



BusinessP. 3
 HealthP. 5
 ArtsP. 6
 CommunityP. 7
 ChurchP. 8
 Classifieds P. 10-11

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Citizenship For Sale In The Caribbean, With No Strings

BBC—Scroll through homes for sale in the Eastern Caribbean and it is no longer just bewitching beaches and a laid-back lifestyle being touted to woo buyers.

political and social volatility in the US is said to be fuelling an upsurge in interest. Five of the region's island nations – Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St Kitts and Nevis, and St Lucia – offer such citizenship by

investment (CBI) from as little as \$200,000. Buy a home, and you also get a passport that grants the holder visa-free access to up to 150 countries including Europe's Schengen area, and for all but Dominica, to the UK too.

For the wealthy, the islands' absence of taxes such as capital gains and inheritance, and in some cases on income too, is another major draw. And all five of the region's schemes allow buyers to retain their existing citizenship.

In Antigua, estate agents are struggling to keep up with demand, says Nadia Dyson, owner of Luxury Locations. "Up to 70% of all buyers right now are wanting citizenship, and the vast majority are from the US," she tells the BBC.

For most it's an insurance policy against whatever they're concerned about. Having a second citizenship is a good back-up plan," he explains. Mr. Volek says the ease-of-travel advantages the Caribbean passports provide appeals to businesspeople, and may also present a security benefit. "Some US clients prefer to travel on a more politically-benign passport."

After Approving Ban On DEI, NC House Votes To Honor The Tuskegee Airmen

By Clayton Henkel
 NC Newswire



The irony of the moment was likely not lost on Rep. Renée Price. Shortly after a tense, hours-long debate in the state House and the passage of a ban on diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) across North Carolina government, it was her time to speak on House Bill 254. The Orange County Democrat stood and asked her colleagues to support legislation that would designate the fourth Thursday of March as "Tuskegee Airmen Commemoration Day" in North Carolina. In 1941, the federal government established the 66th Air Force Flying School at Tuskegee Institute to train Black pilots for the war. Almost 1,000 African Americans trained at the Army Airfield in Tuskegee, Alabama; and 450 of the men who completed training were sent overseas for combat duty. Most battled discrimination and other challenges not experienced by white individuals in the officially segregated U.S. military. And for those who

The Resilient Third Act of Liberation Station

By Jheri Hardaway
 Staff Writer

moments often dictate business success, Scott-Miller is taking a radical, counter-cultural stance on sustainability. While most retailers dream of "selling out," she discourages the trend of massive groups descending on the shop with the sole intent of buying every book on the shelf for a photo-op. The reason? It isn't sustainable for a "one-woman run show," and more importantly, it disrupts the experience for the very people the shop was built for: children. "It robs children, who are seeing themselves for the first time, of the opportunity to come into a space that is full and abundant," Scott-Miller explains. "They don't deserve a 'closed' sign for three weeks because I'm waiting on inventory." For Scott-Miller, the shop is a work of intentional curation. She isn't just "throwing books up" on a shelf; she is crafting a mirror for the

community. She advocates for a "slow-burn" support model—instead of 200 people coming at once, she suggests smaller groups of ten visiting monthly to ensure the shop remains a consistent, vibrant resource. As a traditionally published author with Simon & Schuster, Scott-Miller understands the "bureaucratic gymnastics" and red tape that often keep talented writers on the sidelines. Liberation Station is designed to dismantle those barriers. The shop is actively seeking self-published and independent authors to bring them to the forefront. By hosting local authors on a weekly basis, Scott-Miller is creating a "footprint" for those who lack the PR machinery of the "Big Five" publishing houses. Interested authors can bypass the gatekeepers by filling out a co-creation questionnaire on the bookstore's website.

To ensure that Liberation Station remains a permanent fixture in the community, Scott-Miller has launched a Sustainability Fund via the Ko-fi platform. With memberships ranging from \$4 to \$42, the fund aims to cover overhead costs like rent, allowing the team to focus entirely on innovative programming and community engagement. "It allows us to put our time and energy elsewhere," she says, emphasizing that the community's consistent, long-term investment is what will keep the doors open and the shelves stocked. As Liberation Station settles into its new home, it stands as a testament to the power of persistence and the beauty of building something that belongs to everyone. In this "fertile ground," the next generation of readers and writers is finally finding the space to grow.



LIGON RENOVATION COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
 Thursday, Jan. 8, 2026 6:00 P.M. - 8:00 P.M.
 Ligon Magnet Middle School, 706 E Lenoir Street, Raleigh NC 27601
 During this event, district staff will provide an update on the current status of the Ligon Magnet Middle School renovation project and outline next steps for the revitalization of the school's facilities. Following the presentation, there will be time for discussion to give families, staff, and community members an open opportunity to share feedback and ask questions.

GUT-AMEND-RELEASE. HOW NC'S TRANSLUCENT LAWMAKING TACTICS HURT DEMOCRACY.

WFAE – What you see is not always what you get in the North Carolina legislature. For decades, lawmakers have used a "gut-and-amend" strategy to quickly pass legislation without much, if any, time for the public, opposing advocacy groups – and sometimes, other lawmakers – to weigh in. This year, an effort to regulate cellphone use in schools transformed into an anti-squatter law. A campaign finance bill turned into a mid-decade, more Republican congressional map. Legislation criminalizing the possession and sale of embalming fluid shifted into a Division of Motor Vehicles reform package. Legislation dealing with xylazine and other controlled substances became Iryna's Law, a wide-ranging criminal justice reform bill. A bill originally limiting wake surfing on Lake Glenville ended up changing how the town of Louisburg's elections are run. The list goes on. It happens a bit like this. The state Senate files a bill to, say, allow some building owners to rebuild on floodplains after historic flooding events. State senators unanimously approve the bill without any fuss. Then, the bill moves on to the state House. There, lawmakers file a committee substitute, a tool used to amend legislation during the committee phase of the legislative process. However, committee members do more than amend the bill. They gut it entirely, scrapping the original text and replacing it with something entirely different. In this case, they eliminate a 2034 deadline for Duke Energy to achieve 70% carbon reduction. That change is expected to save the company billions of dollars while soft-launching the end of North Carolina's clean en-

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(See **LAWMAKING TACTICS**, P. 2)

Lawmaking Tactics Hurt Democracy — CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

agenda. Now, the state Senate has to decide whether to agree with the state House's changes. But senators can't hold additional committee hearings to discuss the changes or hear from the public. They also aren't allowed to make further changes to the bill; it's a simple yes or no vote. Sometimes, the process moves so quickly that lawmakers don't have time to digest the new, typically much longer bill before it's time to vote.

The gut-and-amend strategy isn't new. Since the 1999-2000 session, both Democratic and Republican-controlled legislatures have used it at every turn. Approximately a third of the 2025 session laws began as entirely different legislation. That's not an outlier.

But it's not a good government practice, either. The gut-and-amend and related strategies shield the legislative process from thorough public review, often obscure who is driving policy and consolidate power into the hands of a few legislative leaders.

How did we get here? In the 1970s, lawmakers used to file blank bills at the beginning of session. Later, when they wanted to embark on a big project, they would file a committee substitute with whatever policy they wanted, and skip a few days in the process, said Gerry Cohen, who helped draft North Carolina legislation for several decades.

It was a half measure. The bills still had to pass muster in the House and Senate, and could be amended in both.

Former House Speaker Joe Hackney, a Democrat, opened the floodgates for today's propensity for gutting and amending legislation around 2007, Cohen said. At the time, the legislature's rules required

bill amendments to be germane, or sufficiently related to the subject of the bill, to be acceptable.

North Carolina courts had ruled that committee substitutes were a type of bill amendment, and so it wasn't possible to, for instance, gut a bill originally about dentistry standards and replace it with language concerning disaster recovery and election appointment power, which happened in 2024.

But when a committee substitute came up that did make such a change, Hackney ruled that the germaneness rule didn't apply to committee substitutes.

"That was sort of a sea change," Cohen said.

Gut-and-amend is now an everyday practice. Since 2007, about a fifth of bills that became law used some variety of the strategy, according to a Carolina Public Press analysis. Sometimes the original bill intent was scrapped, and other times, it remained in the bill, alongside a plethora of other loosely related or entirely unrelated provisions.

Also since 2007, the North Carolina legislature has passed fewer and fewer laws each session. However, each bill tends to include more provisions. That can allow lawmakers to force members of the opposing party to choose between voting against a bill that they mostly like because of one provision they can't stomach, or go against their principles for the sake of the broader legislation.

This session, for example, a bill that originally dealt solely with protecting children from revenge pornography was amended to include provisions recognizing only two genders, banning use of state funds for gender transition procedures and giving parents more access to which books their child could access



in school, among other provisions Democrats did not like.

In an act of protest against the changes to the original bill and the forced tough decision, most Democrats chose not to vote at all.

Why gut and amend? For one, it rarely backfires, said Common Cause Executive Director Bob Phillips.

In 2013, the legislature chose to gut a motorcycle safety bill and replace it with an abortion restriction bill. While the move caught public attention, nobody really paid a po-

litical price for the legislative process aspect, Phillips said.

Simply put, it's too "inside baseball" for the public to know and understand it's happening, and that prevents lawmakers from ever being held accountable for their lack of transparency, he said. They generally pay more attention to the actual content of the legislation, if anything, Phillips added.

So, lawmakers face zero electoral consequences. The strategy also allows lawmakers to skip ahead in line. In many cases, after lawmakers gut

and amend a bill, it takes only a few days for it to make it through the remainder of the legislative process. There are no extra committees or amendments to deal with.

Sometimes, though, the second chamber disagrees with the changes, and rejects the entire bill. In those cases, a small group of lawmakers from both chambers comes together behind closed doors to negotiate on a final piece of legislation. These so-called conference committees further shield who is pushing for what provisions in the final bill.

Who benefits from that secrecy? Everyone but the people, Western Carolina University political science professor Chris Cooper said.

"It is harder to track and it is harder to understand and it is harder to attribute blame and responsibility, which is supposed to be the cornerstone of the electoral system," he said.

The majority party's leadership, including committee chairmen, the House Speaker and the Senate President Pro Tempore, particularly benefit, as they control what proposals live and die in the process. Whoever has influence over legislative leaders, whether it's lobbyists, donors or key constituents, also profits from the gut-and-amend strategy without having any fingerprints on the final

bill. It's not always a bad practice, though, Cooper said. Since the legislature has self-imposed crossover deadlines — the date by which a bill has to pass at least one chamber to move on in the process — the gut-and-amend method can be used to address unexpected needs, like disaster recovery. Lawmakers can take a bill that probably wasn't going to make it anyways and replace it with more helpful language in an efficient manner.

Everyone does it, so what's the harm?

When Democrats controlled the legislature, they gutted and amended often. When Republicans gained control, they said they wanted to turn a new leaf on some of their predecessors' less savory legislative practices.

That didn't last very long. Republicans took control in 2011. From 2013 to 2016, there were significantly fewer instances of gutted-and-amended legislation. However, Republicans also had control of the governor's mansion then, and so there was less need to force anyone's hand, Cooper said.

Undoubtedly, if Democrats regained control, they wouldn't quit the gut-and-amend practice, Cooper added.

Congresswoman Accused Of Stealing COVID Funds Maintains Innocence

MIAMI (AP) — U.S. Rep. Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick reiterated her innocence Monday outside a Miami federal courthouse, where she faces charges of conspiring to steal \$5 million in federal COVID-19 disaster funds.

Cherfilus-McCormick was scheduled to be arraigned, but her attorney requested the proceeding be rescheduled to Jan. 20 so that she could finalize her legal team. Prosecutors didn't object, and Judge Lisette Reid agreed to the new date. The hearing lasted less than five minutes.

"I just want to make it very clear that I am innocent," Cherfilus-McCormick said immediately after leaving court. "In no way did I steal any kind of funds. I'm committed to the people of Florida and my district."

Cherfilus-McCormick, a Democrat, has pleaded not guilty. She is facing 15 federal counts that accuse her of stealing funds that had been overpaid to her family's health care company, Trinity Healthcare Services, in

2021. The company had a contract to register people for COVID-19 vaccinations.

Cherfilus-McCormick's attorney, David Oscar Markus, said the case involves mistakes that generally aren't even misdemeanors, let alone felonies. He said he believes the case is politically motivated.

Cherfilus-McCormick was arrested in November and then freed on a \$60,000 bond. In addition to bail, the judge said Cherfilus-McCormick must surrender her personal passport, and is allowed to travel only between Florida, Washington, D.C., Maryland and the Eastern District of Virginia.

She has been allowed to retain her congressional passport so she can perform certain duties for her job.

According to the federal indictment, prosecutors said that within two months of receiving the funds in 2021, more than \$100,000 had been spent on a 3-carat yellow diamond ring for the congresswoman.



The health care company owned by Cherfilus-McCormick's family had received payments through a COVID-19 vaccination staffing contract, the indictment said. Her brother, Edwin Cherfilus, requested \$50,000, but they mistakenly received \$5 million and didn't return the difference.

Prosecutors said the funds received by Trinity Healthcare were distributed to various accounts, including to friends and relatives who then donated to Cherfilus-McCormick's campaign for Congress.

Cherfilus-McCormick won a special election in January 2022 to represent Florida's 20th District, which includes parts of Broward and Palm Beach counties, after Rep. Alcee Hastings died in 2021.

The charges she faces include theft of government funds; making and receiving straw donor contributions; aiding and assisting a false and fraudulent statement on a tax return; money laundering, as well as conspiracy charges associated with each of those counts.

According to a previous statement provided by Cherfilus-McCormick's chief of staff, she doesn't plan to resign from office. She said she has cooperated with "every lawful request" and will continue to do so until the matter is resolved.

CITIZENSHIP FOR SALE

Continued from page 1

Not only does being a citizen avoid restrictions on length of stay, it also gives him the freedom to take advantage of business opportunities, he explains. "I chose Antigua because it has beautiful water, I find the people very friendly and it also means great weather for the later part of my life."

Still, such programmes are not without controversy. When passport sales were first mooted in 2012 by the then Antigua government as a way of proping up the ailing economy, some considered the ethics a little iffy.

Protesters took to the streets in condemnation, recalls former Speaker of the House Gisele Isaac. "There was a sense of nationalism; people felt we were selling our identity, so to speak, to people who knew nothing about us," she says.

Leaders of some other Caribbean nations that do not offer CBIs have also been quick to criticise, including St Vincent and the Grenadines' Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves. He has previously said citizenship should not be "a commodity for sale".

Among the international community, there are fears that lax oversight may help criminals get through their borders.

