go on a few first dates before you find your match."

Think about how activities you loved as a child could be adapted for adulthood, or about things that you naturally lose track of time while doing, she suggested.

It can also be helpful to consider what you're missing, or want more of, in your daily routine, Zawadzki said. If you feel too sedentary, try a new form of fitness. If you need to get out of your head, pick up an engrossing book. If you feel starved for social connection, join a club or volunteer. If you haven't used your creative muscles in a while, pick up a paintbrush.

"It's about being more intentional about how you use your time," Zawadzki said.

Ask for recommendations

"It's hard to think past what we currently do," Zawadzki said. So, outsource your search.

Just as you'd ask a friend for a book or movie recommendation, ask your loved ones which activities they'd recommend for someone with your interests and tastes. Make sure they're aware of any financial, time or space constraints, too.

Make your hobbies as accessible as screen time...

If you're used to spending your evening in front of the TV, it can be hard to put those hours to new use – even once you've found a rewarding hobby.

"Screens are so easy," said Gabriela Tonietto, an associate professor of marketing at Rutgers Business School who has studied leisure time.

So, keep your sketchpad or crossword puzzle in plain sight rather than stored away, Pressman suggested, and flow directly from work or dinner into hobby time before you get distracted by screens.

Setting specific goals (not just, "I want to reduce screen time," but something like, "I will read for an hour before bed"), carving out designated time for your activity, and enlisting a hobby buddy for accountability can all help you stick to your pastime, Tonietto said.

...but don't beat yourself up if the screens sometimes win

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Arts & Culture

How Edgecombe County's Brick School Built A Legacy In Eastern NC

By Jordan Meadows

Staff Writer

Before Brick became known as a place of learning, the land in Edgecombe County carried the weight of the Civil War and slavery. As Union armies moved south in a final effort to end the conflict, General Oliver O. Howard passed through North Carolina, while General L.G. Estes traveled an eastern route through towns such as New Bern, Kinston, and Rocky Mount. When Estes reached this area, he reportedly admired it so deeply that he vowed to return after the war and buy land there.

Though peace was declared before the armies reached Richmond, Estes kept his word. After the war, he purchased more than 1,100 acres in Edgecombe County—land that would become home to one of the most important Black educational institutions in eastern North Carolina.

Before Estes, the property had belonged to Mason Wiggins, a prominent farmer, and earlier to the Garrett brothers, whose family wealth later reached into banking and manufacturing. During slavery, the plantation was reportedly used to “break in” enslaved Africans and still bore the site of a whipping post. After the war, Estes attempted to farm cotton, corn, peaches, strawberries, and other crops, shipping goods from a private rail siding. But debt overtook him, and the land eventually fell into the hands of Mrs. Julia Elma Brewster Brick, a wealthy widow from Brooklyn, New York.

Mrs. Brick's ownership marked a turning point not only for the land but for Black North Carolinians. In a chance encounter at a Brooklyn church, she approached William A. Sinclair, a Fisk University graduate



and financial agent for Howard University, with a bold idea: she wanted her North Carolina farm used to educate poor Black children who could not afford schooling elsewhere, giving them the chance to work their way through school.

Though Howard University did not conduct extension schools, Sinclair and General Oliver O. Howard guided her to the American Missionary Association (AMA), a leading philanthropic organization educating Black people across the South after the Civil War.

Through the AMA, Mrs. Brick donated the land—later expanding the gift and contributing thousands of dollars in cash—to establish what became the Joseph Keasbey Brick Agricultural, Industrial and Normal School. Founded in 1895, the school was named for her late husband, a civil engineer whose work on public infrastructure helped build her fortune.

The AMA sent Thomas S. Inborden, an Oberlin and Fisk-educated educator born to free parents, along with five teachers, to launch the school. When Inborden arrived, conditions were rough: unfinished buildings, mosquitoes, wild animals, and nightly disturbances underscored just how desperately the community needed stability, education, and opportunity.

Mrs. Brick believed Black students should master practical skills alongside academics, and the curriculum required every student to take industrial classes. Girls learned sewing and domestic arts; boys trained with tools, agriculture, blacksmithing, woodworking, and mechanical drawing. Students helped maintain the campus while receiving instruction in arts and sciences. This dual approach allowed the school to sustain itself, producing food from its farmland and even operating a successful mail-order honey business.

The school grew quickly. Enrollment climbed as high as 460 students, drawing children and young adults eager for opportunity. Brick also developed a strong cultural presence, particularly in music. Concerts in the late 1890s drew white audiences, and by the 1930s, the school was staging ambitious musical performances reported in national Black publications. Athletics also thrived, with men's and women's basketball teams, football, and membership in the North Carolina Athletic Association.

In 1925, Brick expanded its mission further by opening a junior college, offering rigorous coursework in arts, sciences, education, and even pre-medicine. At its peak, the campus included brick dormitories, classroom buildings, workshops, farm structures, and Ingraham Chapel, whose auditorium seated 1,000 people. Fifty acres served as the school campus, while additional land provided food or income through tenant farming. Yet, like many Black institutions, Brick could not escape the economic devastation of the Great Depression. Enrollment declined, funding from the AMA was sharply reduced, and by the late 1920s and early 1930s, the school was forced to close.

After the school's closure, the campus found new life as the Brick Rural Life School, emphasizing cooperative farming and rural improvement. Today, the land is home to the Franklinton Center at Bricks, a United Church of Christ retreat and educational facility. Under new leadership, the center continues to serve the community through gatherings, land-based innovation, and food production, while plans are underway to establish an African American museum honoring the site's history.



THE GOLDEN YEARS

By Judykay Jefferson

A SHIFTING MINDSET

I used to think complaining was just not a part of my personality. If something wasn't right, I was unlikely to say anything about it. If someone didn't do what I expected, I accepted it while silently fuming. I thought of myself as “non-confrontational.” Truth was, I was cowardly. I avoided unpleasant situations by doing my complaining to myself. As a result, I gained very little experience with conflict resolution while enjoying a great reputation as a “really nice person.” Don't get me wrong, I was, and am a really nice person however, until recently I did whatever I had to do to avoid facing unpleasantness and conflict head-on. It got me through tense moments, but it certainly didn't make me happy. Complaining to myself became a habit, and blaming others was its twin. Together they kept me stuck in frustration, and I was the one paying the price.

As an adult, I learned to laugh when I wanted to cuss. I smiled and took it when I wanted to walk away. I tried to be everything to everybody. I wore myself out trying to earn love, appreciation, and respect. It took a hard 180 to help me accept that I was a big, round, Pagliacchi, and I was good at it.

Once I gained the courage to confront myself, I had no choice but to change. Breaking the habit wasn't easy. It took practice, patience, and a willingness to laugh at myself. The first step was catching myself in the act. Complaining sneaks into our minds so easily. I started listening to my own tone. Was I describing a problem, or just rehearsing my frustration?

The next step was shifting to gratitude. Instead of focusing on what was wrong, I looked for what was right. If the line at the store was long, I reminded myself that I had the money to buy groceries. If the weather was too hot, I thought about the blessing of air conditioning and a cold glass of sweet tea waiting at home. Gratitude didn't erase the challenge, but it changed the way I carried it.

I also had to stop blaming others. Blame gave me the illusion of control, but really it was me handing over my peace of mind, especially when I wasn't going to confront them. When I stopped pointing fingers, I realized I had more power than I thought. If someone upset me, I could choose how to respond. If a situation didn't go my way, I could decide whether to dwell on it or move forward. Responsibility gave me back my strength.

Another shift was practicing compassion. Complaining often comes from expecting perfection—from ourselves, and from others. But none of us are perfect. I started reminding myself that people are doing the best they can with what they have to work with. That softened my heart. Instead of blaming, I tried to understand. Compassion turned irritation into patience, and patience turned into peace.

And then there was the power of words. As seniors, we know the weight of words. Our ancestors spoke life into us even when the world tried to break us down. I realized that every complaint was a bitterness seed I was planting. I wanted to grow joy so I started speaking encouragement—to myself and to others.

Now, I won't pretend I never complain. Old habits don't disappear completely. But when I catch myself, I laugh. I say, “There you go again, fussing about something you can't change.” And then I redirect. I choose gratitude, responsibility, compassion, and encouragement. Breaking the habits of complaining and blaming has given me more peace than I ever imagined. My relationships are smoother, my health feels lighter, and my spirit is freer. Life hasn't gotten easier, but my attitude has gotten stronger.

You too can break the habit. Start small. Catch yourself. Shift your focus. Take responsibility. Practice compassion. Speak life. We've lived long enough to know storms will come. But we've also lived long enough to know storms pass. Complaining won't stop the rain, and blaming won't change the wind. But gratitude, responsibility, compassion, and encouragement will carry us through.

Reclaiming the Truth: The Legacy Of Scholar-Captive Omar Ibn Said



By Jheri Hardaway

Staff Writer

Fayetteville, N.C. - In a gathering defined by deep spiritual reflection and a determined search for historical accuracy, community members, scholars, and historians came together recently to honor the legacy of Omar ibn Said. The event, centered around a communal circle modeled after West African village traditions, focused on the life of Said, a highly educated Muslim scholar from Futa Toro (modern-day Senegal) who was captured at age 37, transported to

Charleston in 1807, and enslaved for six decades, eventually living and dying in Fayetteville. Said left behind a powerful written testimony.

The gathering highlighted the ongoing work of the Muslim Wellness Foundation and their Omar ibn Said Institute, an initiative aimed at uncovering, documenting, and ethically commemorating Said's final resting place in Fayetteville. Founded in 2021, as the first and only institute in the United States dedicated to Black Muslim mental health, wellness and the deep study, preservation, and celebration of the Black Muslim experience—rooted in faith, scholarship, and healing. Organizers emphasized that while official archives are often “closed off and inaccessible,” the true history resides within the community and the stories passed down through generations so they are not forgotten. A central theme of the discussion was the necessity of correcting historical narratives that have long obscured Said's brilliance and suffering.

Facilitator and psychologist Dr. Kameelah Mu'Min Oseguera noted that the goal of current research is to “free him from the toxic narratives that still persist.” She challenged the historical

portrayal of Said as a privileged or “comfortable” slave because he was a scholar. “You can dress it up however you want. You can make a cage comfortable, but it is still a cage,” she said, describing Said as a prisoner of a system that tried to extract everything from him every day of his captivity. Dr. Kameelah argued that while Said was never physically free in his lifetime, the community today can free him in their imaginations and stories by rejecting falsehoods.

