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Former St. Aug Board Chairs' Exodus

By Cash Michaels
Contributing Writer

A Raleigh television station has reported that two former chairmen of beleaguered St. Augustine's University (SAU) in Raleigh are no longer members of the trustees board of the small historically black Episcopal institution, as a condition of a loan agreement to cover its outstanding debts.

WRAL-TV reports that as of January 7th, both former St. Aug. Trustee Board chairmen James Perry and Brian Boulware were "ousted" from continued trustee board membership "...as part of a deal with an investment group providing a financial lifeline... that also offers protection to the school's valuable Raleigh property against debt claims."

That investment group is reportedly Self-Help Venture Fund, which, according to WRAL-TV, agreed just within the last two weeks to "...take over millions of dollars in debt owed by the university, which has been grappling with falling enrollment amid a battle over its accreditation and findings of weak controls over financial reporting."

This reporter confirmed that both Perry and Boulware were no longer listed on the school's trustee board webpage. WRAL reports that change was made "as of Wednesday (January 7th)." The webpage did not indicate why they were no longer listed, or when they were removed.

The removals are notable because both Perry and Boulware led the university's trustee board during a controversial period when SAU fell into serious financial and management



difficulties, resulting in millions of dollars in lawsuits and failure to pay numerous obligations, including federal back taxes, that made for unpleasant headlines, and led to SAU losing its permanent academic accreditation twice, along with an 81% reduction in campus enrollment by the beginning of its 2025-26 school year.

SAU has had to employ remote learning online in order to cut costs and maintain any student enrollment, after having a graduation class last May of just 25 students. The school also had to win a court injunction to hold onto its academic accreditation while it fights in court

to permanently retain it.

According to WRAL-TV, the new financial loan agreement reached between SAU and Self-Help Venture Fund, "...is expected to help address immediate financial obligations and help pay employees, according to messages from university leaders obtained by WRAL. As a condition of the deal, the lender asked for the removal of former Board of Trustees chairmen who were still serving on the board in emeritus roles, according to financial proposals obtained by WRAL"

Reportedly, James Perry told the TV station that he's no longer serving on the SAU Trustee Board

because his term had expired. Brian Boulware said that "...he hasn't been notified of any removal and was trying to get answers himself."

SAU's current trustee board leadership consists of Chair Sophie Gibson of Atlanta, Ga., (the first female chair in the school's 157 year history) and Vice Chair V. Lynette Mitchell of Williamstown, NJ, the first woman to ever serve in that capacity. Both were elected to board leadership in August 2025.

The school is still fighting to permanently retain its academic accreditation membership in Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges.

MLK Day Events

DURHAM
Honoring the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. is the purpose of the annual Durham City-County Martin Luther King, Jr. (MLK) Employee Observance. The celebration, jointly hosted by the City of Durham and Durham County, will take place on Tuesday, January 27, 2026. The event will begin at 11 a.m. inside First Presbyterian Church located at 305 E. Main Street in downtown Durham.

Dr. Karrie G. Dixon, Chancellor of North Carolina Central University, will be the keynote speaker for the 21st annual celebration event. Dr. Dixon is the 13th chancellor of NCCU.

The Dignity of Work: Honoring Dr. King's Legacy of Service and Equality is the event theme for 2026. The 2026 Durham City-County Martin Luther King Jr. Employee Observance seeks to reflect on how this principle continues to guide our shared mission in local government and public service.

The community is invited to join the event which will include remarks from local leaders and elected officials. Musical selections will be provided by singer by Stellar Music Award nominee and gospel artist, Kim Person.

This program is free and open to the public.

WAKE FOREST
Thu, Jan 22 2026, 6:30 - 8:30pm
Several local churches and community organizations will honor the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. during a free, public celebration on Thursday, Jan. 22, at 6:30 p.m. at Friendship Chapel Baptist Church, 237 Friendship Chapel Road.

The evening's theme will center around one of Dr. King's messages: "Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly." In the spirit of the event theme, the Wake Forest MLK Committee will offer creative performance, writing, and art competitions for students in Wake Forest and Rolesville-area schools. Complete contest rules and information, along with the online contest entry form, are available at <http://bit.ly/WFMLKCelebration>. The competition winners will be recognized during the January 22 program.

FUQUAY VARINA
Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration
Join the Cultural Arts Society of Fuquay-Varina for our 22nd annual celebration honoring the life and legacy of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

The event will begin with a commemorative march starting at 9:00 AM from Falcon Park (105 Falcon Drive). Following the march, a program will be held at the First Baptist Church (105 N. West Church), featuring inspiring words from our guest speaker, Dr. Ariel E. Seay, Ph.D.