The European Union has threatened to withdraw its coveted visa-free access for Caribbean CBI countries, while the US has previously raised concerns over the potential for such schemes to be used as a vehicle for tax evasion and financial crime.

A European Commission spokesperson tells the BBC that it is "monitoring" the five Caribbean schemes, and has been in talks with their respective authorities since 2022.

She says an ongoing assessment is seeking to substantiate if citizenship by investment constitutes "an abuse of the visa-free regime those countries enjoy vis-à-vis the EU and whether it is likely to lead to security risks for the EU".

The Commission has acknowledged reforms carried out by the islands, which it says will have an impact on its evaluation.

For their part, the five Caribbean nations have reacted angrily to claims that they are not doing enough to scrutinise applicants.

Dominica's Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerit has described his country's CBI programme as "sound and transparent", adding authorities had worked hard to ensure its integrity.

The government says passport sales have raised more than \$1bn since the initiative's inception in 1993, paying for vital infrastructure including a state-of-the-art hospital.

Duke Energy Submits Permit App For Potential New Nuclear Development

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Duke Energy announced today its submission of an early site permit (ESP) application to the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) for a site near the Belews Creek Steam Station in Stokes County, N.C., culminating two years of work. The submittal is part of the company's strategic, ongoing commitment to thoroughly evaluate new nuclear generation options to reliably meet the growing energy needs of its customers while reducing costs and risks.

Submitting an ESP application is a first for Duke Energy and a risk-mitigation strategy for the company as it pursues new nuclear generation options. An ESP is an optional NRC process that resolves environmental and site safety topics on the front end of a project and confirms a site's suitability for new nuclear generation. Having an approved permit reduces the risk of delays during licensing



and construction if the company decides to build new nuclear units in Stokes County in the future.

"Nuclear energy has and will continue to play an essential role

in powering communities in the Carolinas," said Kendal Bowman, Duke Energy's North Carolina president. "Submitting an early site permit application is an im-

portant next step in assessing the potential for small modular reactors at the Belews Creek site."

The ESP is technology neutral, allowing Duke Energy to receive the permit and select a technology later in the development process. The company's application includes six potential reactor technologies, including four small modular reactor designs and two non-light-water designs. Large light-water reactors, similar to the 11 units Duke Energy currently operates in the Carolinas, are not included in the permit application.

"We're taking a strategic approach to new nuclear development that allows us to advance licensing activities while reducing risks and allowing technologies to mature," said Duke Energy Chief Nuclear Officer Kelvin Henderson.

While Duke Energy has yet to make a decision to build new nuclear units, receiving an ESP provides future optionality for the company's customers and the communities it serves. If additional evaluation confirms small modular reactor technology at the Belews Creek site offers the best value for customers, the company plans to add 600 megawatts of advanced nuclear to the system by 2037, with the first small modular reactor coming on line in 2036.

For more information about advancing the future of energy in Stokes County, including answers to frequently asked questions, visit the Belews Creek, N.C., site webpage, duke-energy.com/stokes.

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Business & Finance

Greg Rice And The Foundations Of BCG Concrete Construction Company

By Jheri Hardaway

Staff Writer

In the world of commercial construction, "solid foundations" usually refers to the PSI of a concrete slab. But for Greg Rice, founder of BCG Concrete Construction, the foundation of his firm is built on something far more enduring: a commitment to Christian values, family legacy, and a standard of customer service that he feels the industry has long missed. I recently sat down with Greg to discuss BCG's rise, their work on some of North Carolina's most historic grounds, and why he believes concrete is a lot like life itself. Founded on three core pillars: quality service, sustainable employment, and Christian integrity, BCG Concrete is not your average contractor. Greg's motivation wasn't just to build structures, but to build a company that treats people fairly.

"BCG was founded to create and sustain long-term employment opportunities not only for family, but for others where individuals can rely on steady work and earn fair, dependable wages," Rice explains. Guided by principles of benevolence and perseverance, BCG aims to be a light in a high-pressure industry. If you've visited the North Carolina



State Fairgrounds recently, you've likely seen BCG's handiwork in action. The firm was awarded the \$1 million turnkey subcontract for the Midway Event Center, a landmark two-story food hall and event space currently rising in the heart of Raleigh.

For Greg and his team, working alongside partners like Clancy & Theys and SGS on this project is more than just a line item on a ledger; it's an emotional contribution to North Carolina history. "The State Fairgrounds hold a special place in the hearts of North Carolinians," Rice shares. "Throughout the

project, we heard many personal stories—from memories of seeing Ric Flair wrestle at Dorton Arena to concerts by Chris Brown. It has been an honor to contribute to the next chapter of this space."

Perhaps the most profound moment of our conversation came when I asked what the average person should know about his craft. Greg's response was a masterclass in perspective: "The average person needs to know that concrete is a lot like life. Mistakes can be made, and it will eventually harden, but there is always an opportunity to fix it and make it right—if you act in time and

are willing to do so."

BCG Concrete is currently in a phase of "responsible growth," learning from industry titans like Baker Concrete. With personal mentorship from giants like Dan Baker, Greg is focused on scaling BCG the right way, ensuring that as the company grows, its capability and integrity grow with it. For those looking to follow in his footsteps, Greg is a staunch advocate for education, citing his degree in Concrete Industry Management from Middle Tennessee State University as the catalyst for his success. He encourages aspiring builders to engage with trade organizations like the American Concrete Institute to find their footing.

As BCG Concrete continues to serve the greater Raleigh-Durham area, Greg Rice remains focused on being a good steward of his success. "We move forward with gratitude and purpose," Greg concludes. "Striving to be good stewards of what has been entrusted to us, continuing to build the company responsibly while contributing positively to the great state of North Carolina." Readers can look forward to experiencing BCG's craftsmanship firsthand when the Midway Event Center opens its doors at the 2026 North Carolina State Fair.



How To Build An Emergency Fund, Pay Off Debt & Make A Plan For Your Money In 2026

NEW YORK (AP) — The start of a new year usually brings new motivation to achieve goals like eating healthier or finally cleaning your basement. Many resolutions also focus on financial goals, such as paying off credit card debt, saving for a new house, or simply getting more educated about money.

"New Year's is a really good time to review and realign your financial goals overall," said Erica Grundza, certified financial planner at Betterment, an investing and savings app.

When building your goals for 2026, Grundza recommends focusing less on the past and more on an optimistic, yet realistic, vision for the future. She recommends that you focus on reestablishing the "why" behind your approach to money and how you want to make it work for your life. This can be as simple as saving \$10 each week in a savings account, or a bigger goal like saving to buy a house in the coming years. It's all about your own journey.

The Associated Press spoke with people who are making financial resolutions for 2026. Here's a look at what they're planning and how you can draw inspiration for your own resolutions:

MAKING ACHIEVABLE PLANS

Resolutions can easily turn into unattainable goals that feel more like a dream, said MarieYolaine Toms, a coach and founder of Focused Fire, a financial coaching company. To avoid setting unrealistic expectations, Toms follows a "no resolutions" mindset and instead focuses on making an actionable plan.

"What I say every year is that I am not making resolutions, I'm making plans that can be tracked forward, traced back, and tweaked until completion," Toms said.

Recently, Toms encouraged her clients to check their credit report with the three credit bureaus and, based on their credit reports, make an attainable plan to start a savings account. For example, adding \$25 to their savings account every week.

Whether you're trying to pay off debt or save for a vacation abroad, the first step towards making a plan can be creating a budget. When making a budget, it's best to find a technique that works for you, whether it's the classic 50/30/20 plan or another budgeting style.

If you're building a budget for the first time, you can find some expert recommendations here.

PAYING OFF DEBT

After losing her job as a magazine editor in September, Rachel Pelovitz, 33, had to take a closer look at her finances. Having acquired a significant amount of debt over the last few years due to her husband's year-and-a-half-long unemployment, Pelovitz explored several options to pay it off. Ultimately, Pelovitz and her husband chose to sell their house and work with a debt consolidation organization.

"Rather than rely on getting more debt, we are currently selling our house," Pelovitz said.

Pelovitz's main goal for 2026 is to pay off half of her credit card debt. And, with some of the money from selling the house, start investing moderately.

If you've also experienced a layoff, you can read expert recommendations to help you take care of your finances and your mental health here.

Building a savings account

For Jenni Lee, 27, this is going to be the year when she gets strict about building her savings account. While Lee considers herself generally good with money, over the last six months she has overspent and wants to rein it in. The long-term goal for her savings journey is for Lee to buy a house.

"I'm now in my late 20s, I'm starting to really think about where I pinch now so it won't hurt later when I finally decide to purchase and own a place," said Lee, a tech worker and lifestyle TikTok creator based in Chicago.

As she saves for her future home and possibly a trip to South Korea, Lee wants to cut unnecessary spending on clothing items and eating out.

Social media microtrends are a common influence on people's shopping decisions, and this can lead to overspending. If you're looking to avoid spending money on microtrends, you can find experts' recommendations here.

BUILDING AN EMERGENCY FUND

If you are in a position to do so, having multiple financial goals you're working towards at the same time can be a great way to speed up your progress. For Worcester resident Melanie Duarte, 23, her New Year's money goals include paying off her student loans and credit card debt while building an emergency fund.

"I made sure to include it in my budget, even if it's something as small as like \$50. I just want to make sure I still put something in (my emergency fund) so that it eventually multiplies," said Duarte, who owns a marketing agency.

Duarte's family didn't speak openly about finances when she was growing up. But, since she opened her own business, Duarte has been slowly working on rewriting her relationship with money.

If you're looking to start an emergency fund or create better habits while you save, you can read some experts' recommendations here.

Finding balance

Finding a balance between saving for your long-term goals while also making sure you enjoy your money is important, but it can also be challenging. After the death of her grandfather just a few years after retirement, Tiana Stewart, 26, felt that he didn't get to enjoy the fruits of his labor. So, this year, Stewart decided to enjoy her life and travel.

"I do understand saving for retirement is important, but I also want to enjoy my life and the money that I work for at this time, especially being in my 20s," said Stewart, who lives in Maryland.

But now, as she reflects on her financial future, Stewart wants to focus on paying off debt, saving, and investing. Having a healthy balance between enjoying life and saving for the future is what she wants to work toward.

For some, participating in budgeting challenges such as the no-buy year can be a great way to set boundaries on your spending and set aside money towards your financial goals. Many people start such challenges at the beginning of the year and commit to keep going until the end, but others start with a no-buy month.

How Work Requirements Could Impact The People Who Receive Public Benefits

AP NEWS — The Trump administration made work requirements for low-income people receiving government assistance a priority in 2025.

The departments of Health and Human Services, Agriculture and Housing and Urban Development have worked to usher in stricter employment conditions to receive health care, food aid and rental assistance benefits funded by the federal government.

The idea is that public assistance discourages optimal participation in the labor market and that imposing work requirements not only leads to self-sufficiency, but also benefits the broader economy.

"It strengthens families and communities as it gives new life to startups and growing businesses," the cabinet secretaries wrote in a New York Times essay in May about work requirements.

Yet many economists say there is no clear evidence such mandates have that effect. There's concern these new policies that make benefits contingent on work could ultimately come at a cost in other ways, from hindering existing employment to heavy administrative burdens or simply proving unpopular politically.

Here is a look at how work requirements could impact the millions of people who rely on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Medicaid and HUD-subsidized housing:

SNAP

President Donald Trump's "One Big Beautiful Bill" in July expanded the USDA's work requirements policy for SNAP recipients who are able-bodied adults without dependents.

Previously, adults older than 54, as well as parents with children under age 18, at home were exempted from SNAP's 80-hours monthly work requirement. Now, adults up to age 64 and parents of children between the age of 14 and 17 have to prove they're working, volunteering or job training if they are on SNAP for more than three months.

The new law also cuts exemptions for people who are homeless, veterans and young people who have aged out of foster care. There are also significant restrictions on waivers for states and regions based on how high the local unemployment rates are.

The Pew Research Center, citing the most recent Census survey data from



2023, notes 61% of adult SNAP recipients had not been employed that year, and that the national average benefit as of May 2025 was \$188.45 per person or \$350.89 per household.

Ismael Cid Martinez, an economist at the Economic Policy Institute, said the people who qualify for SNAP are likely working low-wage jobs that tend to be less stable because they are more tied to the nation's macroeconomics. That means when the economy weakens, it's the low-wage workers whose hours are cut and jobs are eliminated, which in turn heightens their need for government support. Restricting such benefits could threaten their ability to get back to work altogether, Martinez said.

"These are some of the matters that tie in together to explain the economy and (how) the labor market is connected to these benefits," Martinez said. "None of us really show up into an economy on our own."

Angela Rachidi, a researcher at the conservative think tank American Enterprise Institute, said she expects the poverty rate to decline as a result of the work requirements but even that wouldn't ultimately affect the labor force.

"(E)ven if every nonworking SNAP adult subject to a work requirement started working, it would not impact the labor market much," Rachidi said by email.

MEDICAID

Trump's big bill over the summer also created new requirements, start-

ing in 2027, for low-income 19- to 64-year-olds enrolled in Medicaid through the Affordable Care Act's Medicaid expansion or through a waiver program to complete 80 hours of work, job training, education or volunteering per month. There are several exemptions, including for those who are caregivers, have disabilities, have recently left prison or jail or are pregnant or postpartum.

The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office has predicted that millions of people will lose health care because of the requirements.

Nationally, most people on Medicaid already work. The majority of experts on a Cornell Health Policy Center panel said that new national requirements won't lead to large increases in employment rates among working adults on Medicaid, and that many working people would lose health care because of administrative difficulties proving they work.

Georgia is currently the only state with a Medicaid program that imposes work requirements, which Gov. Brian Kemp created instead of expanding Medicaid. The program, called Georgia Pathways, has come under fire for enrolling far fewer people than expected and creating large administrative costs.

Critics say many working people struggle to enroll and log their hours online, with some getting kicked out of coverage at times because of administrative errors.

And research released recently from

the United Kingdom-based research group BMJ comparing Georgia with other states that did not expand Medicaid found Georgia Pathways did not increase employment during the first 15 months, nor did it improve access to Medicaid.

Kemp's office blames high administrative costs and startup challenges on delays due to legal battles with former President Joe Biden's administration. A spokesperson said 19,383 Georgians have received coverage since the program began.

HUD in July also proposed a rule change that would allow public housing authorities across the country to institute work requirements, as well as time limits.

In a leaked draft of that rule change, HUD spells out how housing authorities can choose to opt in and voluntarily implement work requirements of up to 40 hours a week for people getting rental assistance, including adult tenants in public housing and Section 8 voucher-holders.

HUD also identified two states — Arkansas and Wisconsin — where it could trigger implementation based on existing state laws if and when the HUD rule change is approved. The proposal remains in regulatory review and would be subject to a public comment period.