Dr. Mamarama Seck shared a re-

(See **CAPTIVE OMAR IBN P.** 9)



Carl Carlton, Soul And Funk Icon Behind "Bad Mama Jama," Dies

Carl Carlton, the Detroit-born singer whose voice helped shape generations of soul, funk, and R&B, has died at the age of 72. His death was confirmed by family members on December 14, 2025. Carlton had experienced ongoing health issues in recent years following a stroke in 2019.

Carlton, born Carlton Hudgens on May 21, 1953, showed musical talent early. Raised in Detroit, he began singing as a child and entered the recording industry in the 1960s under the name “Little Carl Carlton,” a nod to his youth and vocal ability. He later relocated to Houston, where his early recordings gained regional attention and helped establish him as a rising R&B artist.

His first major breakthrough came in 1974 with a remake of “Everlasting Love,” which became a national hit and introduced his voice to a broader audience. The song climbed into the Top 10 on the Billboard charts and remains one of the most recognizable soul records of the era. Carlton's most enduring success arrived in 1981 with “She's a Bad Mama Jama (She's Built, She's Stacked),” a funk-driven anthem that became an instant classic. The song earned him a Grammy nomination and helped his self-titled album reach gold status. Decades later, it remains a staple of R&B radio, film soundtracks, and pop culture, frequently sampled and referenced by younger artists.

Though he never chased celebrity, Carlton continued recording and performing throughout his career. His work spanned traditional R&B, funk, and later gospel music, reflecting both his musical roots and personal faith. Even as mainstream attention shifted, his influence endured, particularly among fans of classic soul.

Carlton's music captured confidence, joy, and groove at a time when funk and R&B were defining American culture. For many listeners, his songs are tied to memories of dance floors, house parties, and summer soundtracks.

Carl Carlton is remembered not only for his chart-topping hits, but for a voice that helped define an era. His music continues to play on, long after his final note.

UN Recognizes Haitian Music And Dance

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP) — Compas, a beloved Haitian music and dance genre inspired by merengue and infused with percussion, made UNESCO's cultural heritage list on Wednesday.

The syncopated rhythm, created in the 1950s, wafts from bars, bedrooms and businesses across Haiti, lifting spirits and providing solace from the country's grinding poverty and soaring gang violence.

On the night of Nov. 18, when Haiti classified for the World Cup for the first time since 1974, compas music accompanied a cheering crowd jogging through the streets of Port-au-Prince and dancing in their homes.

Dominique Dupuy, Haiti's former foreign affairs minister, called the inclusion of compas on UNESCO's list “an ode to joy.”

“In these dark times our country is experiencing, we continue to usher in this new year, already lost for our youth, with a glimmer of hope,” she wrote on social platform X.

UNESCO also recognized the Cuban Son, noting that its “lyrics are drawn from daily life, which are passed down orally.”

A rhythm “that brings the dawn with gusto”

In its praise for compas, UNESCO said the music “brings together people of all ages, genders and backgrounds.”

Compas, also known as konpa or kompa in Haitian Creole, incorporates the Haitian drum known as tanbou, congas, electric guitars and trumpets, among other instruments.

UNESCO said the music “holds deep cultural significance” and often



touches on themes including love, freedom, peace and resistance.

At KOTR, a compas dance studio in Miami, owner Sony Laventure celebrated the news. He considers compas his therapy.

“This allows me to step away, it allows me to be free from all things,” he said.

Laventure just got back from a trip to Kenya, where he taught instructors how to properly dance compas, and he's leaving soon for Paris to share his knowledge.

“My dad was a musician, so we always grew up listening to konpa,” he said, recalling how his mother loved to dance to it.

His favorite song is “Serenade des Melomanes,” which is sung in Spanish, French and Haitian Creole. When he plays it, it reminds him of his father, who passed away.

Dupuy noted that UNESCO already has recognized Haiti's famed

joumou, or pumpkin soup, along with cassava, and that the inclusion of compas “reaffirms our unwavering commitment to love, the joy of living and freedom of expression: this rhythm that brings the dawn with gusto, against all odds.”

“It makes me feel good”

From Coupé Cloué to Carimi, compas still reigns supreme in Haiti 70 years after its creation.

Stevens Charles, a 35-year-old accountant, recalled how his father loved playing music by legendary bands Shleu-Shleu and Tabou Combo.

“This is the type of vibe that I grew up listening to,” he said. “When you dance with a woman, you really don't have to move, you can just stand still and hold the woman to your body and close your eyes.”

Charles used to go out and listen to live compas bands, but, “now that we're a country that's under siege by gangs, nightlife has diminished.”

Community

Wake County Holiday Markets Spotlight Local Vendors

By Jordan Meadows

Staff Writer

Holiday shoppers across Wake County had no shortage of festive options over the weekend as two major vendor markets brought together local businesses and unique gifts for the holidays.

The weekend kicked off Friday in Cary with the Cary Vintage Holiday Market, which marked the final vintage market of theirs for the year. Hosted by Vicious Fishes Brewery, South Line Brewing Company, and Hummingbird Collective in the West End Biergarten, the family—and dog-friendly—event invited community members to browse an eclectic mix of women's and men's vintage clothing, vintage shoes and accessories, records and cassettes,

and a variety of housewares and trinkets.

Beyond shopping, attendees enjoyed specialty baked goods from Sprinkled With Love Cakery, permanent jewelry from Perm'D, live music, food trucks, and specialty winter drinks, including hot cocoa and slushies. Guests gathered around fire pits, sipped seasonal drinks, and soaked in the festive atmosphere as the market wrapped up its year-long run with a celebratory sendoff.

The holiday market momentum continued Sunday, December 14, 2025, with the 18th Annual Black Vendor Market Holiday Extravaganza and Toys for Tots Giveaway, held at the DoubleTree by Hilton Raleigh Midtown.

I come to these markets every

year because you can feel the energy and excitement," said longtime shopper Maya Johnson.

The event featured a wide range of vendors showcasing food, fashion, beauty services, and professional offerings, while also encouraging attendees to give back by donating new, unwrapped toys. Shoppers explored booths from businesses such as Ms. Martha's Meals, Christian Styles Studios, and Mama Tee's Sweet Treats.

Business information and assistance were available at booths with NC Notary and Tax Planning Strategists. Beauty and artistic works, too, were present, along with women's fragrances, Sparkling Tips Studio Nail Company, beauty consultants, and many more.

Event organizer and salon owner

Melody Council emphasized the importance of creating a supportive space for Black-owned businesses, saying, "We are bringing all Black-owned businesses together under one roof so they can showcase their businesses and sell their services and products. It just grew out of my salon, and just kept growing and growing."

In addition to organizing the event, Council gave away free toys and ensured vendors had a well-lit, clean, and dry space to operate. The spirit of the event extends beyond Wake County, with a similarly themed Black Farmers Market holiday pop-up scheduled to take place in Durham on December 18, continuing the season of shopping, celebration, and community support.



May. Leonardo Williams On Durham's Economic Future

By Jheri Hardaway

Staff Writer

Durham, N.C. - Mayor Leonardo Williams is not interested in code-switching, I'm glad because we are exhausted. Recently the teacher of the year-turned, restaurateur-turned-politician, was asked by a reporter about a comment Williams had made at a town hall meeting. In a moment of candid frustration regarding youth violence, the Mayor had used the acronym "YN." For the uninitiated, it stands for "Young N*****." "She asked, 'Do you want to apologize?'" Williams recalled in a recent sit-down interview. "I said, 'I would not apologize. I'm not apologizing for that.'" For Williams, the controversy that followed—spanning from The Shade Room to local Facebook groups—missed the forest for the trees. While critics fixated on his vocabulary, they ignored the context: a room of 200 Black residents discussing the life-and-death reality of gun violence, broken homes, and children raising children.

"I'm very authentic," Williams said, shrugging off the backlash. "Why do we need to be politically correct? I am a leader who speaks



the truth, and this is how I get in trouble a lot. And you know what? I don't give a damn." Williams, a former educator draws a sharp contrast between the survivalist activism of the past, referencing the resilience of his home Princeville, N.C. after catastrophic flooding, to what he terms the "performative outreach" of today. "We have an ever-growing sense of amnesia," Williams said. He argues that modern

local activism often looks backward rather than forward. "We can't drive the car forward by only looking through the rearview mirror. When you get reckless, looking out the back window and pressing the gas, that is when you can't define what you want." He points to the historic Hayti community. The city recently allocated \$10 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to revitalize the area, yet Williams

notes a struggle to deploy the capital effectively. "We know how to fight," Williams noted, "There's this saying: 'People close to the pain need to be closer to the power.' Well, let them get close to the power and stop speaking for them."

Mayor Williams shared an important data snapshot on the racial wealth gap and housing disparities. To contextualize the Mayor's comments on the necessity of Black wealth generation please note the current Federal Reserve data which highlights the disparity:

- * White Families: The median wealth is approximately \$285,000.
- * Black Families: The median wealth is approximately \$44,900.

- * Homeownership: In North Carolina, the White homeownership rate sits at roughly 76%, while the Black homeownership rate is approximately 48%.

Mayor Williams advocates for wealth generation through entrepreneurship rather than what he views as the "government-incentivized poverty" of traditional public housing systems that lack an "on-ramp" back to economic independence.

One of the most lingering wounds in the greater Research Triangle Park area based politics would be

the failure of the Light Rail Transit project. For years, the narrative has blamed Duke University for killing the project at the eleventh hour. Williams asserts that this narrative is false. "Duke was a representative voice," Williams explained. According to the Mayor, the project was effectively dead once the federal government shifted its focus away from light rail to passenger and commuter rail, rendering Durham ineligible for crucial funding. "We paid \$154 million to consultants, and a shovel never hit the ground," Williams said. He claims elected officials knew the funding model had collapsed but continued to push the project to save face. "Duke takes the hit.. I guess that's better than the elected officials."