Honoring a Pivotal Moment: Inspirations in Integration

(See MLK EVENTS, P. 9)

Keith Porter Killed By Off-Duty ICE Agent

Nationwide — As protests intensify nationwide over recent fatal shootings involving Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents, the family of Keith Porter Jr. is again demanding justice. Porter, a 43-year-old African American father of two, was killed on New Year's Eve in Northridge, California, by an off-duty ICE agent, and his death has resurfaced in public discussion amid outrage over a separate ICE-related killing in Minneapolis.



leased clear details explaining what occurred in the moments leading up to the fatal shooting.

Federal officials defended the agent's actions, stating that he believed he was responding to an ac-

tive shooter situation and that an exchange of gunfire occurred. Porter was pronounced dead at the scene. No criminal charges were immediately filed against the agent, a fact that has drawn sharp criticism from Porter's family and civil rights advocates.

Relatives and community leaders dispute the claim that Porter posed a threat. They describe him as a devoted father and a positive presence in his community. At a Los Angeles City Council meeting, Porter's mother, Franceola Armstrong, spoke emotionally about her son, calling him a man with a kind spirit and a big heart. Family members are now calling for an independent investigation into the shooting.

Activists echoed those demands, pointing to broader concerns about accountability in law enforcement shootings. Representatives from lo-

cal civil rights groups criticized the lack of immediate disciplinary or criminal action, arguing that such cases reflect a troubling pattern of excessive force and insufficient oversight. A candlelight vigil honoring Porter was held in Northridge, with another planned in Carson Park alongside community leaders.

Public attention around Porter's death has grown following the fatal shooting of 37-year-old Renee Nicole Good in Minneapolis, who was killed by an ICE agent during an immigration operation. Federal officials have claimed self-defense in that case, while local leaders sharply rejected that narrative, fueling protests across multiple cities. Together, the two incidents have intensified scrutiny of ICE operations and renewed calls for transparency, accountability, and justice for the families affected.



Asheville, Raleigh Face Lawmaker Questions Over DEI Practices

By Jordan Meadows
Staff Writer

Last Wednesday, North Carolina House lawmakers opened the new legislative year with a contentious first meeting of the House Select Committee on Government Efficiency, focusing heavily on DEI policies in Asheville, Buncombe County and the City of Raleigh.

Much of the scrutiny centered on allegations that local governments and publicly funded programs have unlawfully prioritized race and gender in violation of federal and state civil rights laws.

Asheville attorney Ruth Smith delivered an extended presentation to the committee, arguing that several policies and programs in Buncombe County and Asheville violate the 14th Amendment, Article I, Section 19 of the North Carolina Constitution, and Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

Smith cited decades of Supreme Court precedent, noting that nearly every affirmative action case outside of higher education has failed strict scrutiny under equal protection laws, culminating in the U.S. Supreme Court's 2023 ruling striking down race-based college admissions policies. She also referenced *Ames v. Ohio*, a unanimous decision affirming an individual's right not to be discriminated against on the basis of race.

A major focus of Smith's testimony involved disaster relief funding following Hurricane Helene. She alleged that Buncombe County repurposed federal relief funds and prioritized recipients based on race and gender.

Asheville initially proposed prioritizing minority- and women-owned businesses in its plan to distribute \$225 million in Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery funds. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development rejected that plan, citing violations of a presidential executive order banning DEI criteria. After removing the prioritization language, the revised plan was approved by Asheville City Council in April 2025 and by HUD in May 2025.

(See LAWMAKER QUESTIONS DEI PRACTICES, P. 3)

NC Likely Won't Have A New Budget Until At Least April, As Tax Cut Impasse Continues

WUNC — North Carolina could remain without a new budget until at least April. Lawmakers had scheduled their first session of 2026 this week but aren't planning to hold any votes.

North Carolina is the only legislature in the country that didn't pass a budget bill last year. That's because House and Senate Republicans continue to disagree on whether to delay scheduled income tax cuts.

Any hopes of a quick resolution this month were dashed when the legislature held a no-vote session Monday. Monday's House and Senate sessions lasted less than two minutes each, and only a few legislators were present in Raleigh. House Speaker Destin Hall and Senate leader Phil Berger weren't in the room, and they'd previously told lawmakers there's no need to come to the capital this week.

Another session is on the calendar for February, but a spokeswoman for Berger told WUNC News that no votes are expected in the Senate until April. In addition to the budget stalemate, the state's Medicaid program still faces a looming funding shortfall that could trigger drastic cuts in the spring, according to Gov. Josh Stein's administration.

Berger told PBS North Carolina a full budget agreement isn't likely before then. "I think comprehensive budget talk is not going to result in a comprehensive budget until maybe the short session," he said during a recent interview on the show "State Lines." "We'll see when we get back in April whether or not it does. The Senate is really determined that we promised people a tax cut, and that tax cut ought to take place.