HUD spokesman Matthew Maley declined to comment on the leaked documents, which broadly define the age of work-eligible people being up to age 61, with exemptions for people with disabilities and those who are in school or are pregnant. Primary caregivers of disabled people and children under 6 years old are also exempted.

HUD's proposed rule change also notes that it is only defining the upper limits of the policy, allowing flexibility for local agencies to further define their individual programs with additional exemptions.

In a review of how housing authorities have tested work requirements over time, researchers at New York University found few successful examples, noting only one case where there were modest increases in employment — in Charlotte, North Carolina — as compared to seven other regions where work requirements were changed or discontinued "because they were deemed punitive or hard to administer."

Zebulon Mayor to Lead National Equity Council

Zebulon, N.C. — Mayor Jessica Harrison has been appointed chair of the National League of Cities' 2026 Race, Equity and Leadership (REAL) Council. Harrison was elected to a one-year term and will help develop and guide programs for local elected officials from communities with similar demographics, size or geographic characteristics. The appointment was announced by National League of Cities President Kevin Kramer, a Louisville, Kentucky, councilmember.

"This council's work matters because equity and opportunity look different in every community," Harrison said. "Zebulon understands the importance of thoughtful leadership, collaboration and listening to residents as we grow, and I am honored to help advance those conversations on a national level."



As chair of NLC's Race, Equity and Leadership Council, Harrison will work alongside a diverse group of local leaders to encourage collaboration, networking and the devel-

opment of resources and programs that can be replicated in communities across the country.

"National League of Cities' member councils design and create

NLC's policies that bring together innovative ideas and solutions to the biggest challenges facing local leaders across the country," said National League of Cities President Kevin Kramer, Councilmember, Louisville, Kentucky. "I am thrilled to have Mayor Harrison lead NLC's REAL Council this year as we work together to ensure our cities, towns and villages have the resources they need to create thriving communities."

The 2026 REAL Council leadership team includes Chair Jessica Harrison, mayor of Zebulon, North Carolina; Vice Chair Carlos Clanton, councilmember of Norfolk, Virginia; and Vice Chair Stephanie Howse-Jones, councilmember of Cleveland, Ohio.

For more information about NLC's member councils, visit nlc.org/member-councils.

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How To Find, Start And Make Money From A Side Hustle In 2026

FORBES — Many people are searching for ways to make money online, transition into remote work, or supplement their income as wages struggle to keep pace with the rising cost of living.

Starting a business — especially a side hustle — is often overcomplicated. While launching something new can be demanding, the process itself should not prevent people from starting. The most common reasons for delay are beliefs that the idea is too risky, too expensive, too time-consuming, or that the individual lacks the necessary skills.

In reality, nearly anyone can start a profitable side hustle with the right mindset and a few basic tools: a laptop, a stable internet connection, and existing skills or knowledge. Waiting for the “perfect time” often leads to inaction. Setting a short deadline and moving quickly helps eliminate excuses and encourages progress. Small early wins can build momentum and confidence.

This guide outlines how to take action quickly — not to get rich

overnight, but to begin earning and building consistency.

Two Side Hustles You Can Start in a Weekend

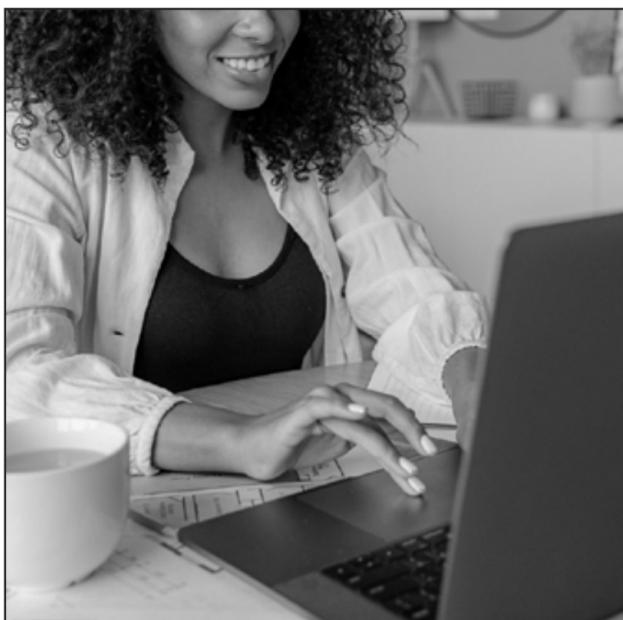
There are two types of side hustles that can realistically be launched within days:

- Task-based side hustles, such as gig or on-demand work
- Service-based, done-for-you side hustles, where clients pay for expertise or support

Both require minimal upfront investment. Most people already have the tools needed, including a computer, internet access, and marketable skills. Task-based work may also require items such as a vehicle or equipment already in use.

Making Money Online Within Hours

It is possible to earn money the same day a side hustle begins. The author of the original Forbes article shared that in 2019, while facing financial hardship, they signed up for a freelance platform, created a profile, and began pitching services. Within hours, they secured their



first client and were paid that same day.

There was no formal business plan, logo, or website — only a platform and existing skills. That first step eventually grew into a full business.

The key takeaway is that progress often comes from starting before everything feels “ready.”

How to Start and Get Paid

For those with only a few free hours this weekend, the process can be broken down into manageable steps:

- Choose one skill people already seek your help with. (Time: 30 minutes)
- Identify where your audience is online and what platforms they use. (Time: 30 minutes)
- Define a clear outcome that solves a specific problem for that audience. (Time: 30 minutes)
- Select a platform, such as Fiverr, Upwork, LinkedIn Services, Udemy, or similar marketplaces. (Time: 20 minutes)
- Create your profile, using AI

tools if needed to clearly describe your experience and services. (Time: 60 minutes)

- Define your offer, connect a payment system, and prepare a simple pitch and response templates. (Time: 90 minutes)

The total setup time is just over four hours — achievable in a single afternoon.

Building Momentum

After launching, the focus for the next 90 days should be on responding quickly, remaining flexible, exceeding expectations, refining services based on feedback, and consistently delivering quality work. Sharing progress on professional and social platforms can also attract new opportunities.

Rather than spending weeks planning, branding, or perfecting details behind the scenes, taking immediate action allows people to move from ideas to income. A few strategic hours can create meaningful financial change and set the foundation for long-term growth.

Starting now — even imperfectly — is often the most important step.



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Health and Wellness

Trying To Improve Your Health And Wellness In 2026?

AP NEWS – The new year is a time when many try to start new good habits and commit to improving health and wellness.

But resolutions, lofty as they may be, can turn daunting quickly with all the advice and sometimes contradicting information coming at you from news reports, advertisers, influencers, friends and even politicians.

But they don't have to be. This year, The Associated Press got the downlow on all manner of health and wellness claims and fads. The good news is that the experts mostly say to keep it simple.

As 2026 arrives, here's what you can skip, what you should pay attention to and how to get credible information when you are inevitably faced with more confusing claims next year.

Protein and fiber are important, but you probably don't need to pay more

When it comes to your diet, experts say most people can skip the upcharge. If you're eating enough, you're probably getting enough protein and don't need products that

promise some big boost.

And it's true that most people could use more fiber in their diets. But, please, ditch the "fiber-maxxing" trend. Instead, eat whole foods such as fruits, vegetables, beans and whole grains.

A good skin care routine is not expensive or complicated. That 20-step skin care routine and \$200 serum some TikToker sold you on? Dermatologists say you really don't need it. Stay away from the beef tallow and slather on a good sunscreen instead (yes, even if you have darker skin), they say.

And the same rule for simplicity applies to that hourlong "everything shower." The best showers are simple and short, dermatologists say, no "double cleansing" required.

There are many simple ways to get that workout in

If the gym and all its equipment feel intimidating, you can drop the illusion that a good workout requires either. This year, the comeback of calisthenics put the focus back on no frills, bodyweight workouts you can do in the comfort of home. Research shows calisthenics helps with muscle

strength and aerobic conditioning. You may eventually need weightlifting or other equipment, but it is a great place to start to build consistency and confidence.

Be wary of wellness fads and treatments – they are often too good to be true

Even if you imbibe too much this New Year's Eve, doctors say you can do without "IV therapy" which have vitamins you can get more easily and cheaper in pill form – if you even need more, which is unlikely if you have a balanced diet. You're pretty much just paying for "expensive urine," one doctor said.

Same for "wellness" focused products like microbiome testing kits that generate information that doctors can't actually act on. And if you don't have diabetes, there's scant evidence that you need a continuous glucose monitor.

To improve your health, go back to the basics

The idea of a panacea pill, product or routine can be enticing. But science already knows a lot about how to improve mental and physical health, and they are tried and true:

1. Whether you're in the city or the country – walk more. Research

shows walking is great for physical and mental health. It's so good for you, doctors are literally prescribing time in the outdoors to their patients.

2. Take steps to get certain health metrics under control, like high blood pressure, which often goes undiagnosed and is known to cause a range of health problems down the road. Prioritize getting enough sleep, and make sure your family does too. Don't just eat right – eat slower.

3. Give your mind some care too. Set better boundaries with your technology and regain and retrain your attention span. Build out your social networks and invest in all forms of love for the people around you.

These lifestyle changes don't just make you feel better in the moment. Research shows they impact your life for years to come, by lowering the risk of dementia and many other health issues.

Don't know who to trust? Start with your doctor

It can be tough to know who to listen to about your health, faced with compelling personal stories on social media from people who swear something worked from them, or clever marketing and advertising from



companies that scare you or promise an easy fix.

Doubts have been raised this year about established medicine, including the safety of food dyes, fluoride dental treatments, hepatitis B shot for newborns, and hormone therapies for menopause.

While the medical system is not perfect, your doctor remains the best person to talk to about prevention,

health concerns and potential treatments.

If you can't get to a human doctor and turn to Dr. Google instead, be sure to follow these tips and never use it to diagnose yourself. When you do get that doctor's appointment, you can make the most of it by bringing a list of written questions – and don't hesitate to ask for any clarification you need.

UNPAID CAREGIVING WORK CAN FEEL SMALL AND PERSONAL, BUT THAT DOESN'T TAKE AWAY ITS ETHICAL VALUE



THE CONVERSATION – As child care costs outpace wages, more families are facing difficult decisions about whether to scale back work in order to care for loved ones. Caregiving remains the top reason women ages 25-54 leave the workforce.

And it's not just parents who struggle. Nearly 60 million Americans provide care for an adult family member, and two-thirds say they have trouble balancing their jobs with their caregiving responsibilities. Nearly 1 in 4 working caregivers reported either missing work or being less productive because of their care duties.

When the demands become too much to juggle, some people quit their jobs, cut back on their hours or turn down promotions in order to provide unpaid care. For many households, that's a financial strain; others save money that way. But even so, the decision can feel heavy – like leaving behind a sense of purpose that extends beyond the family.

These choices force deeper questions: What counts as meaningful work? What do we owe to others, and what's reasonable to expect of any one person?

For many people, work and family are central to identity and how they hope to make a difference in the world. Men and women struggling with whether to step back from a career may wonder whether doing so is the best use of skills or training. Do we owe the world something "bigger"? As much as we care about loved ones, caregiving can feel too small and personal to matter.

As someone who writes and teaches about ethics and social policy, I believe philosophy can help people see these decisions more clearly. Ethics doesn't give tidy answers or eliminate the tension between work and care, but it can help us understand their moral value.

"Too small?" Today, American culture often measures moral worth in terms of results and impact – where doing good means doing more. In this context, stepping back from a professional career to care for a loved one can feel like a failure of ambition or responsibility.

If ambition is measured by observable progress, caregiving is especially vulnerable to being misread as "leaning out." Many of the daily tasks of caregiving – feeding, bathing, dressing and driving to appointments – can seem inconsequential. The end result of much of this work is invisible: You wind up in the same place you were before. For all the work that goes into sustaining life, there aren't many "impressive outcomes" to point to.

In fact, one of care's most important benefits lies in preventing outcomes: avoiding injuries, medication errors, hospital admissions, developmental delays, cognitive decline, loneliness, depression and so on. These "nonevents" are easy to overlook. In public health, this is sometimes referred to as the "preparedness paradox": The better prevention works, the less visible its effects.

Appreciating the full value of care means considering what would happen without it. If the answer is that there would be more risk, more crises or more downstream costs, then care is making a difference. Health care ethicists, for example, use this kind of counterfactual reasoning to evaluate harm and benefit, asking how a patient would have fared without an intervention. Caregiving that reduces vulnerability and prevents suffering is a genuine moral achievement.

Still, helping a handful of people can look minor compared to careers measured by reach or scale. Good care requires a level of presence and attentiveness that just can't be scaled.

But that isn't a failure. "Smallness" is actually part of the point: Care is personal – and "personal" doesn't mean morally trivial.

In fact, there's a rich philosophical tradition that puts meeting the needs of the people we're responsible for at the very heart of moral life. Relationships are core to who we are. In care ethicists' view, attachments to other people are not distractions from morality but expressions of what it means to live a good human life.

Close relationships make special claims on us. Ties with particular people carry moral weight, not just emotions – they give genuine reasons to act. As philosopher Samuel Scheffler notes, it makes little sense to say we value a relationship if we don't think it places any demands on us. Caring about another person's needs is part of what it means to care about them.

Attending to a loved one's needs and interests honors those special claims and imbues care tasks with extra meaning – showing someone that we believe they're worth our time and attention. Caring for loved ones might be modest in reach, but making another person feel truly seen and valued can make a deep impact.

"Too personal?" Even if care isn't "too small" to matter, it might still seem too personal to matter much to the wider world. But while care is certainly personal, it's also socially significant.

As care ethicists like Joan Tronto and Eva Kittay argue, caring for particular people reveals something universal about the human condition: Everyone

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Arts & Culture

The Reopening Of Liberation Station



By Jordan Meadows

Staff Writer

Liberation Station, North Carolina's first Black-owned children's bookstore, has officially reopened its doors in Raleigh.

Now the Miller family-owned bookstore returned before a large and celebratory crowd in a commitment to its original mission: creating a safe, affirming space where children can see themselves reflected as heroes, leaders, and central figures in the stories they read.

For owner and founder Victoria Scott-Miller, the moment represents what she describes as a "revival," one made possible by collective care and overwhelming community support. Liberation Station first opened on Fayetteville Street in downtown Raleigh in 2023 after evolving from a pop-up concept that began in 2019. From its inception, the bookstore stood out as one of the region's few spaces dedicated exclusively to children's literature by and about Black authors and characters. Every book sold is written by a Black author and personally reviewed by Scott-Miller and her children. The mission was simple but transformative: to ensure Black children had access to stories in which they were not background figures, but protagonists whose lives, imaginations, and possibilities mat-

tered.