Looking forward, Williams is concerned about the "sugar rush" of data centers flocking to North Carolina, arguing they drain energy and land while providing few long-term jobs. "They don't produce much in jobs nor sales tax," Williams said. He noted a critical shortage of skilled labor, stating, "the average electrician and plumber in North Carolina is between 65 and 70 years old." Nationally, nearly 25% of the construction workforce is older

than 55. A recent Bureau of Labor Statistics data shared only 6.7% of electricians in the U.S. are Black or African American, compared to 8.5% of the overall workforce, representing a significant opportunity for economic inclusion in these high-paying fields.

Ultimately, Mayor Williams' vision for Durham is grounded in a specific economic equation: increasing sales tax revenue to relieve the burden on property owners. Currently, for every \$5 Durham collects in property tax, it collects only \$1 in sales tax. To fund big progressive ideas like fare-free buses and the HEART alternative response team Williams argues Durham needs visitors to foot the bill. "We lost \$72 million in denied contracts because our convention center is too small," Williams revealed. "Locals will shop local about once a quarter... The visitors shop every night." For Williams, the path to a better Durham isn't found in performative protests or political correctness, but in hard economic numbers and the "Black excellence" that built the city in the first place invoking the spirit of the original Black Wall Street. "Nobody came to save them 120 years ago... we can't be blind to our potential"

In a case in which no crime is committed, innocence is absolute. Crystal Mangum is absolutely innocent in the April 13, 2011 death of her boyfriend Reginald Daye... her innocence being factually provable. What cannot be proven is that a crime was committed in Mr. Daye's death.

Attorneys blacklist Crystal Mangum as a client... while the NC Innocence Inquiry Commission refuses consideration of her as a client in a quid pro quo maneuver?

In an April 11, 2007 public promulgation, then-NC Attorney General Roy Cooper dropped the criminal investigation into accusations of sexual assault made a year earlier against three white Duke University student/lacrosse athletes by Crystal Mangum... earning the black single mother of three the moniker of "Duke Lacrosse Accuser." A.G. Cooper took the unprecedented action of declaring the three accused to be "innocent," after which Mangum was vilified as a societal pariah... not unlike O.J. Simpson. The proclamation prepared grounds for the three exonerated student suspects to reach an out-of-court settlement with Duke University for \$20 million each.

Following the payout, the three Duke student/lacrosse players filed a lawsuit against the city of Durham seeking \$10 million each, but instead of capitulating, the Bull City fought back and after seven years a settlement was reached in which the plaintiffs received no money and the city issued a grant of \$50,000 to the North Carolina Innocence Inquiry Commission.

Years later, in the morning hours of April 3, 2011, Ms. Mangum poked her intoxicated alcoholic boyfriend Reginald Daye in his left side with a steak knife during a domestic fight; the nonfatal wound being successfully treated at Duke University Hospital in Durham. On April 13, 2011, Mr. Daye died after being electively removed from life-support due to his brain-dead comatose state which was precipitated by an unrecognized errant esophageal intubation while treating his delirium tremens.

Five days later on April 15th, a Durham grand jury indicted Ms. Mangum for second-degree murder in Daye's death, based on the deputy chief medical examiner's fraudulent autopsy report consisting of fabricated findings and a false BIG LIE conclusion that Daye "died secondary to complications of a stab wound to the chest." Neither the medical examiner, the prosecutor, nor anyone else could identify the so-called "complication" from the stab wound... because there was none.

Two and a half years later, in November 2013, in a trial which Ms. Mangum's defense attorney had ten weeks to prepare a before a jury biased by a third (including two employees of Duke University and the wife of a surgeon at the very hospital where the fatal medical malpractice took place), Ms. Mangum was found guilty of second-degree murder after six hours of deliberation.

On March 27, 2012, non-lawyer/retired physician Sidney B. Harr received a copy of prosecution discovery which included Mr. Daye's hospital records, so he was immediately aware the instrument of Mr. Daye's death was an endotracheal tube and not a steak knife. A co-founder of the grassroots *Committee on Justice for Mike Nifong* (established in June 2008 in honoring the courage of the Durham D.A. who - in good faith - prosecuted Mangum's criminal complaint), Harr advocated on Ms. Mangum's behalf.

Dissatisfied with progress by the assigned appellate defense attorney, Dr. Harr began searching in 2014 for legal representation for Ms. Mangum... early-on contacting the North Carolina Prisoner Legal Services and the NC Innocence Inquiry Commission.

The NC Prisoner Legal Services, a non-profit law firm contracted with the NC Indigent Defense Services to provide post-conviction legal counsel for inmates, refused to confer with Dr. Harr, filed no motions, sent no letters, conducted no legal activity on Ms. Mangum's behalf, and abandoned her as a client in a January 17, 2017 letter. At this point, Ms. Mangum was without legal counsel and for the next eight years plus, Dr. Harr would be unable to obtain legal representation for her despite his dogged efforts.

In essence, Ms. Mangum had been blacklisted by attorneys in the private sector, lawyers who had the autonomy to select and refuse potential clients. However, the NC Innocence Inquiry Commission is a State agency having a mandate to investigate and represent post-conviction inmates with credible claims of wrongful conviction. From 2014 to the present, Dr. Harr contacted four successive executive directors of the NC Innocence Inquiry Commission, all of whom refused to meet and allow him to present evidence of Mangum's innocence. Despite maintaining Mr. Daye's manner of death was an accident and not a homicide, the Commission refused to allow an audience with Harr. Could this represent a quid pro quo regarding the \$50,000 grant it received from the three Duke student/lacrosse athletes in their 2014 settlement with Durham?

On October 9, 2025, Dr. Harr filed, on behalf of himself and Ms. Mangum, a lawsuit in Federal Court against the NC Innocence Inquiry Commission seeking to compel it to allow Dr. Harr to present evidence in Ms. Mangum's case. The case, *HARR, MANGUM v. NC INNOCENCE INQUIRY COMMISSION* - case no. 5:25-CV-00636-D-RN, is pending.



Crystal Mangum --Victim of a cruel and unjust justice system

Crystal Mangum, a 47-year-old mother, has spent nearly 14 years imprisoned on a trumped up murder conviction; the basis being criminality provided by the NC deputy chief medical examiner. The State, courts, and malleable medis knew of her innocence in the 2011 death of her boyfriend Reginald Daye. Mangum's 2nd-degree murder conviction was not about justice, but rather to mete out retaliation to the black NCCU coed's 2006 sexual assault accusations against 3 white Duke student/athletes at a beer-guzzling/stripper-ogling Spring break bash.

With cruelty being the point and justice be damned, the State and others in power tried to saddle the Duke LAX Accuser with a mandatory life-sentence by use of the "felony-murder rule," but had to settle for imprisonment between 14 and 18 years.

Ms. Mangum, who cherished being a mother, had more than 13 prime years of motherhood sadly stripped from her life. But, collateral damage of injustice affected Ms. Mangum's mother, her children, her friends, and loved ones, her confinement caused her to miss milestones in her children's lives (e.g. school graduations, weddings, and births of grandchildren).

As Mangum's advocate, and recently fiancé, Dr. Harr fought to have her released by the holidays, something which should be readily attainable when considering the weakness of her conviction. But the NC Department of Justice wants her to spend a fifteenth consecutive Christmas in prison despite knowledge of her innocence.

Church

A Beginner's Guide To Kwanzaa And Core Its Principles

AP NEWS – Kwanzaa has become a nationally recognized celebration of African culture and community in the United States since its founding in 1966 and also is celebrated in countries with large African descendant populations.

The holiday, which serves as a nationwide communal event reinforcing self-determination and unity in the face of oppression, spans seven days from the day after Christmas through New Year's Day. It is observed in large, city-sponsored events as well as in smaller communities and homes nationwide.

Kwanzaa has grown in popularity in the decades since its founding and is celebrated by 3% of the country, according to a 2019 AP-NORC survey. Former Presidents Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and Barack Obama all released statements commemorating the holiday, and in 1997 the U.S. Postal Service began issuing Kwanzaa stamps. It is not recognized as a federal holiday.

Kwanzaa's origins

Kwanzaa emerged during the Black Freedom Movement of the 1960s as a way to reconnect Black communities in the U.S. with important African cultural traditions that were severed by the transatlantic slave trade. It also promotes unity and liberation.

"It was also shaped by that defining decade of fierce strivings and struggles for freedom, justice and associated goods waged by Africans and other peoples of color all over the world in the 1960s," Maulana Karenga, the holiday's founder, wrote in his annual Kwanzaa address in 2023. "Kwanzaa thus came into being, grounded itself and grew as an act of freedom, an instrument of freedom, a celebration of freedom and a practice of freedom."

Karenga, an African American author, activist and professor, founded Kwanzaa following the Watts Riots, also known as the Watts Rebellion, in Los Angeles in 1965.

Karenga described Kwanzaa as a "political-motivator holiday" in an



interview with Henry Lewis Gates Jr. for PBS.

"The idea is for African and African descended people to come together around family, community and culture so we can be in spaces where, in Dr. Karenga's words, we

feel fully African and fully human at the same time," said Janine Bell, president and artistic director at the Elegba Folklore Society in Richmond, Virginia.

The basics

Many people who observe Kwanzaa, which is a secular holiday, celebrate it alongside religious festivals such as Christmas. People of any faith, race or ethnic background can participate.

The name Kwanzaa derives from "mutanda ya kwanza" a Swahili phrase meaning "first fruits" or "first harvest." The final "a" was added to the name to accommodate the seven children present at the first Kwanzaa, each of whom was given a letter to represent.

The holiday is governed by seven principles, known collectively as the Nguzo Saba, and a different principle is celebrated each day: Umoja (Unity), Kujichagulia (Self-Determination), Ujima (Collective Work and Responsibility), Ujamaa (Cooperative Economics), Nia (Purpose), Kuumba (Creativity) and Imani (Faith).

The Nguzo Saba is represented by a candleholder with seven candles called a kinara. Each night, one of those candles is lit. The candles are the same colors as the Kwanzaa flag: Black representing the people, red their struggle and green their hope.

Large Kwanzaa celebrations happen across the country every year in cities including Los Angeles, Atlanta and Detroit. These events often feature storytellers, music and dance.

Bell said the theme at this year's Capital City Kwanzaa Festival in Richmond is "knowledge of self," and an African descendent will be

selected by drawing a name from a fishbowl to win a free DNA test so they can learn where they come from.

The holiday is also observed in individual homes, often focusing on children, because they are key to the survival of culture and the development of community. This concept of children and the future they embody is often represented symbolically by corn.

"The intention is that it's 365 (days a year)," Bell said. "The need for the principles and the strengthening value of the principals don't go away on January 2nd."

Family celebrations also involve giving gifts and sharing African American and Pan African foods, culminating in the Karamu, a feast featuring dishes from across the African diaspora. Typical meals include staples of southern cuisine like sweet potato pie or popular dishes from Africa like jollof rice.

Activities over the seven days are geared toward reaffirming community bonds, commemorating the past and recommitting to important African cultural ideals. This can include dancing, reading poetry, honoring ancestors and the daily lighting of the kinara.



ANNUAL CANDLELIGHT REMEMBRANCE SERVICE—Lea Funeral Home, 2500 Poole Rd., Raleigh, NC, held its Annual Candlelight Remembrance Service Service on Sunday, Dec. 14th. Attendees filled the Lea Funeral Home Chapel as they remembered loved ones on the occasion. Male Staff members, as well as hostesses (center), made everyone feel welcome. Mrs. Lucille Lea (left inset) is the Owner & President, and Rev. Dr. Darien C. Bouie (right inset), First Baptist Church Senior Pastor, Raleigh, NC, gave an inspirational message. Contributed Photo

Obituaries

DR. PATRICIA C. CAPLE

It is with an extremely heavy heart that we announce that Dr. Patricia C. Caple received her heavenly wings on Tuesday evening, 11/25/25. Dr. Caple radiated with ethereal beauty, inside and out. She was a multi-talented, renaissance woman with unparalleled determination and strength. Her sense of style and art, and her encyclopedic knowledge of theatre arts was second to none. In the mid-sixties, while performing in professional summer stock theatre, Dr. Caple formed the Second Ward Playmakers at the historic former Second Ward High School in Charlotte, NC. In the late sixties, with her late husband Dr. Horace B. Caple, she led the Shaw Players and Company at Shaw University in



Raleigh, NC. In the mid-eighties, she embarked upon a new journey in her life and founded the Black Repertory Theatre at NC State University in Raleigh, NC. She served for several years as the president of the National Association of Dramatic Speech and Arts and has received numerous awards and accolades during her lifetime for her directing writing and performances. She was a devoted wife and confidant to her late husband. Her undeniable and doting love for her late daughter, Pamela Caple Mangum, and her son, Patrick Bruce Caple, will last for an eternity. Her understanding and appreciation for the universal struggles for justice, understanding and freedom for all serves as a beacon. She was a trailblazer, and an all-around superwoman.

Obituaries

MRS. BESSIE H. ASHE LYON-KEARNEY OBITUARY

Bessie Henrietta Ashe Lyon-Kearney entered this life on Dec. 9, 1932, in Raleigh NC, and entered her heavenly home early Friday morning Dec. 5, 2025 at Transitions Life Care in Raleigh NC. Born to the late Melba Robena Glen Ashe and Toxcie Ashe, she was the fifth of their eight children.

She is preceded in death by her siblings; Toxcie Ashe Jr., Otis Lee Ashe, Al Joseph Ashe Sr., Alyce Ashe Williams, Frances Ashe, William Bryant Ashe, and Harold Ashe. Bessie is also preceded in death by her two loving husbands, Jay Cee Lyon and Howard Kearney.

Bessie attended Berry O'Kelly High School and is a graduate of St. Augustine's University. Upon graduation Bessie married Jay Cee Lyon, and they made their home in Washington DC, where she was first employed at the Smithsonian Institution. She went on to begin a long and meaningful career at the VA Hospital in Washington, DC where she aided servicemen in receiving the health benefits they were entitled to. She retired after 24 years of dedicated service to our veterans.

When her parents' health started to decline, Bessie relocated to Raleigh to help her sister with their care. She later went on to take care of her sister Alyce when her health also declined. She faithfully attended to the needs of her family until their deaths.

From the beginning to the end of her life, Bessie carried with her a spirit of love, compassion, and ser-



vanthood that would shine warmly throughout the 92 plus years of life. Bessie and her siblings were raised in a loving Christian home, and at an early age she gave her life to Christ at St. John AME Church. Whether worshipping in Washington DC or in Raleigh NC, she always let her light shine for the Lord. While living in DC, Bessie faithfully served at New Second Baptist Church. At her home church, St. John AME, in Raleigh, she served through the years in many capacities. Bessie was full of energy when it came to supporting her church financially. She could be counted on to bring in money to support the church through her many fundraising activities. He was actively involved in preparing and serving food at the AME Shelter on the Sunday that St. John was assigned. She regularly attended Bible Study at Watts Chapel Church, and she enjoyed attending Sunday School at St. John.

Bessie worked closely with her sis-

ter Alyce in engaging in supporting seniors and their activities within the community. She will be remembered for always being willing and ready to work to supply food for the local community. If there was someone in need of food or help, all they had to do was make their need known to Bessie. Bessie's compassionate care for family, church and community lasted until her health prevented her from engaging in active service.

Bessie leaves to mourn her St. John AME church family and friends, a special godchild, Leslie Blue Walters of Maryland and several longtime friends; Martha Ruth Gadison, Bernice Hicks, both of Raleigh; Renee Minick, and her friend Lilly both of Maryland. Bessie is survived by sisters-in-law, Patricia Ashe of Edenton NC, and Sarah Sanders of Raleigh NC. She leaves behind a host of nieces and nephews whom she considered her "adopted children." She will be greatly missed by a dear friend, Yvonne Gunther, a niece, Portia Hargrove, and a nephew, Joseph Ashe Jr., all of Raleigh, who spent many hours overseeing her needs and caring for her health requirements.

Bessie loved her family. She loved her church. She loved people. First and foremost, she loved the Lord. She tried to impress upon her family and all who would listen, that time was winding up and Jesus was soon to come, so we were to get ready. She shared that she wanted the work that she had done to speak for her. Her life spoke volumes of love, compassion, and service. She will be remembered. She will be missed. She will be loved.

SERMON of the WEEK

CALL HIS NAME

Sermon by Elder Demetrius Hunter
Matthew 14: 25-30

"And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea.

And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear. But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid. And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me."

There was a song that many of our parents listened to back in the day by a band named Switch. One of the lead singers, Bobby DeBarge, said he used to think childish things, but as a grown man, he knew better. And in the chorus of the song, he declared that when he calls the name of his love interest, it eases the pain he is in. But our younger generation hears the same song rearranged by Kendrick Lamar and Sza. Their words say: I

only want your love if it's solid. Saying they are bringing the same energy and that's the way they like it. Either version of the song talks about relationships and the response to adversity within those relationships.

I would like to examine a familiar account from Jesus' life. Jesus gave the disciples instructions and did the unthinkable. As the storm arose when the disciples traveled on the water, they looked and saw Jesus walking on the water. From there, Peter has an encounter with Jesus that I would like to examine.

1. Can You Recognize Jesus? The Bible says that when the disciples first saw Jesus, they did not recognize him. They said that it was a spirit. So many times in life, we get into situations where things get so bad that we don't recognize Jesus. In the past, our patriarchs and patriarchs lived through tough times. But they were able to see Jesus through Jim Crow and segregation. They were able to see Jesus while working jobs beneath their abilities. We have evidence of this because they told us we could do better. They pushed us to college and to professional careers. But now I ask: with all that's going on, do you see Jesus? Can we

encourage our youth as our parents did us?

2. Call His Name: Peter was the only one on the boat crazy enough to do the impossible. He dared to walk on water. Some of us were just like Peter. We believed in our parents and did the impossible. We came out of the slums and the projects to do what some of our friends said would be impossible. But when we got out on the water, when we got the job, when the money came, we began to focus on the water rather than on the Lord.

The same thing with the youth today. When we push them and tell them to go to college. When they get there, what happens when trouble comes? The answer is simply to call His name. Peter began to sink and cried out, "Lord, save me!" Call His name when you're lonely. Call His name when you're discouraged. Call His name when you're in need of love. When your back is against the wall, don't drown, call His name!

Please visit www.youtube.com/@lincolnparkholinesschurch1913 to watch this week's sermon on video. We invite you to Like, Subscribe, and Share your comments. We would love to hear from you.

Practical Biblical Principles

WHY DID GOD CHOOSE MARY?

Read: Luke 2:8-15

By John L. Caldwell, Pastor
New Jerusalem Baptist Cathedral

Anytime a baby is born we all agree this is a beautiful thing event to cherish always. Now when we speak of the Christ child being born it is beautiful. We speak here of Christmas, the season to celebrate God fulfilling His promise to Adam and Eve, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. However, this promised child is also the Messiah which is sent to save the entire world from sin. This is God's original plan to correct the terrible mistake of disobedience which was carried out by Adam and Eve in the Garden.

Adam and Eve's disobedience in the Garden gave the devil a foothold in the door in controlling the world. God's plans included sending His Messiah to take back control from the devil, abolish all sin, and re-establish His Kingdom rule on this earth. Is this the entire Christmas story?

There is additional information about the Christmas story which is not usually mentioned in the Christmas Advents in the western world. We speak here of the "Proto Evangelism of James," one of the many apocrypha books (twelve or thirteen) written and held in esteem by the Catholic church. In this case, "Proto Evangelism" means the first gospel of James. This is apocrypha writing supposedly writ-

ten by the brother of our Lord, James. However, this book is a second century writing and was not included in the Canon of our "sixty-sixty" books of the Bible as we know it in America, and as we know it's approval from the councils of Nicaea in 352 AD. Some church Fathers of the past designated this book as a legend. The story in this Book is celebrated annually by many Catholic and middle eastern churches in July and November of each year.

This book was written to explain the reason why God chose the young girl, Mary, of the town of Nazareth to birth His Messiah. We can be sure there were other teenager girls in the town who would have qualified for the job. Why Mary of Nazareth?

As the writing goes, it begins with naming Mary's parents. They are identified as Joachim and Anne. According to this story, Mary's father was a very religious and rich man. Mary's mother was also religious.

Joachim and Anne were childless. This story runs parallel with the story in the Book of Samuel, wherein, Hannah, a childless mother, prayed to God for a child. And if God were to bless her with a boy child, once weaned, she would take him to the temple, and give Him back to God in dedication.