"When I first envisioned Liberation Station, I dreamed of a space where our children could walk in and see themselves. Not as side characters or after-drops, but as heroes with their own stories," Scott-Miller said.

Victoria Scott-Miller, born and raised in Memphis, Tennessee, she later moved across the country with her husband, Duane, due to U.S. Navy assignments, living in South Carolina and Hawaii before settling in the Triangle almost by chance. Raleigh became home, where the couple raised their two sons and where Scott-Miller's creative and entrepreneurial work flourished. An accomplished author, documentarian, and cultural leader, she has earned statewide and national recognition, including induction into the Wake County Public School Hall of Fame for Entrepreneurship and a historic commission from the North Carolina Museum of Art.

Despite its early success and national attention from outlets such as CNN, NPR, Good Morning America, and The Washington Post, the original downtown bookstore faced intense hostility shortly after opening. Scott-Miller reported receiving repeated hate messages and threats via phone calls and social media, raising serious concerns about safety for her family, staff, and patrons. In April, less than a year after opening, the de-



cision was made to close the Fayetteville Street location.

"Struggle doesn't get the spotlight today," Scott-Miller exclaimed.

That pause sparked a wave of public support. After Scott-Miller shared the store's story online, a GoFundMe campaign quickly gained traction, raising more than \$60,000, with nearly half of the funds secured within the first 24 hours. The total eventually surpassed \$70,000, fueled by grassroots donations and amplified by social media figures who praised Scott-Miller's vision and spirit. The funds helped cover relocation costs, inventory, and operating expenses, making the move to Hill Street possible and turning collective outrage into collective action.

The new location sits in Southeast Raleigh, near Saint Augustine's University, one of the state's historically Black colleges and universities, and within a neighborhood rich in cultural history and mutual support. Liberation Station now neighbors long-standing community institutions, including a family-run barber shop that has operated for decades, youth and community centers, and nail salons. Scott-Miller has said the area feels safer because of the pride residents take in their history and in one another, describing the move as a homecoming rather than simply a relocation.

"I want my boys to inherit this," Scott-Miller said. "Even when life tried to break us, we built something beautiful. That a black woman looked at her children and said, 'You will grow up in a world that celebrates you and then create that world with her whole hand.'"

The reopening intentionally coincided with Kwanzaa, taking place on the fourth day of the celebration and honoring the principle of Ujamaa, or Cooperative Economics, which emphasizes supporting and uplifting Black-owned businesses. Community members, families, and supporters lined up early to welcome Liberation Station back, many describing the moment as emotional and long overdue.

Beyond selling books, Liberation Station has continued to expand its vision of service. Plans for the space include community-centered initiatives such as food and supply pantries, reinforcing Scott-Miller's belief that literacy, access, and well-being are deeply connected. She has consistently emphasized that children must have access to books in order to develop a love of reading, and that engagement begins when young people feel seen, heard, and empowered to help shape the spaces they occupy. "Liberation station exists because liberation is not a moment. It is a practice," Scott-Miller said.

Beyoncé Enters The Billionaire's Club

By Stacy M. Brown

NNPA

Beyoncé Knowles-Carter has joined the small and closely watched group of Black American billionaires, a milestone that places her alongside a handful of individuals who built vast wealth in a country where Black ownership has long been restricted, delayed, or denied.

According to Forbes, Beyoncé is now worth at least \$1 billion, making her one of only a few musicians to reach that level and one of the rare Black women in the United States to do so through entertainment, business control, and ownership. She joins her husband, Jay-Z, who became hip hop's first billionaire in 2019, as well as a short list that includes Rihanna, Oprah Winfrey, Michael Jordan, and a limited number of others whose fortunes stand out precisely because they remain so uncommon.

Black billionaires remain an



exception in America. Forbes has reported that fewer than 20 Black individuals worldwide have reached billionaire status, despite Black Americans playing an essential role in building the nation's economy. The gap between contribution and compensation continues to be shaped by segregation, discriminatory lending, exclusion from ownership, and financial systems that consistently placed barriers in front of Black ambition.

Beyoncé's rise into this space did not arrive through novelty or chance. It came through structure. Over time, she moved beyond performing within the industry to controlling it. Her company, Parkwood Entertainment, became the center of her creative and financial decisions, allowing her to retain ownership of her music, manage her tours, and oversee production. That control proved decisive.

In 2023, her "Renaissance" tour traveled to 39 cities and included

56 shows, drawing more than 2.7 million people and generating more than \$500 million in revenue. The scale was historic, but the economics mattered just as much. Producing and managing the tour largely in-house allowed Beyoncé to capture profits that artists once surrendered to labels, promoters, and intermediaries. The concerts were visible. The ownership was quieter.

That approach mirrors the path taken by other Black billionaires whose wealth came from insisting on possession rather than permission. Jay-Z expanded from music into business by retaining equity and investing early. Oprah Winfrey built a media empire by controlling her platform. Rihanna transformed global fame into ownership stakes that surpassed album sales. Michael Jordan turned athletic dominance into long-term equity. In each case, the turning point was not applause, but control.

Anatomical Exhibition Includes Rare Victorian-Era Drawing of a Black Body

THE GUARDIAN – It is an image of an unnamed black man with his eyes closed and his innards exposed. Drawn with care and precision, the image may be the only anatomical drawing of a black body made during the Victorian age.

Now it is part of a new exhibition that focuses on the work of Joseph Maclise, a surgeon and artist whose work – including his 1851 atlas *Surgical Anatomy* – made the human anatomy accessible to the general public, and who was the brother of the celebrated artist Daniel Maclise.

Jack Gann, the curator at Thackray Museum of Medicine in Leeds, which is hosting the *Beneath the Sheets: Anatomy, Art and Power* exhibition, says Joseph Maclise's work also broke new ground by centering black bodies and focusing on queer desire.

The portrait of the black man featured in *Surgical Anatomy*, which sold widely. But when the book was published in the US that image was the only one omitted, with racial prejudice and segregationist attitudes in the lead-up to the American civil war blamed for the decision.

Maclise used living models from the streets of London and Paris to create his drawings, combining their figures – often idealised visions of the human body – with dissections of corpses taken from the morgues of the French capital.

His drawings were intricate and delicate, often homing in on small details that other artists might have avoided. "He drew little scars or blemishes," says Gann. "One of them has an ear piercing, they aren't like Greek gods."

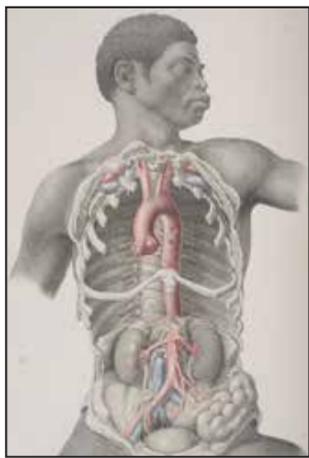
The artist also consistently drew the genitalia of his subjects, even when the drawing concerned another part of the body. "He drew these beautiful portraits and lavished attention on the body far beyond the bits that the anatomist needed to show," says Gann.

The American medical historian Michael Sappol describes Maclise's work as "a catalogue of irrelevant penises" and that recurring feature has led to speculation about Maclise's sexuality.

Although there is no evidence to confirm it, Gann says some believe Maclise was gay and that the drawings doubled as erotica. "He never left any real records of his personal life – he never wrote letters or diaries and he never married," Gann adds. "The story is most clearly told by just looking at the pictures and coming face to face with that sensuality."

Sappol argues in his book *Queer Anatomies* that Maclise's images are part of a "lost archive of queer expression", alongside the work of artists including the French anatomist and painter Jacques Fabien Gautier d'Agoty and the English surgeon William Cheselden.

Ultimately, Maclise's work was



eclipsed by the popularity of Gray's Anatomy, which was much more accessible and cheaper. But his work has continued to fascinate: one of

his illustrations was used to promote the National Theatre's production of *Frankenstein* in 2011.

Female bodies also feature in the exhibition, including the case of Mary Paterson, whose body was sold for medical study after she was a victim of Burke and Hare, the most notorious serial killers in Scottish history. She is described by the Thackray as "a posthumous object of anatomical fascination, medical men marvelled at her preserved beauty, raising troubling questions about class, violence and the male gaze".

Charles Estienne's 1545 book, *De Dissectione Partium Corporis Humani Libri Tres*, with images that were essentially collages, or "body parts stitched together like Frankenstein's creation from sketches of many dissections", also features.

As does Andreas Vesalius, whose 1543 *De Humani Corporis Fabrica* publication was the first major work to show human anatomy drawn directly from dissected bodies.



THE GOLDEN YEARS

By Judykay Jefferson

RESOLUTIONS

With less than a week before the New Year, like most people I am reflecting on how fast 2025 sped by, my personal successes, challenges, changes, blessings. On January 15th, I will celebrate one year at my current State of North Carolina job. In some ways, it feels like I've been here forever. I am pleasantly surprised at how successful the transition from one administration to the current administration has been. This is my third state agency and the most exciting. There is a clear line of impact that many government entities just don't have. I am happy to be a part of this group of public servants and look forward to doing my unique part.

I must also take a look at what didn't get done in 2025. I did not lose 20 lbs. I did not get to Mississippi to visit my family. I did not get implants, nor did I resolve my ongoing dental issues. Most importantly, I didn't become a better steward of my financial resources. In fact, I did so much online shopping I scared myself. I have neither money nor space for mass consumption of unnecessary stuff. I don't need another garment, cookie sheet, or box of any kind. It's ridiculous! I'm sure my neighbors think I'm a hoarder. Between Instacart delivering cookie and candy ingredients, TEMU bringing everything from candy molds to skin care dupes, and Amazon fulfilling multiple subscriptions for supplements, vanilla beans, and protein powder, the delivery folks know me well.

I believe this has been the most out-of-control spending ever. As has become my thing, I am planning to give up online shopping for Lent. I take that seriously and undertake it faithfully. This year, however, beginning on Easter, I'm sure I more than made up for the 40 days of sacrifice. I cannot do that again this year. If someone came to me for help with this issue, I would ask them, "What deficit are you trying to fill with all this stuff you're buying? What type of dopamine charge do you get when you purchase these items you don't need?" So, I ask myself those same questions and it started me thinking: what is the psychology of compulsive spending? Have I become a shopaholic? What will it take to correct this behavior? (As I'm writing, I heard my phone ding with notification of another delivery.)

Research says that uncontrolled or impulsive spending isn't about money – it's about emotion, brain chemistry, habits, and environment. Common emotional triggers include: stress, boredom, loneliness, anxiety, and need for distraction. Sounds about right. I often pick up my phone and instead of scrolling social media, jump headfirst into the rabbit hole of online shopping. I don't like to think of myself as a lonely person. I am a person who is often alone. Probably too often. My go-to distractions are shopping or baking/candy making. Sometimes I justify the shopping by ordering ingredients or equipment for baking/candy making.

The research also looked at the dopamine effect of anticipating a purchase. Dopamine is the brain's "reward" chemical. Dr. Tracy Verrico broke it down to five points that include normalizing what "once felt like luxuries," prompting bigger, more expensive treats. She also explained the cognitive biases. "Our brains play tricks with money. We underestimate small recurring costs, overvalue "limited time" deals, and justify purchases with mental accounting (I saved \$50, so I can spend \$50).

Here are some of her strategies for correcting this self-destructive behavior:

1. Identify emotional triggers: When does the urge happen?
2. Delay Gratification: Pause purchasing for 24 hours to 7 days to give your rational brain time to weigh in.
3. Automate Good Habits: Set up automatic transfers to savings or investments before money hits your spending account.
4. Redefine Rewards: Change the way you reward yourself. Instead of buying stuff, save for experiences, or activities that don't cost money.
5. Practice Mindful Spending: Do you really need it? Will it matter in a month?
6. Set Clear Boundaries: Use cash or prepaid debit cards for discretionary spending. Once it's gone, it's gone.

As with any habit, understanding the whys can determine the path to change. I agree with Dr. Verrico, "true financial freedom isn't about earning more, it's about aligning your money with your values and vision." That's my goal for 2026: financial realignment. Keep a good thought for me.

Tarboro Road Tradition Serves Holiday Joy At Breakfast With Santa



By Judaea Ingram

Staff Writer

The line stretched out the door as cars filled the parking lot and spilled onto Tarboro Road outside the Tarboro Road Community Center, where hundreds of families gathered Saturday morning for the 44th Annual Breakfast With Santa, a holiday tradition rooted in the Tarboro Road community and led for decades by Octavia Rainey.

Held from 10 a.m. to noon on the Saturday before Christmas, the free event welcomed families for a morning of food, music, gifts and fellowship. Inside the center, classic Christmas songs played as children danced, crafted desserts and waited eagerly to meet Santa Claus.

"This is the season of giving," said Tanya Burnette, who attended the event. "It's encouraging to see people giving back to the community."

Families were treated to a hot breakfast of freshly made pancakes, eggs and sausage, along with hot chocolate. Volunteers dressed in holiday attire worked throughout the space serving food, directing families and helping distribute gifts.

One of the most popular attractions was the professional photo station, where children posed with a Black Santa Claus in front of a decorated backdrop with studio lighting and a photographer. Families were able to pick up their photos before leaving, creating a keepsake of the morning.

(See *BREAKFAST WITH SANTA*, P. 7)



Preserving The Art Of Discovery

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Community

Angie Brooks Was Fighting Inequality On The Global Stage

By Jordan Meadows

Staff Writer

Angie Brooks was a diplomat, jurist, and global leader whose life reflected intellectual achievement and courage, particularly as a black woman in the mid-20th century navigating education, law, and international politics.

Because her parents could not afford to raise her, she was fostered to a widowed seamstress in Monrovia. By the age of eleven she had taught herself to type and earned money copying legal documents to pay for school, later working as a stenotypist for the Liberian Justice Department to finance her high school education. Married at fourteen to Counselor Richard A. Henries, who later became Speaker of the Liberian House of Representatives, she became a mother of two before eventually divorcing, all while continuing to pursue her education and professional goals.

Brooks's work as a typist and court stenographer sparked her interest in law, as she observed firsthand

the flaws and inequities within the legal system. Determined to change those laws despite strong prejudice against women in the legal profession, she pursued legal training at a time when Liberia had no formal law schools. She successfully passed the bar exam.

Seeking further education, Brooks applied to Shaw University in Raleigh. As a divorced mother of two with limited financial resources, she could not afford the journey to the United States, but after appealing to Liberian President William V. S. Tubman, her determination impressed him enough that he arranged payment for her travel.