Likewise, Joachim and Anne made the very same promise to God if He were to bless them with a child. According to this story, God did bless

Joachim (Gehokii) with a baby girl, and she was named Mary. The parents believed Mary to be a special child in that God blessed them a with child late in life. The parents weaned the little Mary to the age of three and decided to take her to the temple for dedication and to serve in the temple. The decision was to leave the child at the temple with the priest if the child did not seek the arms of her mother once the parents backed away from her. As the story goes, the child was drawn to the priest by the Holy Spirit, and her parents were satisfied to leave her there in the temple to serve. Mary served in the temple until the age of her puberty. It was then that the priest released Mary back to her parents. Being back at home with her parents, Mary's parents strongly believed Mary would soon be used by God in some special way. As the story goes and for whatever reason, little Mary's father, espoused her to an older man, named Joseph, who had no desire to be intimate with her. As the story goes, this man, Joseph, already had children. This is the story rationale for Mary remaining a virgin.

It is at that point we pick the part of the story that we are familiar with wherein, Gabriel, the Angel, and God's messenger, soon appears to Mary and makes the great announcement that God wants her to be the mother of His Son, Jesus the Messiah, who will save the world from its sins.



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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.

A Million Dollars Worth of Citizenship: Trump's Gold Card

By Jheri Hardaway

Staff Writer

A new immigration policy that trades citizenship for a cash payment was signed into effect by President Donald J. Trump on September 19. This executive order is a bold, some might say jarring, pivot toward a purely transactional system. With the official rollout anticipated around December 18, it promises to inject capital into the American economy, but at what cost to the integrity of our immigration process?

At its heart, the Gold Card is a premium, expedited path to permanent residency. The price of entry is stark and unambiguous: a \$1 million unrestricted gift to the Department of Commerce for individuals, or \$2 million from corporations sponsoring talent. The funds, we are told, will be funneled into a dedicated Treasury fund to "promote commerce and American industry."

But for a program touted as a strategic economic maneuver, there are significant philosophical and procedural questions that demand scrutiny. First, the process, the order mandates "expedited adjudication," treating the \$1 million gift as prima facie evidence of "exceptional business ability" and "national benefit." The money itself, not a proven track record, becomes the ultimate qualification. This fundamentally changes the nature of the residency application from an assessment of merit and character to a simple financial transaction. Are we truly to believe that \$1 million is an iron-clad guarantee of exceptional ability? Or is it simply a guarantee that the applicant is exceptionally wealthy?

Second, the language of the order is riddled with subjectivities that grant immense, potentially unchecked, power to the administering departments. The policy aims to "realign Federal immigration policy with the Nation's interests" by prioritizing those who can advance those interests. But who defines the "Nation's interests"? Similarly, the funds are meant to be used to "promote commerce." This is a vague, catch-all term. Without more rigorous, transparent controls, it opens the door to political patronage or pork-barrel spending disguised as economic revitalization.

This Gold Card initiative asserts that American citizenship is a privilege worth investing in. I agree. It is a privilege that should be earned through contribution, dedication, and a commitment to our nation's values, not solely purchased through a seven-figure check. The spirit of American enterprise is built on hustle and ambition, but the process of becoming a permanent resident must be built on more than money. It must be built on fairness, clarity, and accountability.

As we approach the launch date, The Carolinian will continue to press the Department of Commerce for clear, objective guidelines. The American people deserve to know that the "Gold Card" is a genuine economic strategy and not simply a fast track for the global elite to buy their way into we the people.

Trump's Birthright Citizenship Executive Order: What Happens Next

Cody Wofsy

Deputy Director of the ACLU Immigrants' Rights Project

The Supreme Court announced that it will hear oral argument in our birthright citizenship case. The case blocks President Donald Trump's executive order seeking to take away the right to birthright citizenship for many native-born American children, even though the 14th Amendment guarantees that right.

Just hours after the president signed the birthright citizenship order last January, the American Civil Liberties Union and our partners sued to block that cruel and lawless action, as did other groups of plaintiffs around the country. Although the order has never been allowed to go into effect, the legal landscape is somewhat complex, with multiple legal challenges and appeals, and even a prior trip to the Supreme Court on a procedural question.

Below, we lay out where birthright citizenship stands today and what happens next.

The Fight for Birthright Citizenship, Explained

Trump signed his birthright citizenship executive order on the first day of his second term. That same day, the ACLU and our partners filed a lawsuit, *NHICS v. Donald J. Trump*, challenging the order in federal court. Within days, other legal challenges followed and several judges issued injunctions that blocked the order, temporarily halting enforcement and preventing harm while the legal challenges proceeded.

In response, the Trump administration filed emergency applications asking the Supreme Court to narrow the injunctions, or blocks, on the law by limiting protections from the entire country to just a handful of individual plaintiffs. On June 27, the Supreme Court issued a ruling on those emergency applications.

In *Trump v. CASA, Inc.*, the court limited the availability of what's known as "universal injunctions." These legal tools prohibit or require certain actions not just for the parties involved in a particular case, but for all persons or entities. The Supreme Court limited the availability of these universal injunctions in general, but ultimately left it to lower courts to decide whether broad relief was justified in these particular birthright cases. That raised the possibility that, if the lower courts did restrict relief, tens of thousands of U.S.-born babies could be left vulnerable to arrest, deportation, discrimination and denial of critical early-life nutrition and health care.

Immediately after the *CASA* ruling, the ACLU and our partners filed a new class action lawsuit, *Barbara v. Donald J. Trump*. A class action lawsuit is a different legal tool that can also broadly block harmful or unconstitutional policies. We identified a class of people — in this case all children born on U.S. soil to parents who are undocumented or have temporary status — and asked the court to let us proceed with the case on behalf of the entire class (called "class certification") and to block the executive order as to everyone in the class. On July 10, a federal court provisionally granted nationwide class certification, recognizing the protected class and again blocking the executive order from taking effect while questions over the legality of Trump's order continue to move through the courts.

Where the Legal Battle Stands Now

Right now, every child whose citizenship was threatened by the executive order is protected. While the legal fight is not over, these families can now take solace in knowing that they are protected while the cases make



THEN

their way through the courts.

The fight over "universal injunctions" that culminated in the Supreme Court's *CASA* decision and limited how this legal tool is used will have significant implications for future cases. But the Trump administration's procedural win in that case was ultimately an empty victory when it comes to birthright citizenship. The *Barbara* injunction protects everyone, and it is not vulnerable to the kind of arguments that the government offered in *CASA*. In fact, the Supreme Court pointed to class actions, such as *Barbara*, as an appropriate way to obtain nationwide protection.

Where the Fight Goes From Here

The Supreme Court just announced today it will hear our case challenging Trump's attempt to deny birthright citizenship to babies born in the U.S. We're prepared to remind the court that the administration's attempt to end birthright citizenship is a direct violation of the 14th Amendment.

At this moment, while arguments are ongoing, our win in *Barbara* ensures that there is no reason for families to fear whether they need to move, give birth in another state or take other drastic steps to secure their children's citizenship. Expectant parents can feel confident that their babies will still be recognized as U.S. citizens at birth — regardless of their immigration status or where they live.

Birthright citizenship isn't just a legal doctrine — it's central to who we are as a nation. It reflects that all children born in this country belong here and are equal members of our national community, no matter who their parents may be. The Constitution is on our side, and the ACLU will keep fighting to ensure this remains a fundamental right for future generations.



SANCTUARIES

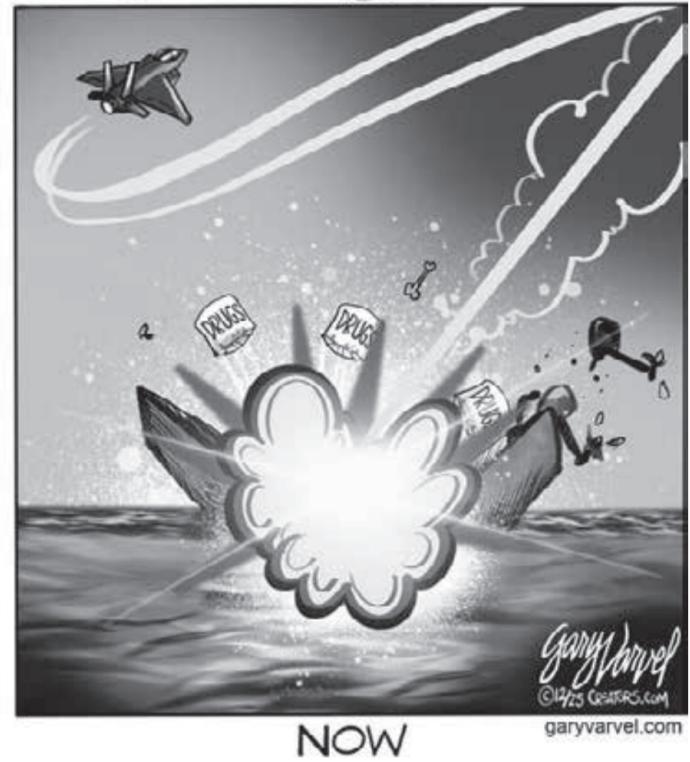
We have a new pastor at First Baptist, a place I have been a member of since I was seven years old. I am now seventy-nine, so you can figure that is a long time, seventy-two years. As a child, my home, school, neighborhood, and church were sanctuaries for me and still are, so I know I have been blessed. I mention Dr. Bowie because yesterday he shared a sermon that truly blessed my soul. He reminded me of something I had forgotten. Although I have read the Bible from cover to cover, I admit that I often rely on the passages that give the essence of the message and do not always remember the details. Yesterday was a case in point. I had forgotten that Joshua and God had ordained sanctuary cities.

As Christians, we need to remember the details because if we are going to be good messengers, Scripture is essential, especially in these insane and critical times when Christian nationalism has persuaded some people that their personal interpretations should align with their political affiliations. The right has placed a person in the White House who has usurped the essence of the message of Jesus. He is flagrant and loud in his belief that he can divide people into categories based on skin color and national origin. His immigration strategies are rooted in the idea that America is the land of the white. Last week he openly asked, "Where are the people from Norway and Sweden?" This is no longer a dog whistle, and I am not convinced it ever was for him. He began his public entry into politics by calling Mexicans rapists and criminals. For anyone familiar with diagnosing personality disorders, this is a clear case of projection. During his campaign, he even bragged about his behavior with young girls. Why is anyone surprised by the Epstein files now?

Last week, he denied Catholic Charities in South Texas funding because he accused a nun of illegal activities related to migrant aid. I am not even sure what he is accusing her of, but this much I know to be true: our tax dollars are not his personal bank account. Congress appears to be letting him behave as though they are, and that is wrong. This man is getting away with all sorts of actions based on the belief that he can do whatever he wants. The Supreme Court has given him a small taste of "no, you cannot," but I believe they will have to revisit a previous ruling that he has interpreted to mean "yes, I can." They are not accepting his attempts to use the military in our cities, deny birthright citizenship, or deport people without due process. He also needs to leave Attorney General James alone. The grand jury is continuing to follow the law in that state. Lawmakers are not agreeing to his gerrymandering efforts in some states. His poll numbers are dropping, and party leaders are beginning to see the implausibility of winning Republican seats in the midterms if they continue to follow him blindly. When the head of the Republican Party says this, you know there is trouble. Still, I am not getting excited, because in my experience, after his first term, if you supported him once, you could be persuaded to do so again.

The bottom line is that the church and its preachers are stepping up. Reverend John Wesley, Otis Moss, and many others are leading people

The War on Drugs



NOW

through Scripture and encouraging Christians to stand up, love, and support the vulnerable. As was said yesterday, these are my words: church is not a place to dress up, look cute, go to banquets, and eat overpriced meals. Church is a place where we should be safe from the belief that we are hopeless, failing humans doomed to never measure up. Jesus himself said he did not come for the self-righteous but for sinners, so that sinners like you and me might be saved. We are willing to admit that although we are trying, we have not been perfect and still are not. The church is a sanctuary, and that truth should fill our walls. People with babies, small children, teenagers, young adults, and those of us growing older should all find support there. As I mentioned last week, I was blessed to attend two rehearsals for our White Christmas program, which will be held on Sunday the twenty-first.

My heart could not have been warmer as I watched the little ones and teenagers perform their parts, along with the adult performers. We have some bright and confident children in our world, and some of them are in this production.

I hope you will come out and attend the one your church is hosting. We cannot have a world without children, and children and their parents will not join us if the church is not a sanctuary.

FUNdraising Good Times

By Mel & Pearl Shaw Saad & Shaw



HOLIDAY PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS

As we celebrate the many holidays that come with the winter months, we can enjoy and plot and scheme for the coming year. By that, we mean we can observe and participate in the many good things happening and plan for how we can increase our participation for the coming year. Hold tight to the heartwarming feelings experienced as children receive gifts, seniors eat hot meals, and those who are cold huddle with extra blankets and new socks. We can participate in these activities now, and we can plot and scheme — we mean plan — for how to increase the care we extend to our neighbors, known and unknown.

What to do today.

First, there's the obvious. Start setting aside funds and resources to share with others this time next year. It's always hard to "find the money," but allocating funds throughout the year to share during the year-end can make next year's giving easier. As nonprofits, we can observe what our partners are doing and consider how we can help them. Are they hosting meals? Paying electricity bills for those who may be cut off? Observe now and talk with community leaders early next year to explore how to add value. This is true for each of us as individuals and families as well. Watch, participate, ask questions, and get involved going forward.

There are other ways to help out now — and next year. These include asking staff, board members, and volunteers to help other groups deliver food, toys, clothing, and more during the holidays. Those who have access to buses and minivans can make a big difference when it comes to collecting toys, food, clothing, and blankets for distribution. The front porch — for those who are homeowners — or the office, if you are a nonprofit, can become an information center for people who are looking to donate, get involved, and give, and know who is doing what. And we all know that our social media accounts are the new "front porch." We can all share what is going on in our community.

When thinking about next year, there may be more resources to share when there's more time to plan. Perhaps you'll decide on a special communication to your constituency to encourage giving to a community-wide program. Or maybe you'll advocate for longer-term solutions such as temporary housing, nutrition programs.

CAPTIVE OMAR IBN SAID

Continued from page 6

cent emotional visit to Davidson College to view Said's Arabic Bible. They noted the notations he made in the margins, still praising God after decades of bondage, testament to a profound psychological fortitude rooted in years of scholarly study before his capture. Dr. Seck, a research collaborator originally from Senegal, detailed the arduous research undertaken since 2020 to confirm Said's origins, involving on-the-ground tracking in Futa Toro and linguistic analysis by Egyptian experts to decipher Said's writings, which used Arabic script to write in his native language.

"Now we are opening a new chapter of that research. We want to build connections between people in Futa Toro and here in Fayetteville, because Omar has become a common heritage for both communities," Dr. Seck said. The event featured portraits taken recently in Said's home village, showing living descendants and a new mosque, bridging the visual gap between the past and present.

The discussion also touched on Said's famous autobiography—the only one written in Arabic by an enslaved person in the United States. Participants noted that although written under coercion, Said subversively began his life story with *Surah Al-Mulk* (The Sovereignty) from the Quran, an assertion that true power belonged only to God, not his earthly enslavers.

Organizers urged a shift in language when discussing Said, advocating for terms like "captive" rather than "slave," and "enslaver" rather than "master," to accurately reflect the violence of his condition. As the circle closed, participants offered messages to the spirit of Omar ibn Said. The room resonated with phrases like, "We made it back home," "Your legacy is solidified," and "Your suffering has not been in vain." The ultimate message of the gathering was a commitment to ensuring the next generation knows his name.

"We have to be even more diligent and dedicated and determined in preserving the truth about who he is," the facilitator concluded. "He is alive in us."

Classifieds

AVERY COUNTY

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
AVERY COUNTY

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

File Number 25E001179-050
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 20th day of October 2025, as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of FREDDY GWYN, late of Avery County, North Carolina, hereby wish to notify all persons having claims against the Estate of said deceased to exhibit them to the undersigned at the below listed address on or before the 27th day of February, 2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

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

This, the 27th day of November, 2025.

David Gwyn, Administrator
c/o Edwards Beightol, LLC
714 St. Mary's Street
Raleigh, NC 27605
11/27, 12/4, 12/11 and 12/18/2025

CHATHAM COUNTY

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
CHATHAM COUNTY

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

File Number 25E000643-180
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 26th day of November 2025, as EXECUTOR of the Estate of DONNA LEE MCCORKLE, late of Chatham County, North Carolina, hereby wish to notify all persons having claims against the Estate of said deceased to exhibit them to the undersigned at the below listed address on or before the 4th day of March, 2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

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

This, the 4th day of December, 2025.

Molly Jo Swann, Executor
c/o Richard F. Prentis, Jr.
4 Consultant Pl.
Durham, NC 27707
12/4, 12/11, 12/18, and 12/25/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
CHATHAM COUNTY

NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION
In the General Court of Justice
District Court Division

File No. 25CV001255-180
To: HENRY FILANDE ARTICA
MATAMOROS, Defendant.

Take notice that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above-entitled action. The nature of the relief being sought is for child custody. You are required to make defense to such pleading no later than January 13, 2026 said date being at least forty (40) days from the first publication of this Notice, and upon your failure to do so, the Plaintiff, PAULA ISABEL LEON BENITEZ, will apply to the court located at 40 E Chatham St, Pittsboro, NC 27312 for the relief sought.

This, the 4th day of December, 2025.

Aneta Paval
Paval Law Offices, PLLC
7404 Chapel Hill Rd
Suite M
Raleigh NC 27607
Telephone: (919) 410-6690
12/4, 12/11 and 12/18/2025

DURHAM COUNTY

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
File Number 25E001254-310

All persons, firms and corporations having claims against GORDON ROBERT PERRY, DECEASED, are noticed to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before March 18, 2026, or this notice along with the appropriate general statute will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the deceased are asked to make immediate payment. This the 18th day of December, 2025. All correspondence should be to the Estate of Gordon Robert Perry, c/o Florence A. Bowns, Attorney, P.O. Box 51263, Durham, NC 27717.

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
ESTATE OF BEATRICE A.

12/18, 12/25/2025, 1/1 & 1/8/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

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

File Number 25E001530-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 9th day of December 2025, as EXECUTOR of the Estate of GORDON SPENCER MYERS, late of Durham County, North Carolina, hereby wish to notify all persons having claims against the Estate of said deceased to exhibit them to the undersigned at the below listed address on or before the 18th day of March, 2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

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

This, the 18th day of December, 2025.

Barbara A. Horvitz, Executor
1541 Catch Fly Lane
Durham, NC 27713
12/18, 12/25/2025, 1/1 & 1/8/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

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

File Number 25E001466-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 18th day of November 2025, as EXECUTOR of the Estate of RONNIE LLOYD HOLDEN, late of Durham County, North Carolina, hereby wish to notify all persons having claims against the Estate of said deceased to exhibit them to the undersigned at the below listed address on or before the 18th day of March, 2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

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

This, the 18th day of December, 2025.

Kristen Aiken, Executor
2421 Orange Factory Rd.
Bahama, NC 27503
12/18, 12/25/2025, 1/1 & 1/8/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

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

File Number 25E001427-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 8th day of December 2025, as EXECUTOR of the Estate of ALLAN KEITH MORELOCK, late of Durham County, North Carolina, hereby wish to notify all persons having claims against the Estate of said deceased to exhibit them to the undersigned at the below listed address on or before the 18th day of March, 2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

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

This, the 18th day of December, 2025.

Gena Netten, Executor
c/o Marion Law Office, PLLC
2741 University Drive
Durham, NC 27707
12/18, 12/25/2025, 1/1 & 1/8/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

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

File Number 25E001380-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 12th day of December 2025, as EXECUTOR of the Estate of DAVID ANDREW ROBERTSON, SR., A/K/A DAVID ROBERTSON, SR., A/K/A DAVID A. ROBERTSON, SR., A/K/A DAVID ANDREW ROBERTSON, late of Durham County, North Carolina, hereby wish to notify all persons having claims against the Estate of said deceased to exhibit them to the undersigned at the below listed address on or before the 18th day of March, 2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

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

This, the 18th day of December, 2025.

Ronald Wayne Robertson, Executor
c/o B. Bailey Liipfert, III
Allman Spry Leggett Crumpler & Horn PA
380 Knollwood Street, Suite 700
Winston-Salem, NC 27103
12/18, 12/25/2025, 1/1 & 1/8/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
ESTATE OF BEATRICE A.