Brooks's years in North Carolina were transformative and challenging: while studying at Shaw University, she worked multiple jobs as a dishwasher, laundress, library assistant, and nurse's aide to support herself and her children. She became a member of the Eta Beta Omega chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority and earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in social science in 1949. Yet her time in Raleigh also ex-



posed her to the harsh realities of racial segregation in the Jim Crow South. Outraged by discriminatory laws and customs, Brooks refused to ride segregated buses and instead drove herself everywhere, asserting her dignity and autonomy in everyday life. Her experiences as an black African woman in the segregated South deeply informed her understanding of racial injustice and

strengthened her resolve to advocate for equality on a global stage.

After Shaw University, Brooks continued her academic journey with distinction, earning a Bachelor of Law degree and a Master of Science in political science and international relations from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She also completed graduate work in international law at the University of London in the early 1950s, later earning a Doctor of Civil Law degree from the University of Liberia in 1964, as well as honorary Doctor of Law degrees from Shaw University and Howard University. Returning to Liberia, she made history as the first woman to serve as Assistant Attorney-General of Liberia from 1953 to 1958 and as a counselor-at-law to the Supreme Court. She also founded the Department of Law at the University of Liberia. Trained by the United States Foreign Service, she joined the Liberian delegation to the United Nations in 1954 and soon became Liberia's permanent representative. Over the years, she earned a reputation for substance, integrity, and reform-

minded leadership, determined to close the gap between the United Nations' lofty commitments and meaningful action.

Her connection to Raleigh resurfaced dramatically in 1963, when Brooks returned to North Carolina as Liberia's United Nations ambassador to deliver a speech at North Carolina State University. After the event, she and N.C. State professor Allard Lowenstein attempted to eat lunch at two downtown Raleigh restaurants, the S & W Cafeteria and the Sir Walter Coffee Shop, but were refused service because Brooks wasn't white. One manager even suggested she could work there as a cook or waitress but would not be served as a customer. Despite her diplomatic status, Brooks faced the same racial discrimination she had known years earlier as a student. The incident, reported by the press, brought national attention to segregation in North Carolina and prompted Governor Terry Sanford to issue a formal apology on behalf of the state.

Despite these experiences in the American South, Brooks, in 1969,

achieved a historic milestone by becoming the first African woman elected President of the United Nations General Assembly and only the second woman from any nation to hold that position.

Throughout her career, Brooks remained committed to advancing women's rights and access to the legal profession. She served as vice president of the International Federation of Women Lawyers from 1956 to 1959 and continued to break barriers when she was appointed Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of Liberia in 1977, becoming the first woman to hold that position.

Beyond her public achievements, she lived out her values privately by fostering at least 47 Liberian children in honor of the woman who had raised her. Although she hoped to return to Liberia permanently, Angie Brooks died in Houston, Texas, in 2007. She was honored with a state funeral in Liberia and buried in her birthplace in Montserrado County, remembered as a pioneering woman whose life and values bridged continents.

The Tuskegee Airmen — CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

survived, many such challenges persisted in the decades that followed — a phenomenon that DEI policies seek to combat.

"The Tuskegee Airmen were pilots, mechanics, bombardiers, navigators, crew members, nurses, and instructors," Price said. "From 1943 to 1945 in the European Theatre, they provided escorts during bombing missions, helping the Allied Forces in achieving a victory in the global conflict that caused horrific destruction and casualties."

The Tuskegee Airmen flew hundreds of patrol and attack missions — first flying older and less well-equipped P-40 and P-39 airplanes, before ultimately being reassigned to escort B-17 and B-24 heavy bombers, using P-47 and P-51 airplanes. They earned the nickname "Red Tails" from the distinctive painted tails of the Tuskegee fighter planes.

"I have a personal interest in this request," Price shared. "Even though he was from New York State, my father was actually part of the 99th Pursuit Squadron and was with the 332nd Fighter Group."

Standing on their shoulders
Rep. Nasif Majeed (D-Mecklenburg) told members of the House that as a decorated Air Force combat pilot who flew 120 combat missions over North Vietnam, the history of the Tuskegee airmen was very dear to him.

"I stand on their shoulders," said Majeed. "They were known as the Red Tails and all the bomber pilots said that because of their outstanding record, they wanted them to escort them because they lost fewer aircraft."

The National WWII Museum notes that while 66 Tuskegee Airmen died in combat, it was one of the lowest loss records of any escort fighter group. They are credited with completing more than 1,500 missions, destroying 260 enemy aircraft, and



sinking an enemy German destroyer.

Rep. Abe Jones (D-Wake) said it was a Tuskegee Airman who helped change the trajectory of his life.

After the war, Harold Webb became a teacher and a principal, and served as a leading force for school integration, according to the Raleigh Hall of Fame.

Governor Jim Hunt later appointed Webb as the first African American director of the Office of State Personnel in 1977. The former Tuskegee Airman worked to strengthen the state's Equal Employment Opportunity program that was dedicated to diversifying and strengthening the state's government workforce.

"I'm proud to be able to have a chance to vote for this bill," Jones told his House colleagues.

From aviator to prisoner of war Rep. Jay Adams (R-Catawba) became emotional as he thought about his own father in World War II.

"He was shot down outside of Rome in January of 1944. He spent 16 months in a German prison camp."

Adams said it was after his capture in a dark, crowded box car that his father met a fellow southerner and aviator named William E. Griffin from Montgomery, Alabama. Griffin took flight training at Tuskegee, earned his wings in 1943, and flew more than 23 flights over enemy ter-

ritory. "William E. Griffin became one of my dad's best friends. They dug tunnels together. They cooked together. They exercised together. They did everything together for 16 months."

After the war, the two POWs lost touch.

Adams said his father was deeply saddened to learn in 1992 that Griffin died in 1969.

"Willie E. Griffin was the only Black guy in that prison camp. In the end of the war, there were 8,500 airmen there. But he was one of them. They were best friends. This is very special to me."

Adams said it took years, but he made sure that letters his father had in Griffin's own handwriting were returned to his daughter.

"He was very educated. He was a smart guy."

Adams, a co-sponsor on the Tuskegee bill, joined 68 of GOP colleagues in voting to approve the bill to ban DEI programs.

Preserving the Tuskegee legacy amid efforts to dismantle DEI Earlier this year, in an effort to comply with Trump administration's crackdown on diversity, equity and inclusion, the Air Force removed videos that included stories of the Tuskegee Airmen from the military's training materials.

Bipartisan outcry over that hasty decision led Air Force officials to walk back the order.

Locally, the Heart of Carolina Chapter of the Tuskegee Airmen and the Wilson V. Eagleson Chapter are now seeking the special day of commemoration outlined in House Bill 254 to ensure that the history of America's first Black military pilots and their triumph over adversity is never not forgotten.

HB254 won a rare unanimous vote (114-0) on Wednesday in the state House and now moves to the North Carolina Senate.



BREAKFAST WITH SANTA

Continued from page 6

After registering, children received age-appropriate, wrapped gifts, including toy trucks, Barbies, stuffed animals and more. Organizers said the turnout exceeded expectations, with more than 700 children served.

"It was nonstop," one volunteer said. "We had to bring in more gifts." The community center quickly reached capacity as families filled tables decorated in green and red. Music and laughter echoed through the room as children danced together and parents smiled, many capturing the moment on their phones.

"The turnout, that's what brought me," said Lila Livingston, who regularly attends activities at the center. "It's beautiful to see everybody together."

Community support played a major role in the event's success. Members of fraternities, sororities, local organizations and the Raleigh Police Department volunteered their time.

The program also included raffles for adults and children, with prizes such as bicycles, a kitchen set, a television and more. A step show by members of Groove Phi Groove Social Fellowship added to the festive atmosphere.

The tradition spans more than four decades. Rainey said the event began with her grandmother, who hosted a similar holiday gathering for about 20 years before Rainey continued the tradition in 1981.

"When I started, I never imagined it would grow like this," Rainey said. "But every year, it just keeps growing."

This year's turnout was among the largest, she said, with cars lining Tarboro Road as early as 9:30 a.m.

"I walked around the building and thought, 'Wow,'" Rainey said. "But the outreach really worked."

Rainey said she personally visited shelters and hotels, coordinated transportation for families, worked with Wake County Human Services and posted flyers throughout the neighborhood to reach residents without internet access.

"I wanted to make sure no one was left out," she said. As the morning came to a close, families continued to arrive and volunteers worked steadily to keep the event running smoothly.

For many, Breakfast With Santa was more than a holiday meal or gift giveaway, it was a reflection of the Tarboro Road community's commitment to generosity, tradition and togetherness: a spirit Rainey has helped sustain for more than 40 years.

N.C. Fails 2/3 Of Levels On Annual School Funding Report

By Jordan Meadows

Staff Writer

North Carolina's public schools are facing renewed scrutiny after the Education Law Center released its annual Making the Grade report, which gave the state an overall F for school funding.

The report evaluates states based on funding level, funding distribution, and funding effort, and North Carolina failed two of the three categories.

The most damaging mark for North Carolina was its ranking in funding effort, which measures how much of a state's economic capacity is invested in public education. The state ranked dead last, investing just 2% of its gross domestic product into education, compared with a national average of 3.1%. As a result, North Carolina spends about \$12,193 per student, compared to the top state of Vermont at around \$27,000.

North Carolina received a slightly

better grade in funding distribution, earning a C for providing marginally more funding to high-poverty districts than to low-poverty ones. The state provides about \$600 more per student in higher-poverty areas, placing it on the lower end of "progressive" funding states. North Carolina is one of 13 states to receive failing grades in both funding level and funding effort.

The state's low ranking reflects a long-standing trend: from 2002 to 2023, North Carolina's per-student funding grew by just 8.5%, ranking 48th in the nation. While funding growth from 2020 to 2023 ranked 17th nationally at 8.7%, the report attributes most of that increase to temporary federal COVID-19 relief dollars. With those funds now expired, the Education Law Center warns that public school funding growth may be slowing nationwide due to rising economic uncertainty, declining enrollment, and increased competition from private schools, vouchers, and homeschooling.



In the 2022-2023 school year, the state spent between \$5,000 and \$6,000 less per student than the national average, ranking 49th in funding level, just above Idaho. Neighboring states performed significantly better, with South Carolina ranking 10th in funding effort and Virginia and Georgia also receiving higher overall grades.

Low funding has directly affected educators. North Carolina

ranks 43rd in the nation for average public school teacher pay, with an average salary of about \$58,292. At a December 2025 meeting of the North Carolina State Board of Education, members discussed legislative priorities ahead of the 2026 short session, focusing heavily on teacher and staff pay. Geoff Coltrane, senior director of government affairs at the Department of Public Instruction, warned board members to expect very limited revenue and said lawmakers may not even pass a full budget for the 2026-2027 fiscal year, urging the board to narrow its requests to essential items.

Educators say the pay gap has real consequences. Rachel Candaso, the 2025 North Carolina Teacher of the Year, said she worked two additional jobs during the 2023-24 school year to supplement her income. Jason Johnson, the 2025 Principal of the Year, said some of his teachers work night shifts at retailers such as Walmart, Costco, and Old Navy. Although Governor

Josh Stein proposed a 10.6% raise for teachers and a 6% raise for principals in his 2025-26 budget, and legislative proposals ranged from 2.3% to 8.7% for teachers, the General Assembly adjourned in late July without passing a two-year budget.

Beyond salaries, North Carolina schools face major infrastructure challenges, with an estimated \$13 billion needed for repairs and renovations. Many school buildings lack reliable heating, air conditioning, and other basic features necessary for modern, 21st-century learning. Rising benefit costs also strain school budgets. From 2002 to 2023, spending per student on employee benefits such as pensions and health insurance nearly doubled, growing by 98.9% and ranking the state 13th in the nation for benefit spending per student. Teacher pension debt has been identified as a primary driver of these rising costs.

Staffing patterns have shifted as well. Nationally, public school staffing grew by 15.1% from 2002

to 2023, with most growth coming from non-teaching positions such as counselors, social workers, and instructional aides. Teacher hiring grew by just 7.6% during that period. North Carolina had the 12th highest number of non-teaching staff in public schools in 2023, even as student enrollment continues to decline, a trend that the National Center for Education Statistics estimates will result in a 5.3% drop in enrollment between 2024 and 2032.

Underlying many of these funding issues is the decades-old Leandro case, filed in 1994 by low-wealth school districts arguing that North Carolina failed to provide students with a sound basic education. While there was progress in 2022, when a plan called for the release of \$5 billion in funding for schools, legislative challenges have paused much of that money. The state Supreme Court heard arguments again in February 2024, but the case remains largely stalled.



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Church

Caregiving Work —CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

is dependent and sustained by care at different points in our lives. Former first lady Rosalynn Carter captured it simply: "There are only four kinds of people in the world — those who have been caregivers, those who are currently caregivers, those who will be caregivers and those who will need caregivers."

Understanding dependency as a shared human condition helps explain why care is foundational to collective well-being. Unpaid caregiving in the U.S. is worth an estimated US\$1.1 trillion annually, making it one of the largest sources of social support.

However, care has value beyond its economic impact. Care makes family, community and civic life possible, with benefits that reach well beyond the household. As economist Nancy Folbre writes in "The Invisible Heart": "Parents who raise happy, healthy, and successful children create an especially important public good" — one that will benefit employers, neighbors and fellow citizens.

Treating care as a private matter rather than a shared social good has consequences. It places the moral and practical weight of caregiving on individual families — most often on women. I believe this narrow view unfairly shifts responsibility and also distorts value, limiting society's sense of what matters.

Policy changes could ease the strain on caregivers but wouldn't remove the personal choices families face every day. Even in a more supportive system, I believe Americans would need ways of thinking about work and care that give a fuller account of their value. Caregiving's broader public benefits are diffuse and hard to measure. But recognizing that care sustains not only families but communities too is a reminder that paid work and unpaid care are not opposites. They are both ways to contribute to the common good.

Of course, loved ones' needs can often be met without career changes. But when families need to make tough choices, it helps to have a

fuller picture. Care ethics is not a demand for perfect caregiving or self-sacrifice; it's an argument that care matters and that people deserve support as they respond to real limits. Stepping back from work to care doesn't have to mean stepping back from contributing to the world — it changes where contribution happens.

Appreciating the full value of care means considering what would happen without it. If the answer is that there would be more risk, more crises or more downstream costs, then care is making a difference. Health care ethicists, for example, use this kind of counterfactual reasoning to evaluate harm and benefit, asking how a patient would have fared without an intervention. Caregiving that reduces vulnerability and prevents suffering is a genuine moral achievement.

Still, helping a handful of people can look minor compared to careers measured by reach or scale. Good care requires a level of presence and attentiveness that just can't be scaled.