CLEMENTS

FILE NO. 25E001359-310

All persons, firms and corporations having claims against Beatrice A. Clements, deceased, of Durham County, N.C., are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before March 20th, 2026 or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment.

This the 18th day of December, 2025.

Cynthia W. Barrows, Executrix
c/o W.G. Alexander & Associates, PLLC
3717 Benson Dr.
Raleigh, NC 27609

12/18, 12/25/2025, 1/1 & 1/8/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

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

File Number 25E001468-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 18th day of November 2025, as EXECUTOR of the Estate of BARBARA JEAN WALKER, late of Durham County, North Carolina, hereby wish to notify all persons having claims against the Estate of said deceased to exhibit them to the undersigned at the below listed address on or before the 11th day of March, 2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

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

This, the 18th day of December, 2025.

Amy R. Walker, Executor
4144 Crown Oaks Drive
Oxford, NC 27565
12/18, 12/25/2025, 1/1 & 1/8/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

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

File Number 25E001479-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 16th day of December 2025, as EXECUTOR of the Estate of CHARLIE THOMAS GARRETT, SR., late of Durham County, North Carolina, hereby wish to notify all persons having claims against the Estate of said deceased to exhibit them to the undersigned at the below listed address on or before the 18th day of March, 2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to the Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned at the below listed address.

This, the 18th day of December, 2025.

Charlie Thomas Garrett, Jr.,
Executor, c/o Richard F. Prentis, Jr.,
4 Consultant Pl., Durham, NC 27707
12/18, 12/25/2025, 1/1 & 1/8/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

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

File Number 25E001459-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 15th day of December 2025, as EXECUTOR of the Estate of CAROLYN ROBERTSON TIPPETT, late of Durham County, North Carolina, hereby wish to notify all persons having claims against the Estate of said deceased to exhibit them to the undersigned at the below listed address on or before the 18th day of March, 2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to the Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned at the below listed address.

This, the 18th day of December, 2025.

Amy Tippett, Executor
c/o Bagwell Holt Smith PA
111 Cloister Court; STE 200
Chapel Hill, NC 27514
12/18, 12/25/2025, 1/1 & 1/8/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

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

File Number 25E001518-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 3rd day of December 2025, as EXECUTOR of the Estate of MARTHA HELEN CASH a/k/a HELEN M. CASH a/k/a HELEN MASSEY CASH, late of Durham County, North Carolina, hereby wish to notify all persons having claims against the Estate of said deceased to exhibit them to the undersigned at the below listed address on or before the 11th day of March, 2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

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

This, the 11th day of December, 2025.

Brant Taylor Massey, Executor
822 Knight Drive
Durham, NC 27712
December 11, 18, 25, and 1/1/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

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

File Number 25E001462-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 4th day of December 2025, as EXECUTOR of the Estate of FREDERICK SAMUEL BATTAGLIA, JR., late of Durham County, North Carolina, hereby wish to notify all persons having claims against the Estate of said deceased to exhibit them to the undersigned at the below listed address on or before the 11th day of March, 2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

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

This, the 11th day of December, 2025.

Catherine Thomas, Executor
c/o Bagwell Holt Smith P.A.
111 Cloister Court, Suite 200
Chapel Hill, NC 27514
December 11, 18, 25, and 1/1/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
File Number 25E001432-310
ALL PERSONS, firms and corporations having claims against MARY LOU CLARKE CARTER a/k/a Mary Louise Clarke Carter a/k/a Mary Lou Carter, deceased, of Durham County, N.C., are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before 4-13-2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This 12-11-2025.

Frances Lynn McSherry, Executor of the Estate of Mary Lou Clarke Carter a/k/a Mary Louise Clarke Carter a/k/a Mary Lou Carter c/o Lori M. Bernstein, Attorney at Law
2726 Croasdaile Dr. Suite 202
Durham, North Carolina 27705
12/11, 12/18, 12/25/2025, and 1/1/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION
In The General Court of Justice
Superior Court Division Before The Clerk File No. 25SP001018-310 For The Adoption Of A Male Minor
TO: The biological father of A.J.M., a male child, born on January 23, 2023 in Raleigh, Wake County, North Carolina.

Take notice that a Petition for Adoption was filed with the Clerk of Superior Court for Durham County, North Carolina in the above entitled special proceeding. The Petition relates to A.J.M., a male child, born on January, 2023 in Raleigh, Wake County, North Carolina to Angela Grace Merida. The putative biological father is unknown. PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that you are required to file a response to such pleading not later than 40 days from the first day of publication of this notice, that date being December 11, 2025, and upon your failure to do so the Petitioner will apply to the Court for relief sought in the Petition. Any parental rights you may have will be terminated upon the entry of the decree of adoption.

Kelly T. Dempsey, Attorney for Petitioners, 10310 Couloak Drive, #400, Charlotte NC 28216.
12/11, 12/18, and 12/25/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION
In The General Court of Justice
Superior Court Division Before The Clerk File No. 25SP001017-310 For The Adoption Of A Female Minor
TO: The biological father of A.R.M., a female child, born on December 29, 2023 in Durham, Durham County, North Carolina.

Take notice that a Petition for Adoption was filed with the Clerk of Superior Court for Durham County, North Carolina in the above entitled special proceeding. The Petition relates to A.R.M., a female child, born on December 29, 2023 in Durham, Durham County, North Carolina to Angela Grace Merida. The putative biological father is unknown. PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that you are required to file a response to such pleading not later than 40 days from the first day of publication of this notice, that

date being December 11, 2025, and upon your failure to do so the Petitioner will apply to the Court for relief sought in the Petition. Any parental rights you may have will be terminated upon the entry of the decree of adoption.

Kelly T. Dempsey, Attorney for Petitioners, 10310 Couloak Drive, #400, Charlotte NC 28216.
12/11, 12/18, and 12/25/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

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

File Number 25E001486-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 24th day of November 2025, as EXECUTOR of the Estate of JACQUELINE LADD, late of Durham County, North Carolina, hereby wish to notify all persons having claims against the Estate of said deceased to exhibit them to the undersigned at the below listed address on or before the 4th day of March, 2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

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

This, the 4th day of December, 2025.

Donald Ladd jr., Executor
4533 Holloman Rd
Durham, NC 27703
12/4, 12/11, 12/18, and 12/25/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

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

File Number 25E001351-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 23rd day of October 2025, as EXECUTOR of the Estate of TONYA MICHELLE MANGUM, late of Durham County, North Carolina, hereby wish to notify all persons having claims against the Estate of said deceased to exhibit them to the undersigned at the below listed address on or before the 4th day of March, 2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

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

This, the 4th day of November, 2025.

Tyressa Mangum-McCormick
Executor
1704 Stargross Drive
Grayson, GA 30017
12/4, 12/11, 12/18, and 12/25/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

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

File Number 25E001130-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 1st day of October 2025, as EXECUTOR of the Estate of JEAN COLEMAN PAGE, late of Durham County, North Carolina, hereby wish to notify all persons having claims against the Estate of said deceased to exhibit them to the undersigned at the below listed address on or before the 4th day of March, 2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

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

This, the 4th day of December, 2025.

Roger Dale Page, Executor
4313 Page Road
Morrisville, NC 27560
12/4, 12/11, 12/18, and 12/25/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

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

File Number 25E000862-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 10th day of July, 2025, as EXECUTOR of the Estate of DOROTHY LUCILLE ROYCROFT MOORE, Deceased, of Durham County, North Carolina, does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 4th day of March, 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 4th day of December, 2025.

Joseph Harold Roycroft, Jr.,
Executor, c/o Richard F. Prentis, Jr.,
4 Consultant Pl.,
Durham, NC 27707.
12/4, 12/11, 12/18, and 12/25/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION
In the General Court of Justice
District Court Division

Doe v. John Reed, 25CV006835-310
Mr. Reed:

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: Complaint for Emergency Child Custody, Temporary, and Permanent Child Custody.

You are required to make defense to such pleading not later than January 20, 2026 and upon your failure to do so the party seeking service against you will apply to the court for the relief sought. You may file responsive pleadings with the Durham County Clerk of Court, 510 South Dillard St., Durham, NC 27701.

This the 4th day of December, 2025.

/s/ Mr. Robert L. Schupp,
Attorney for Plaintiff
PO Box 396, Benson, NC 27504
12/4, 12/11 and 12/18/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

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

File Number 25E001148-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 20th day of November 2025, as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of DARIN PAUL RHEW, late of Durham County, North Carolina, hereby wish to notify all persons having claims against the Estate of said deceased to exhibit them to the undersigned at the below listed address on or before the 27th day of February, 2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

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

This, the 27th day of November, 2025.

Dwayne Russel Rhew,
Administrator
8807 Camden Park Drive
Raleigh, NC 27613

11/27, 12/4, 12/11 and 12/18/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

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

File Number 25E000820-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 19th day of June 2025, as CO-EXECUTORS of the Estate of BERTICE RAY SORRELL, late of Durham County, North Carolina, hereby wish to notify all persons having claims against the Estate of said deceased to exhibit them to the undersigned at the below listed address on or before the 27th day of February, 2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

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

This, the 27th day of November, 2025.

Debra Gay Sorrell, Co-Executor
242 Sun Colony Blvd, Unit 104
Longs, SC 29568

Timothy Russell Sorrell Sr.
Co-Executor
4205 Greens Ferry Court
Wilmington, NC 28409
11/27, 12/4, 12/11 and 12/18/2025

FORSYTH COUNTY

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
FORSYTH COUNTY

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

File Number 25E002798-330
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 9th day of December 2025, as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of ARENETTIA HICKS, late of Forsyth County, North Carolina, hereby wish to notify all persons having claims against the Estate of said deceased to exhibit them to the undersigned at the below listed address on or before the 18th day of March, 2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to the Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned at the below listed address.

This, the 18th day of December, 2025.

Torey Hicks, Administrator
5112 Tall Tree Dr.
Winston-Salem, NC 27105
12/18, 12/25/2025, 1/1 & 1/8/2026

Classifieds

SEEKING DBE/WBEs

Woda Construction INC is constructing a single building, 50 unit community (consisting of one and two bedroom units). This project is known as Iris Ridge. We are seeking qualified DBE/WBE individuals and business concerns to fill various new hire positions and subcontracting contracts for a variety of trades. On the job training will be provided to the right candidate if necessary. If interested, please contact Grayson Johnston at (919)348-8655 or gjohnston@wodagroup.com by January 30th 2026.

PRESCRIPTION TIPS

Continued from page 5

patients, raising significant privacy concerns.

Some pharmacies do not accept GoodRx. You may have to visit more than one pharmacy to be able to activate its discounts.

These cards may make the most sense for uninsured or underinsured patients, but do not always help those who have insurance because you might not get a better price. What's more, if you use a discount card, the amount you pay may not count toward your insurance deductible for the year.

You should weigh the caveats closely depending on your circumstance.

Prescription assistance programs

Prescription assistance programs provide another cost-saving tool for Americans.

Drugmakers, nonprofits and government agencies sponsor those programs, which help patients who are uninsured or underinsured – even if they are on Medicare – fill prescriptions either at a discount or for free.

These programs include manufacturer-specific programs as well as charitable pharmacies like Dispensary of Hope, NOVA Scripts Central and the Patient Advocate Foundation. Qualifying criteria vary for these programs, but typically you must have a low income and be a citizen or a legal U.S. resident.

The Patient Access Network Foundation and RxAssist, two nonprofits that help Americans pay their medical bills, also offer helpful tools to identify programs that could work for you.

Assistance from these programs could cut your copay or even provide a prescription drug at no cost.

Separately, the Trump administration announced in November 2025 that a new White House prescription drug pricing program will soon begin to connect consumers to companies that have agreed to sell certain prescription drugs at a big discount.

Many experts don't expect the program, known as TrumpRx, to help people who have health insurance. Instead, it could be most likely to help those with no insurance at all. The new government program is slated to begin to roll out in 2026.

Direct-to-consumer models

Beyond coupons and assistance programs, a more radical shift is in the works: direct-to-consumer platforms and cash-payment models.

In 2025, several manufacturers offered to sell medications directly to patients on websites and patient portals at cash prices. For example, the drug manufacturer Eli Lilly is offering its popular weight-loss medication, Zepbound, on its website.

These websites have out-of-pocket costs that can run upward of \$300 a month, making them too high for many, if not most, Americans to afford. And insurance companies have so far refused to cover them.

To be sure, the systems underlying these programs are still being built. We believe that the Trump administration would need to make a bigger effort to make it easier for millions of Americans to be able to afford filling their prescriptions.

Balfour Beatty

NOTICE TO SUBCONTRACTOR BIDDER PRE-QUALIFICATION REQUEST FOR THE RALEIGH-DURHAM AIRPORT AUTHORITY RUNWAY 5L-23R PAVEMENT PRESERVATION

Balfour Beatty Construction is seeking to pre-qualify concrete paving and airfield lighting contractors to submit bids for the furnishing of labor, material, and equipment for the following project: **RDU Runway 5L-23R Pavement Preservation**. Balfour Beatty Construction has been selected as the Construction Manager at Risk (CMR) for the project and will receive bids from and contract with the principal contractors for the execution of the work. The preliminary budget for this project is approximately \$7,000,000. **Small Business participation will be required under RDU's Small Business program. Participation goals will be provided with the bid advertisement.**

Similar project experience will be considered during prequalification. **Anticipated Bid Date will be March 5, 2026.** This is not a request for bid, however, only subcontractors who have completed a prequalification package, and been deemed prequalified for this project, will be considered for a bid on this project. Submittals for prequalification forms may be hand delivered, mailed, or submitted electronically. **Deadline for prequalification submission is 14 days prior to Bid Date.** The CMR and Authority reserve the right to reject any and all Pre-qualifications. The contracting method will be through Competitive Bid in accordance with Chapter 143 of the NC General Statutes. For further information or questions, please contact **Chad Luihn at 336-708-3648**, or by email at: **RDU-prequal@balfourbeattyus.com**.

Updated prequalification documents can be accessed through the Balfour Beatty plan room under "RDU RUNWAY 5L-23R PRESERVATION - PREQUALIFICATION" at the below link:

<https://app.buildingconnected.com/public/5430e7a75cdc2e0300dd757d>

Mailed or hand delivered submittals shall go to the following address:

Chad Luihn
4601 Nelson Road
Balfour Beatty Office Trailer
Morrisville, NC 27560



NOTICE TO SUBCONTRACTOR BIDDER PRE-QUALIFICATION REQUEST FOR THE RALEIGH-DURHAM AIRPORT AUTHORITY TERMINAL 2 EXPANSION – PKG 1D – NORTH ADDITION

Balfour Beatty / Metcon is seeking to pre-qualify trade contractors to submit bids for the furnishing of labor, material, and equipment for the following project: **RDU Terminal 2 Expansion – PKG 1D – North Addition**. Balfour Beatty / Metcon has been selected as the Construction Manager at Risk (CMR) for the project and will receive bids from and contract with the principal contractors for the execution of the work. The preliminary budget for this project is approximately \$82,122,419. **Small Business participation will be required under RDU's Small Business program. Participation goals will be set for each individual bid package. Refer to the bid manual documents once issued for information on your specific package.**

Similar project experience will be considered during prequalification. **Anticipated Bid Date will be April 7, 2026.** This is not a request for bid, however, only subcontractors who have completed a prequalification package, and been deemed prequalified for this project, will be considered for a bid on this project. Submittals for prequalification forms may be hand delivered, mailed, or submitted electronically. **Deadline for prequalification submission is 14 days prior to Bid Date.** The CMR and Authority reserve the right to reject any and all Pre-qualifications. Contracting method will be through Competitive Bid in accordance with Chapter 143 of the NC General Statutes. For further information or questions, please contact **Bobby DelVecchio at 860-965-0813**, or by email at: **RDUprequal@balfourbeattyus.com**.

Updated prequalification documents can be accessed through the Balfour Beatty plan room under "RDU Terminal 2 Expansion - PKG 1D – North Addition - PREQUALIFICATION" at the below link:

<https://app.buildingconnected.com/public/5430e7a75cdc2e0300dd757d>

Mailed or hand delivered submittals shall go to the following address:

Bobby DelVecchio
1001 Cemetery Road
Balfour Beatty Office Trailer
Morrisville, NC 27560

Sports

How HBCU Football Built Its Own Championships

By Jordan Meadows

Staff Writer

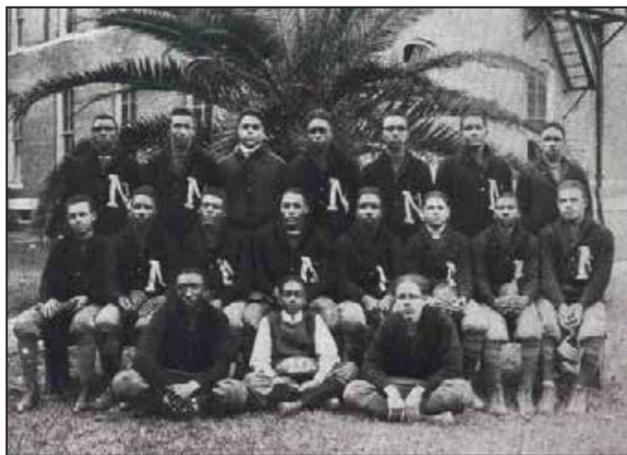
The roots of HBCU football trace back to December 27, 1892, when Biddle College, now Johnson C. Smith University, defeated Livingstone College in what is recognized as the first intercollegiate football game between two Black institutions. Played on the snowy lawn of Livingstone's campus in North Carolina, the game was organized with minimal resources: uniforms sewn by students, cleats added to street shoes, and a football purchased collectively by the teams.

In the early decades of college football, segregation barred most HBCUs from competing against predominantly white institutions. As a result, Black colleges were largely confined to playing one another and developing their own systems to determine champions.

The earliest documented claim of an HBCU national championship dates to 1906, when Livingstone College, led by captain Benjamin Butler "Ben" Church, declared itself the best team in Black college football. By the 1920s, more formal efforts emerged. Other initiatives, including the Champion Aggregation of All Conferences, reflected growing efforts within the HBCU community to assert legitimacy and structure in the absence of access to mainstream college football power brokers.

The gradual dismantling of segregation after World War II opened limited new doors. A milestone came in 1948, when Southern University defeated San Francisco State in the Fruit Bowl, marking one of the first prominent victories by an HBCU over a predominantly white institution. In the 1950s, many HBCUs gravitated toward the NAIA, which was more welcoming to smaller schools and institutions of diverse demographics.

Eventually, most HBCUs transitioned into the NCAA, competing across multiple divisions while



continuing to crown Black national champions alongside NCAA and NAIA titles.

Throughout this period, HBCU programs produced dominant teams, legendary coaches, and future professional stars: Florida A&M and Tennessee State each claimed 16 HBCU national championships, while Central State won five consecutive titles from 1986 to 1990. Coaching icons such as Eddie Robinson at Grambling State, John Merritt at Tennessee State, and Rod Broadway helped elevate HBCU football to national prominence. On the field, programs like Southern, Prairie View A&M, Tuskegee, and North Carolina A&T achieved perfect seasons.

Efforts to stage postseason showcase games have been a recurring theme in HBCU history. Early attempts included the Steel Bowl, Vulcan Bowl, National Bowl, and National Football Classic, though none achieved lasting stability.

A breakthrough finally came in 2015 with the creation of the Celebration Bowl. Contested annually between the champions of the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference (MEAC) and the Southwestern Athletic Con-

ference (SWAC), the Celebration Bowl has become the de facto national championship of Black college football.

Played in Atlanta and currently hosted at Mercedes-Benz Stadium, it stands as the only active bowl game featuring teams from the NCAA Football Championship Subdivision. North Carolina A&T has emerged as the game's most successful program, winning four championships since its inception.

Because it is played during the FCS playoffs, MEAC and SWAC champions do not participate in the postseason tournament, a tradeoff that reflects the bowl's cultural significance and national visibility.

A total of 27 Pro Football Hall of Famers played their college football in the MEAC or SWAC, including legends such as Walter Payton, Jerry Rice, and Willie Lanier. In recognition of that legacy, the Black College Football Hall of Fame has become a central institution promoting the history of the sport. Its latest initiative: the HBCU Legacy Bowl. The all-star game showcases NFL draft-eligible HBCU players and is held during Black History Month.

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CLOSED NEW YEAR'S DAY

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Merry Christmas