But that isn't a failure. "Smallness" is actually part of the point: Care is personal — and "personal" doesn't mean morally trivial.

In fact, there's a rich philosophical tradition that puts meeting the needs of the people we're responsible for at the very heart of moral life. Relationships are core to who we are. In care ethicists' view, attachments to other people are not distractions from morality but expressions of what it means to live a good human life.

Close relationships make special claims on us. Ties with particular people carry moral weight, not just emotions — they give genuine reasons to act. As philosopher Samuel Scheffler notes, it makes little sense to say we value a relationship if we don't think it places any demands on us. Caring about another person's needs is part of what it means to care about them.

Attending to a loved one's special and interests honors those special claims and imbues care tasks with

extra meaning — showing someone that we believe they're worth our time and attention. Caring for loved ones might be modest in reach, but making another person feel truly seen and valued can make a deep impact.

"Too personal"? Even if care isn't "too small" to matter, it might still seem too personal to matter much to the wider world. But while care is certainly personal, it's also socially significant.

As care ethicists like Joan Tronto and Eva Kittay argue, caring for particular people reveals something universal about the human condition: Everyone is dependent and sustained by care at different points in our lives. Former first lady Rosalynn Carter captured it simply: "There are only four kinds of people in the world — those who have been caregivers, those who are currently caregivers, those who will be caregivers and those who will need caregivers."

Understanding dependency as a shared human condition helps explain why care is foundational to collective well-being. Unpaid caregiving in the U.S. is worth an estimated US\$1.1 trillion annually, making it one of the largest sources of social support.

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Obituaries



FREDERICK EUGENE ALLEN

(1986). Master Sergeant Frederick E. Allen's duties included: Superintendent Bulk Storage, Fuels Control Center, Fuels Laboratory, Training and Material Control, Administration and Accounting, and Fuels Distribution. He was also the Fuels Manager during deployments to Roosevelt Roads Naval Station, Puerto Rico and Daharan Air Base, Saudi Arabia. His professional military training includes: Noncommissioned Officer Leadership School and Noncommissioned Officer Academy and advance courses in Petroleum Logistics Management, Quality Control, and

accounting in which he received the Aerospace Management Certificate from the Community College of the Air Force.

His awards and decorations include: Air Force Commendation Medal, Air Force Outstanding Unit Awarded, Air Force Good Conduct medal, National Defense Service Medal, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, Air Force Overseas Ribbon-Long and Short tour, Air Force Longevity Service Award ribbon, Noncommissioned Officer professional Military Education graduate Ribbon and Air Force Training Ribbon. He received many letters of appreciation for his outstanding support throughout his career.

Fred leaves to cherish his memory: his daughter Cortina (Marcus) Allen, of Apex, NC; son, Frederick E. Allen, Jr., of the home; a devoted fiancée, Bernice Heller, Raleigh, NC; two sisters, Malinda McCullers and Beverly Thomas both of Raleigh, NC; five grandchildren: Zy'eer Thompson, K'Lahni Allen; loving nieces, nephews, other relatives, and friends who loved him dearly.

We know to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. Fred's body fought the good fight while his soul won the battle. He is now at peace, and we are grateful for every day we had to love him. Now may his works praise him in the gates.

Obituaries



ELLA PERRY, 96, LIFELONG COMMUNITY ADVOCATE

died, 80 schools across three states had been built.

Mrs. Perry constantly reminded us of that history, as well as being a reliable member of her present day community, when it came to advancing the concept of it takes a village

to rear a child. See Ms. Perry's full obituary in your next edition of this newspaper, and you can watch a video interview that The Carolinian Legacy Project did with Mrs. Perry on our website at www.CARO.news in the video section.

Practical Biblical Principles

CHRISTMAS HOPE MADE NEW FOR AN ANXIOUS WORLD

Read: Isaiah 42:1-9

By John L. Caldwell, Pastor

New Jerusalem Baptist Cathedral

Christmas comes and goes every year whether the world seems to be in tune with it. Christmas comes every year. Yet Christmas comes every year with its annual reminder that the God who made us and loves us and endowed us with freedom never leaves us simply to stew in our own juice. Even though the stew may be of our own cooking.

The Christmas message is always a proclamation of hope for an anxious world. God is always coming to an anxious world. Anxiety may be found in everybody whose lives may be threatened with meaninglessness and futility—there is always anxiety in the world when it comes to starting anew. Christmas is always the answer to a real question in the hearts of men once we get below the surface of circumstances to where we really think and feel.

To as many as received Him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God (John 1:12). This is the nature of hope - Jesus. It is not that the world's problem has been eliminated, but through the eyes of faith we can see realities and solutions which the world often does not take into account. The Children of God's hope is their faith; Their faith is their hope. Hope makes old things new.

"I am the Lord, that is My name; And my glory I will not give to another, Nor My praises to carved images. Behold the former things I declare; Before they spring forth I tell you of them (Isaiah 42:8-9).

The bible never refers to any part of time as a new year, but first of the year (Jewish calendar-March). For some reason mankind or the early church started using the term New Year referring to a new start. The life of a Christian is continuously broken by repen-

tance. What is the difference in time repenting on June the fifth or January the second? The time factor does not give your repented life a new start but a continuous one. The thief on the cross did not get a new year, he got eternity. Sometime in the 18th century, the term New Year is given to us as some kind of psychological boost; given us the feeling and belief that we can have a new page or new lease on life given the fact that we might have messed up somewhere in the past previous months of the old year, so to speak. In other words, we can start a clean life all over again. Again, the thief didn't start life all over again, he continued into eternity. The emphasis should be not on time but on faith and hope regardless of the time. This is what the thief did.

The New Year or the "continuous year" is a time of Grace. Marked by the power and influence of our Lord Jesus Christ in the hearts and minds of those who take Him seriously. Whether you start your time on the first day of January or the fifth day in the month of June to come. Again, what makes time appear new is not time itself, but our faith and our hope as we look forward to whatever time comes our way. God said He would be there with us (Isaiah 42:16).

What this New Year or new page brings to us is the on-going transforming Spirit of God working in us and through us as we continue to work out our soul's salvation the best we can.

It is Jesus Who makes all things new by introducing new things into our old lives. "I come to give you life and to give it to you more abundantly" says Jesus (John 10:10). Does this mean Jesus is telling us that He is promising us more time of "succession," where one thing happens after another. Or is He going to give us more "duration" of time, wherein, we will have more opportunity to make better things happen for ourselves and in doing so the results will end up giving God the praise?

Are you preparing to make a better spiritual New Year this year than last year? What will be the spiritual tool you will use to bring this better change about? If it is not getting closer to Jesus Christ by a more dedicated worship, bible study, more praise, and prayer, then all hope is gone already.

God makes the New Year possible in us in the sense we know ourselves to be forgiven. We have a new appreciation of what the Sonship to the Father means. They are One. Our clean or New Year page in life comes from being One with the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Let's start the New Year by praying more for one another. Let's start the new year by being more faithful in studying God's words. Let's start the New Year by removing as much ignorance from our lives. Let's start the New Year by inviting non church people to our worship service. Let's start the New Year by walking closer with Jesus. Let's start the New Year by being the best Christian we can be. Let's start the New Year by committing ourselves to not falling away from the straight and narrow path Christ has laid out for us.

1. Where is that Old Year which was not so kind?
2. Where is that Old Year that robbed us blind?
3. Where is the New Year, we must make it last.
4. Where is the New Year we welcome it fast.
5. Where is the New Year the Old will not return.
6. Where is the New Year we are ready to learn?
7. Where is the New Year our faith is growing hot?
8. Where is our New Year our faith slows not?
9. Christ is our New Year and all our New Hope.
10. We can have a New Year the Cross made it so.

FREDERICK EUGENE ALLEN OBITUARY

Frederick Eugene Allen was born to Johnnie E. and Ora Lee Allen in Oxford, NC on July 23, 1953. He attended Orange St. Elementary School briefly and later moved to Raleigh, NC where he graduated from John W. Ligon High School in June 1971.

Upon graduation, Sergeant Allen was locally employed and attended the Electronic Computer Programming Institute (ECPI), pursuing a career in computer programming, which was short lived by his decision to enlist in the Air Force on July 7, 1972.

On completion of basic military training at Lackland Air Force base, Texas, in Sept. 1972, he began technical training as a Fuels Specialist at Chanute Air Force Base, Illinois. He completed training in Nov. 1972, and was then assigned to Charleston Air Force Base, SC where he began on-the-job training for his five-skill level in March 1973. Other bases of assignment include: U-Tapao Airfield, Thailand (1973-1974), Shaw Air Force Base, SC (1974-1975), Seymour-Johnson Air Force Base, NC (1975-1978), Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska (1978-1980), Malmstrom Air Force Base, Montana (1980-1985), Kunsan Air Base, Korea (1985-1986) and Langley Air Force base, Va.

Mrs. Ella Wilder Perry, 96, departed this earthly existence on Saturday, Dec. 20, 2025, and she left a legacy of community caring. She was a force behind the Panther Branch Rosenwald School. When she reminisced about elementary, she thought of a framed one-story, weatherboard building in Garner. But she also thought of a time when African American children were dependent on the strength, vitality and sacrifice of their community, and an unprecedented atmosphere of interracial collaboration for their schooling.

In 1911, Philanthropist Julius Rosenwald met black educator Booker T. Washington, the son of slaves and founder of the Tuskegee Institute. Up to this point, other philanthropists and religious denominations had successfully launched upper-level training grounds, include Shaw and St. Augustine's Universities in Raleigh, NC, but one void remained: the education of young black children. Washington asked Rosenwald to help him improve their opportunities. By 1915, the year Washington

SERMON of the WEEK



YOU CAN'T SPELL CHRISTMAS WITHOUT CHRIST

By Bishop-Elect William "Billy" Eli Ratcliff

Subject: Understanding Truth and Reality vs. Fantasy and Unrealities
Before preaching, I often remind the congregation of an essential truth: the devil is a deceiver. His primary target is the mind. His weapon is lies, and his purpose is to keep people ignorant of God's will. Our defense is the inspired Word of God. That truth frames today's message.

One of the best seasons to talk about truth versus fantasy is the Christmas season.

Christmas is celebrated all over the world, but not everyone celebrates the same thing. Some celebrate tradition. Others celebrate memories, sales, gifts, lights, music, and moments. As believers, we must be careful not to let fantasy replace faith or tradition replace truth.

It is important to note that the word Christmas is not found in the Bible. The term developed over generations after the birth of Christ. However, the absence of the word does not mean the absence of truth. What matters is not merely the spelling of Christmas, but the meaning behind what—and who—we celebrate.

That raises an important question: How should Christians spell Christmas? Some words are easy to spell, but not always easy to understand.

First, don't let unreality replace truth.

In the 1970s, an antacid company ran a famous commercial asking, "How do you spell relief?" The answer given was R-O-L-A-I-D-S. The advertising was so effective that some children spelled the word relief incorrectly on their elementary school spelling tests. An advertisement turned unreality into perceived reality through repetition.

The same tactic is still used today. If something is repeated long enough and loud enough, people begin to believe it—even when it is wrong. However, many of today's politicians abuse this tactic. Do you agree? Moreover, that is why some people act as if Santa knows their address better than Jesus knows their heart. The post office may know your zip code, but only Jesus knows your soul.

For years, many have abbreviated Christmas as "X-Mas." Historically, the "X" came from the Greek letter Chi, the first letter in Christos. What once saved space has now become symbolic of something else—many prefer to remove Christ entirely from the season.

People will sing about a silent night but reject a holy night. They celebrate the season while denying the Savior. That is unreality attempting to replace truth.

Second, Christ must be in your Christmas.

Here's my new spelling; although it's grammatically wrong, to me, it's spiritually right: C-H-R-I-S-T-M-U-S-T You cannot spell Christmas without Christ, and CHRIST MUST be in your Christmas. You cannot have a full Christmas without Christ in it, and you cannot enter heaven without Christ in your life.

Isaiah 7:14 prophesied that a virgin would conceive and bear a son called Immanuel—God with us. He declared

that the government would rest on His shoulders, meaning Jesus came with divine authority and eternal power.

The debate over the exact date of Christ's birth misses the point. What matters is not when He was born, but why He was born. Matthew 1:21 states clearly that His purpose was to save His people from their sins.

The greatest gift was not found under a tree—it hung on a tree. 1 Peter 2:24 says, "who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed." NKJV - Aren't you glad God decorated that rugged-wooden cross with love, grace, mercy, forgiveness, and long-suffering?

Third, when you truly meet Him, you go another way.

Scripture tells us that when the wise men encountered Jesus, they returned home by another route. Encountering Christ changes direction. Old desires lose their power. Old habits no longer define us. We may still be growing, but our path has changed. Santa may live in our imagination, but Christ must live in a transformed heart.

You can spell Christmas without Christ, but you cannot live right without Him, and you cannot reach heaven without Him. Jesus is the True Light, and all who receive Him are given power to become children of God.

Some people spell Christmas as c-r-e-d-i-t, s-t-r-e-s-s, or d-e-b-t. But believers know another spelling: G-o-d t-h-e F-a-t-h-e-r, G-o-d t-h-e S-o-n, and G-o-d t-h-e H-o-l-y S-p-i-r-i-t!

So, make room for Jesus—not just in December, but every day. Do not cross Him out or abbreviate Him away. Let every heart prepare Him room.

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.



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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.

2025 Year in Review

By Jheri Hardaway

Staff Writer

As we stand on the precipice of a new year, looking back at 2025 feels like reviewing a masterclass in the resilience of the human spirit. For North Carolina, this year was defined by a pivot away from the noise of national divisiveness toward the quiet, steady work of local unification. In my weekly columns for The Carolinian News, I have had the distinct honor of chronicling this journey. A clear theme emerged: we didn't just report the news; we explored the hubs of our community, including our churches, small businesses, and town halls, to find the pulse of what truly matters.

Nationally, 2025 brought significant shifts in the political and economic landscape. President Donald Trump was reelected, as Governor Josh Stein stepped into the highest office in North Carolina. We saw the continued evolution of the workforce and new debates surrounding "Parent Choice" and educational autonomy. We've observed Fortune 500 companies build plants and manufacturing facilities in our state. Citizens are pushing for higher wage jobs while rejecting data centers and polluting companies. In these pages, I sought to research and articulate these complex ideas with precision, ensuring that our readers felt empowered rather than overwhelmed.

We move into 2026 not with apprehension, but with a renewed "vision." We are a community of creators, builders, and listeners. As your journalist and your neighbor, I am more motivated than ever to ensure that the "will of the people" remains our North Star. We aim to be solution-oriented, to put forth strong ideas, and to never stop striving for a better tomorrow. Thank you for allowing me to tell your stories this year. The best chapters are yet to be written.

Should You Be Smiling or Frowning at 2026

By Mike Walden

NCSU

It's that time of year for economists to emerge and present their economic forecasts. Some say it's like the economic version of Groundhog Day. Will economists see the light of a good year ahead or the clouds of a dreary time in our future?

I've joined the economic groundhog day celebration for almost 50 years. But beware: Just because my colleagues and I have a Ph.D. behind our names doesn't mean we are infallible in our predictions. In fact, in many cases, our success rate in our predictions is very low. Still, our forecasts may be useful if they point to factors that may drive the economy in 2026.

But before I jump into 2026, let me give a short summary of this year's economy. I give the 2025 economy either a C+ or B - grade, meaning borderline good. On the plus side, the economy grew - meaning there was no recession - jobs were added, and the inflation rate was near 2% in the early part of the year. A 2% inflation rate is near the low point when the economy is prospering. Lower and negative inflation rates - meaning prices are falling - typically occur when the economy is bad, such as in a recession or depression.

Perhaps the best economic news for households in early 2025 was that many saw their work earnings rise faster than inflation. This means they were able to claw back some of their standard of living lost when the inflation rate was at double-digit rates in earlier years.

But the second half of 2025 was a different story. The job market slowed, including some announced layoffs at major employers. The jobless rate rose in the nation, but remained relatively stable in North Carolina. Importantly, the average change in prices - or inflation - accelerated, rising from around 2% early in the year to nearly 3% later in the year. As a result, households' gains in their standard of living stalled, and for some, declined.

There was one good piece of news that carried over from early 2025 to late 2025 for home buyers. Mortgage interest rates dropped throughout the year, with 30-year fixed mortgage rates falling three-quarters of a percentage point.

So which economy - the good one of early 2025 or the not-as-good one of late 2025 - will prevail next year?

The challenge is we are entering 2026 with a large amount of uncertainty, and businesses and investors don't like uncertainty because it makes it more difficult for them to plan and anticipate the future. We have uncertainty over Federal Reserve policy. Will the Fed cut interest rates, hold them steady, or even raise them? What will happen with tariffs? Tariffs are important because many economists blame them for the acceleration of inflation in the second half of 2025. It's important to remember that tariffs are paid by U.S. importing companies and not by foreign exporting companies. It appears U.S. companies initially absorbed the cost of tariffs early in 2025, but have now begun to pass those costs on to buyers by raising prices.

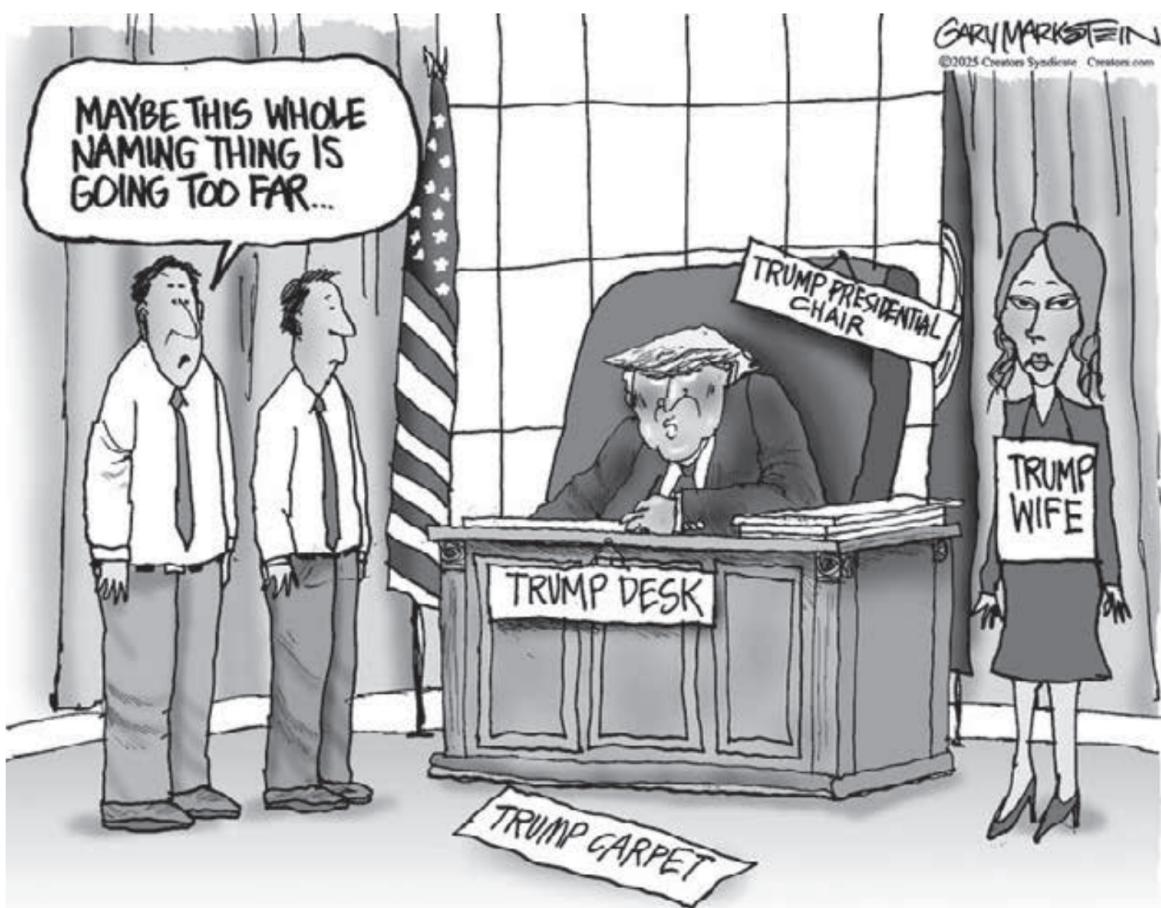
Now I will develop forecasts for 2026 based on scenarios for the uncertain factors, and I'll begin with the Federal Reserve. After World War II, Congress added two mandates to the Fed's responsibilities: keep the inflation rate low and keep the unemployment rate low. If the Fed uses its tools to focus on lower unemployment, this means cutting interest rates and creating more money. The Fed does the opposite if its focus is to lower inflation. During 2025, it appears the Fed was more concerned with jobs than with inflation. Assuming this concern is maintained in 2026, this could indicate a potential for slightly lower interest rates. Also, Fed Chairperson Jay Powell's term as chair ends in May, and President Donald Trump will likely appoint a replacement who supports lower rates. Although the Fed chair has only one vote among 12, in rate decisions, the new chairperson will likely advocate for lower rates.

The "Big Beautiful Bill" passed by Congress in mid-2025 has numerous provisions that will take effect in 2026. Among them are several measures reducing taxes for both households and businesses. The likely result is more investment, more production and more jobs, which could lead to higher incomes for households but with no adverse impacts on inflation.

Last, if tariffs are relaxed or completely removed, the impact should be a reduction in the inflation rate. Prices will still rise, but at a slower rate, therefore setting up a situation that allows more households to see their earnings increase faster than prices.

Hence, I'm cautiously optimistic about the 2026 economy, giving it a forecasted grade of B. Still, there are many "ifs," even for economists, meaning we all have to decide.

I should add that forecasts for inflation, interest rates and the impacts of federal tax changes apply to North Carolina just as they do nationwide. But in terms of business expansion, job growth and economic opportunities, North Carolina will likely continue to come out ahead of the nation in 2026, just as it has in previous years. In terms of the economy, companies and investors continue to have "Carolina on My Mind."



WHAT A YEAR

Do not get me wrong. I am grateful to be here, yet this has been quite a year. I am reminded that it could be worse. In fact, after experiencing circumstances this year that I could never have imagined, I expected things to get worse, and in many ways, I still do. Not personally, perhaps, but nationally and especially politically. I am no longer surprised by what comes out of the White House.

Even so, I am at peace and feel blessed to be here because I still see God in the disturbances we humans have caused. Some people ask how God could allow this to happen. Others say they do not believe in God because of what they see going on in the world. If you believe you wrote the script of your own life, I have compassion for that misunderstanding. With my still-limited spiritual vision, I have come to see that the script God has written is exactly what is needed.

I can see why it is important that we recognize why we are here and what it means when Scripture says we are fearfully and wonderfully made. As someone said yesterday in Sunday school, the freedom God has given us is what has gotten our world into trouble. God did not do this. We humans did. We did not follow the clear teachings of Scripture and instead chose to lean on our own understanding.

We get into trouble when we believe we have the right to control what other people do with their bodies. We miss the message that judgment belongs to God, not to us. We miss the Golden Rule when we treat others in ways we would never want to be treated ourselves.

When we decide that people are homeless because they are lazy, unstable, alcoholic, or addicted, we miss the message that we are here to help one another and to share what we have with those in need. Having a home, food, a job, and healthy relationships is not something we

earn because we are more deserving. These are gifts of God, mercy, grace, and blessing, and they can be lost at any moment.

I am not preaching. I am repeating what I need to hear from the holy books, especially the Bible, which I have read and studied and found to be true. Things fall apart when we believe race, skin color, or national origin make some people better, smarter, or more deserving than others.

We live by absurd norms, particularly in America, where these beliefs are amplified. Because of them, we have a crude, disrespectful, indecent, and dishonest administration. We have a bully in leadership, driven by ego, willing to say and do anything that undermines peace while demanding admiration. He exaggerates accomplishments, spreads lies, and causes harm based on what he believes others are doing.

Yesterday morning, I heard a claim on Reverend A.C.'s radio call-in show praising Trump and blaming all that he is about to do for Black people. He believed that Black people would soon receive two thousand dollars and that rising grocery prices are the fault of Biden and Harris. This is what happens when someone believes everything Trump says and accepts his habit of blaming Democrats for everything as truth.

Did I mention that our belief that women are inferior to men has also gotten us into trouble? Women give birth to us, feed us, teach us, clothe us, and often do it alone, yet some still believe women cannot lead a nation. It is astonishing.

Still, I believe the world is moving toward something better as we confront our harmful thinking. I trust God's plan rather than fearing Satan's distractions. As we enter the year 2026, I can say this. I have learned more about the inventions, contributions, and influence of African and African American people than I ever learned in all my years of schooling.

The more attempts are made to erase this history, the more it is revealed, not just the past, but present-day victories as well. What I see in small children, teenagers, and young adults is remarkable. I expect to see more good in 2026 to balance the cruelty of 2025.

I also believe that Trump has sacrificed his soul for selfish reasons and, in doing so, has shown us who we do not want to be and what we do not want our leaders to be.

Let us all find God in the midst of whatever 2026 brings. That is the way to begin a new year. What matters most is not what happens in 2026, but how we respond to it.

Happy New Year

Classifieds

DURHAM COUNTY

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

The undersigned, having qualified as Administrator of the Estate of Joseph Roy Aicher, Jr., Deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, does hereby notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the estate to exhibit the same on or before April 2, 2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment.

This 1st day of January, 2026.
Kathleen M. Aicher, Administrator
c/o Attorney Heather Hazelwood
PO Box 61182
Durham NC 27715

1/1, 1/8, 1/15, and 1/22/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

All persons, firms and corporations having claims against the Estate of MARY DOLAN O'DONNELL, File No.: 25E001434-310, deceased, of Durham County, NC, are notified to present the same to the personal representative listed below on or before March 25, 2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. All debtors of the said estate are asked to make immediate payment.

This 25th day of December, 2025.
Brendan Hugh O'Donnell, Executor
c/o Moeller & Smith, PA
607 Broad St.
New Bern, NC 28560

12/25/2025, 1/1, 1/8, and 1/15/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

File 25E001257-310
All persons, firms and corporations having claims against WILLIAM LEONARD BUTTERFIELD, deceased, of Durham County, NC, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before March 26th, 2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This, the 25th day of December, 2025.

Loree K Miller, Executor
c/o Beth W. Bowen
Bowen Law Firm PC
590 New Waverly Pl., Ste 120
Cary, NC 27518

12/25/2025, 1/1, 1/8, and 1/15/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Estate Of Arthur William Egan, Jr.
Aka Arthur William Egan
File No. 25E001509-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 16th day of December, 2025, as Co-Executors of the ESTATE of ARTHUR WILLIAM EGAN, JR., also known as ARTHUR WILLIAM EGAN, Deceased, do hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before March 26th, 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 25th day of December, 2025.

Courtney Jayne Egan, Co-Executor
Brittany Yvette Egan, Co-Executor
ESTATE OF ARTHUR WILLIAM EGAN, JR.

AKA ARTHUR WILLIAM EGAN
c/o Jennifer Dalman, Attorney
Walker Lambe, PLLC
240 Leigh Farm Road, Suite 100
Durham, North Carolina 27707

12/25/2025, 1/1, 1/8, and 1/15/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk

File Number 25E001464-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 15th day of December 2025, as EXECUTOR of the Estate of DEWEY J. CUNNINGHAM, 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 25th 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 25th day of December, 2025.

Rhonda S. Cohen, Executor
c/o David A. Burns, Esq.

Wyrick Robbins Yates & Ponton, LLP
4101 Lake Boone Trail, Ste. 300
Raleigh, NC 27607

12/25/2025, 1/1, 1/8, and 1/15/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk

File Number 25E001760-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 15th day of August 2024, as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of RICHARD DORSEY, 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 25th 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 25th day of December, 2025.

Vanessa Dorsey, Administrator
8 Mirando Place
Durham, NC 27707

12/25/2025, 1/1, 1/8, and 1/15/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

File Number 25E001348-310
The undersigned having qualified as Executor of the Estate of JAMES SLADE CRUMPTON, Deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the Estate to Exhibit them to the undersigned at the office of IDOL LAW, PLLC, PO Box 51759, Durham, North Carolina 27717, on or before the 30th day of March, 2026, or this Notice will be in bar of their recovery.

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

This is the 25th day of December, 2025.

James Slade Crumpton, Jr.,
Catherine Crumpton, Co-Executors
Estate of James Slade Crumpton,
Deceased

Robert A. Idol, Esquire
IDOL LAW, PLLC
Attorney at Law
PO Box 51759
Durham, NC 27717

(919)401.5151
12/25/2025, 1/1, 1/8, and 1/15/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE OF CREDITORS

THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 16th day of December 2025, as Executor of the ESTATE OF BARBARA JEAN GOODWIN aka BARBARA JEAN GOODWIN-BRODAS, 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 26th 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 25th day of December, 2025.

Mitchell S. Heard, Executor
Estate Of Barbara Jean Goodwin
aka Barbara Jean Goodwin-Brodas
c/o Rupe S. Gill, Attorney
Walker Lambe, PLLC
Post Office Box 51549
Durham, North Carolina 27717

12/25/2025, 1/1, 1/8, and 1/15/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE OF SERVICE OF

PROCESS BY PUBLICATION
File No.: 25CV001360-310
(Divorce Proceedings)

Rukayat Sealy, Plaintiff VS. Joseph Sealy, Defendant

TAKE NOTICE that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above-entitled action. The nature of the relief sought is an absolute divorce.

You are required to make defense to this pleading no later than forty (40) days from the first publication of this notice by filing a response with the Clerk of Superior Court of Durham County, North Carolina. Upon your failure to do so, the party seeking relief will apply to the Court for the relief sought.

This the 25th day of December, 2025.

Rukayat Sealy, Plaintiff
2317 Fitzgerald Avenue
Durham, NC 27707

12/25/2025, 1/1, and 1/8/2026
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. BOWENS, Attorney, P.O. Box 51263, Durham, NC 27717.

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.

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

This, the 18th day of December, 2025.

Ronald Wayne Robertson, Executor
c/o B. Bailey Lipfert, III
Allman Spry Leggett Crumpler & Horn P.A.

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 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 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.

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 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
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

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

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.

VANCE COUNTY

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
VANCE COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
File Number 25E000398-900
ALL PERSONS, firms and corporations having claims against ANNIE M. JONES, deceased, of Prince Georges County, MD, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before March 4, 2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This December 11, 2025.
Arnice Jones, Administratrix
c/o Browning Law Firm, PA
120 E. Main Street
Durham, NC 27701
December 11, 18, 25, and 1/1/2026

WAKE COUNTY

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
ALL PERSONS, firms and corporations having claims against BENJAMIN WESTLEY WHITAKER, AKA BENJAMIN WHITAKER, Deceased, of WAKE COUNTY, NC, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before APRIL 8, 2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery.
Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment.
This is the 8th day of January 2026.
Dorothy Whitaker, Executor of the Estate,
c/o MONROE JENKINS, PA
Post Office Box 12534
Durham, North Carolina 27709
1/1, 1/8, 1/15, and 1/22/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS

In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File Number 25E003790-910
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 12th day of December 2025, as EXECUTOR of the Estate of JOAN TECKLA NIELSEN a/k/a JOANNE TECKLA AMTOFT-NIELSEN a/k/a JOAN MANZOLILLO NIELSEN, late of Wake 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 25th 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 25th day of December, 2025.
Anja Wynns, Executor
218 Rosebrooks Drive
Cary NC 27513
12/25/2025, 1/1, 1/8, and 1/15/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

WAKE COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File Number 25E004295-910
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 5th day of December 2025, as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of LINDA RYAN A/K/A LINDA ANN RYAN, late of Wake 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.
Ryan Keith Pruzinsky, Administrator
413 Lindsays Run
Rolesville, NC 27571
12/18, 12/25/2025, 1/1 & 1/8/2026

FORECLOSURE

NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
SECOND NOTICE OF FORECLOSURE SALE
Special Proceedings No. 24SP002173-310
Under and by virtue of the power of sale contained in that certain deed of trust executed by DANIEL A. MCADOO JR. dated June 7, 2018 to JOSEPH P. CLARK, Trustee for TRULIANT FEDERAL CREDIT UNION, recorded in Book 8440, Page 840, DURHAM County Registry; default having been made in payment of the indebtedness thereby secured; and the necessary findings to permit foreclosure having been made by the Clerk of Superior Court of DURHAM County, North Carolina; the undersigned Substitute Trustee will offer for sale at public auction to the highest bidder for cash, the property conveyed in said deed of trust, the same lying and being in the County of DURHAM and State of North Carolina, and more particularly described as follows:

Beginning at a stake on the West side of Booker Avenue South 9 degrees 20' East 375 feet from the South of Stuart Drive, at the southeast corner of Lot #5 Block C, as shown on the plat hereinafter referred to and running thence North 80 degrees 40' West 150 feet to a stake; thence South 9 degrees 20' West 75 feet to a stake, thence South 80 degrees 40' East 150 feet to a stake on the West side of Booker Avenue, thence along and with the West side of Booker Avenue North 9 degrees 20' East 75 feet to a stake, the point of the beginning and being Lot #6 in the Block C of Forest Wood Park as per plat and survey thereof now on file in the Office of the Register of Deeds of Durham County in Plat Book 35 Page 82 to which reference is hereby made for a more particular description of same.

Property commonly known as: 4016 Booker Avenue, Durham, NC 27713.

PROPERTY ADDRESS/ LOCATION: 4016 Booker Avenue, Durham NC 27713;

DATE OF SALE: January 6, 2026;

TIME OF SALE: 10:30 A.M.;

LOCATION OF SALE: DURHAM County Courthouse;
RECORD OWNER(S): Daniel A. McAdoo, Jr.

TERMS OF THE SALE:

- This sale will be made subject to: (a) all prior liens, encumbrances, easements, right-of-ways, restrictive covenants or other restrictions of record affecting the property; (b) property taxes and assessments for the year in which the sale occurs, as well as any prior years; (c) federal tax liens with respect to which proper notice was not given to the Internal Revenue Service; (d) federal tax liens to which proper notice was given to the Internal Revenue Service and to which the right of redemption applies; and (e) the right of payoff or reinstatement of the loan as permitted by law.
- The property is being sold "as is". Neither the beneficiary of the deed of trust, nor the undersigned Substitute Trustee, makes any warranties or representations concerning the property, including but not limited to, the physical or environmental condition of the property. Further, the undersigned Substitute Trustee makes no title warranties with respect to the title to the property.
- The highest bidder will be responsible for the payment of revenue stamps payable to the Register of Deeds and any final court and/or auditing fees payable to the Clerk of Superior Court which are assessed on the high bid resulting from this foreclosure sale.
- At the time of the sale, the highest bidder will be required to make a cash deposit of five percent (5%) of the bid, or \$750.00, whichever is greater, with the remaining balance of the bid amount to be paid on the day following the expiration of the applicable ten (10) day upset bid period.
- Any person who occupies the property pursuant to a rental agreement entered into or renewed on or after October 1, 2007, may after receiving this Notice of Foreclosure Sale, terminate the rental agreement by providing written notice of termination to the landlord, to be effective on a date stated in the notice that is at least 10 days, but no more than 90 days, after the sale date contained in this Notice of Foreclosure Sale, provided that the mortgagor has not cured the default at the time the tenant provides the notice of termination. Upon termination of a rental agreement, the tenant is liable for rent due under the rental agreement prorated to the effective date of the termination.
- An order for possession of the property being sold may be issued pursuant to N.C.G.S. §45-21.29 in favor of the purchaser and against the party or parties in possession, by the Clerk of Superior Court of the county in which the property is sold.
- If the sale is set aside for any reason, or if the Trustee is unable to convey title to the property being foreclosed for any reason, the purchaser at the sale shall be entitled only to return of the deposit paid. The purchaser shall have no further recourse against the Mortgagor, the Mortgagee, the Mortgagee's attorney, or the Substitute Trustee.

Date: November 5, 2025.
SMITH DEBNAM NARRON DRAKE SAINTSING & MYERS, L.L.P.
Jeff D. Rogers, Substitute Trustee
PO Box 176010
Raleigh, NC 27619-6010
(919) 250-2000
Fax: (919) 250-2211
12/25/2025 & 1/1/2026

ATTENTION:

Beginning on January 1, 2026 the Classified Advertising Rate will increase \$2 per column inch

Young Africans Find Hope In Farming As Urban Life Becomes Too Expensive

TAMBACOUNDA, Senegal (AP) — On a blazing afternoon in Senegal, 33-year-old farmer Filly Mangassa heaved peanut plants onto a horse-drawn cart, sending clouds of dust swirling.

Ten years ago, he left his village for the capital, Dakar, dreaming of becoming a professor. But the high cost of living and lack of jobs put that dream out of reach.

"Particularly after COVID, companies weren't hiring and prices were rising," said Mangassa, who has a masters degree in criminology. "I thought: My father and my grandfather were farmers, so why not use that experience and go back to my hometown and try to make a living in agriculture."

Across much of Africa, farming has long been seen as low-status work, pushing young people to cities in search of office jobs.

"For my father and some people in my family, they sort of saw me returning to the countryside as a step back," Mangassa said.

But that perception is changing. Rising food prices, investments in irrigation and access to new technologies are making agriculture more profitable. Governments and nonprofits now fund programs that teach advanced farming skills and support farmers with equipment, fertilizers, pesticides and seeds.

"When my father saw that I had a clear, thorough business plan, he encouraged me and helped me with the administrative process to acquire land," Mangassa said.

He is part of a trend of young Africans leaving cities to try their luck at farming. Mangassa says he makes a profit of around 2 million CFA (\$3,500 a year), far above Senegal's average yearly income of about \$2,500.

Africa is the world's fastest-urbanizing region, with cities growing at an average rate of 3.5% per year. As city populations increase, so does the cost of living.

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Africa is the world's fastest-urbanizing region, with cities growing at an average rate of 3.5% per year. As city populations increase, so does the cost of living.

Median rents and grocery prices in places like Dakar or Kenya's capital of Nairobi are approaching those of major European cities, despite median salaries being significantly lower, according to the World Bank.

Meanwhile, between 10 and 12 million young Africans enter the job market each year while only about 3 million formal jobs are created, according to the African Development Bank.

"A lot of my friends who graduated at the same time as me now work as motorcycle taxi drivers and barely make a living," Mangassa said.

Helping young farmers acquire land

Mangassa now owns a 32-acre farm where he grows peanuts, corn, vegetables and fruit. He received some funding to buy land from a World Food Program initiative helping young Africans start careers in agriculture.

Launched in 2023 and set to run through early 2027, it has supported around 380,000 people in launching agricultural businesses.

It works with local governments to allow young farmers to acquire land — often a challenge because of com-

plex ownership systems and young people's difficulty in obtaining loans because they are seen as high risk.

In Senegal, the program has supported over 61,000 people, with more than 80% launching farms, according to WFP. It also operates in Ghana, Nigeria, Mozambique, Uganda, Rwanda, Kenya and Tanzania.

"Our surveys show three main barriers for young people entering agriculture: limited access to land, financing and inputs; a lack of practical skills; and tough market conditions — knowing when to sell, how to add value and how to market their products," said WFP's country director for Senegal, Pierre Lucas.

Senegal, like many African countries, is plagued by food insecurity that has been exacerbated by donors' funding cuts and worsening climate conditions.

The region also is recovering from the colonial era, said Ibrahima Hathie, an agricultural economist at the Senegal-based Prospective Agricultural and Rural Initiative think tank.

"In Senegal for example, farmers were pressured to grow groundnuts to be sold in France instead of food crops," Hathie said.

Scarce arable land and soil degradation further constrain food production.

But now, many young farmers are shifting to high-value crops and have better technology, so production is increasing, Hathie said, predicting that as more locally produced food

enters markets, staple prices could fall.

Farming becomes an alternative to migration

Senegal is a main departure point for migrants attempting to reach Europe via the deadly Atlantic route. Authorities see agriculture as one way to create jobs to keep young people at home, launching campaigns in rural areas most affected by migration.

"I'm convinced that the only sector that can create the hundreds of thousands of jobs young people in Africa need is agriculture and livestock," Senegal's agriculture minister, Mabouba Diagne, told reporters in October.

Adama Sane, 24, once dreamed of reaching Europe but didn't have money to pay smugglers. He had moved to Dakar in 2020 but struggled to make ends meet as a construction worker. Then he heard about the WFP initiative.

"In a sense, discovering agriculture saved my life," Sane said. "If I had stayed in my construction job, I would have tried crossing the ocean sooner or later."

He now raises poultry and cultivates peppers on his five-acre farm in his village.

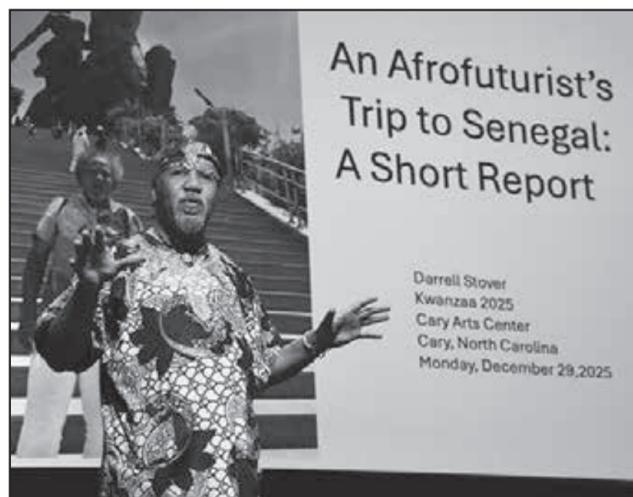
"I am still far from where I want to be with my business, but at least I am saving a lot of money compared to the city, and life is less stressful," Sane said. "A lot of young people think that being a farmer is a 'small job,' but there is starting to be a public awakening that agriculture can be the key to development in Senegal."

Three other potential migrants are now working for Mangassa.

Mamadou Camara, 22, Issa Traoré, 22, and Madassa Kebe, 23, had been living in Mali's capital, Bamako, struggling to find work. Their families had helped them raise money for the Atlantic journey to Europe via Guinea-Bissau, but they said a smuggler there disappeared with it.

They decided to return home through Senegal, where they met Mangassa.

"I empathized with them because I know what it's like to work hard and still not make ends meet while your family depends on you," Mangassa said. "I wanted to show them that there are opportunities for young people here."



2025 Kwanzaa Celebration in Cary

Over a hundred people attended the Kwanzaa Celebration at the Cary Arts Center on Monday afternoon. The Attendees were treated to a performance by the SUAH African Dance Theatre, a STEM program with Alex Flowers, artwork for the children and a vendor market. -Mathias Bishop Photos

Classifieds

D/M/WBE

SUBCONTRACTORS/SUPPLIERS WANTED

T. A. Loving Company (NC General Contractor License No. 325) is seeking certified DBE, MBE, and WBE subcontractors and suppliers for the **Waterline Replacement - Contract No. 1** project for the Town of Dover which bids on **January 6, 2026, at 2:00 PM.** Plans and specifications for this project are available at the following locations: T. A. Loving Company; 400 Patetown Road; Goldsboro, NC 27530 * Town of Dover, Town Hall; 105 North Main Street; Dover, NC 28526 * McDavid Associates, Inc., 3714 North Main Street; Farmville, NC 27828 * Dodge Data and Analytics website * Construct-Connect website (formerly iSqFt) * Construction Journal website * Builders and Contractors Exchange website.

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

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