House Republicans, as well as Democrats, worry those tax cuts could leave the state with a budget deficit in the coming years. House Speaker Hall has said his proposed budget would increase the "trigger" amounts in state law that prompt a lower tax rate, setting amounts that better reflect inflation.

(See TAX CUT IMPASSE CONTINUES, P. 2)

State Gerrymandering Battle Kick-Started

(AP NEWS) After a frenetic few months of congressional redistricting efforts, President Donald Trump's plan to reshape voting districts for partisan advantage ahead of this year's midterm elections stands at an important juncture.

Will Republican- and Democratic-led states ramp up their remapping of U.S. House districts as new legislative sessions get underway? Or will the mid-decade redistricting frenzy fade away following Indiana's resounding rejection of Trump's pressure-packaged campaign?

"We're at a crossroads to see if the mid-decade redistricting movement gains more speed or was simply an attempt by Donald Trump to impact elections that in many states fizzled," said Jeffrey Wice, director of the Elections, Census and Redistricting Institute at New York Law School.

Virginia and Florida are two key states to watch. Democrats who lead Virginia and Republicans who lead Florida could try to swing multiple seats in their party's favor by an aggressive redistricting. Virginia's legislative session begins Wednesday. Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis plans to call a special session in April on con-



gressional redistricting.

What happens next in Democratic-led Illinois and Maryland and in Kansas' Republican-led Legislature also could affect the GOP's ability to maintain a narrow House majority in the face of political headwinds that typically favor the party out of power in midterm elections. Key lawmakers in all three of those states remain opposed to redistricting.

A gerrymandering wave hits a wall Trump kick-started an unusual redistricting plan in July by calling on Texas Republicans to redraw their congressional map to create more favorable districts for the party — even though there was no new census data to base it upon. That triggered a mid-decade redistricting battle the likes of which has not been common since the late 1800s.

Texas, Missouri and North Caro-

lina all approved new Republican-friendly House districts. Ohio, which had to redistrict because of its state constitution, used the opportunity to enact a more favorable House map for Republicans.

But Ohio's action on Oct. 31 marked a turning point. That same day, Virginia's Democratic-led legislature took a first step toward redistricting. Then in November, California voters approved new House districts helping Democrats, Kansas Republicans dropped plans for a special session on redistricting, and a Utah judge adopted a new House map that benefits Democrats.

Trump suffered a stunning setback Dec. 11, when Indiana's Republican-led Senate defeated a redistricting plan that could have helped the GOP win all nine of the state's U.S. House seats, up from their current seven.

The net result from the 2025 jockeying could be three additional seats for Republicans. But even that is in question, because legal challenges remain in some states, and there is no guarantee that parties will win the districts they redraw.

(See GERRYMANDERING P. 2)

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Gerrymandering Battle Kick-Started — CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

Virginia may be next up on redistricting.

When the Virginia General Assembly begins its annual session, the agenda will include a proposed constitutional amendment allowing mid-decade redistricting in response to other states.

The amendment, which received first-round approval in the fall, would also need to pass a statewide vote before the new districts could be implemented. Quick action would be necessary to get all that accomplished in time for candidates to run in redrawn districts later this year.

Democrats, who currently hold six of the state's 11 U.S. House seats, have not unveiled those new districts would look like. But some have talked of trying to gain as many as four additional seats.

Virginia Gov.-elect Abigail Spanberger has embraced the redistricting effort but has not committed to a particular plan.

"I will look at any map that is kind

of reasonable and keeping communities compact and together," Spanberger, a Democrat, told The Associated Press. "But ultimately, it's up to the people of Virginia to choose whether or not to move forward with the referendum."

Florida plans an April redistricting debate.

Republicans currently hold 20 of Florida's 28 U.S. House seats. That advantage could grow if districts are reshaped during a special session.

Although Florida's regular legislative session starts Tuesday, DeSantis said he is waiting until April to call a special redistricting session to allow time for a possible U.S. Supreme Court ruling on a key provision of the federal Voting Rights Act. If the court rules in a Louisiana case that race cannot be the predominant factor in creating voting districts, it could open the way for several Republican-led states to redraw districts represented by Black or Hispanic lawmakers who are Demo-

crats. DeSantis said the high court's ruling could affect "at least one or two" Florida districts.

But any redistricting that aids Republicans could face a court challenge. A voter-approved Florida constitutional provision prohibits drawing district boundaries to favor or disfavor a political party or incumbent.

Resistance remains in several targeted states.

Some Democrats seeking to counter Trump have urged lawmakers in Illinois and Maryland to redraw their already heavily Democratic districts to try to gain one additional seat in each state. But the plans appear to lack traction as legislative sessions begin Tuesday in both states.

Illinois House Speaker Pro Tem Kam Buckner said "there is no active push" for congressional redistricting.

"There is no appetite to reopen something that will consume enor-

mous time, energy and, frankly, political capital without a compelling justification," Buckner, a Democrat, told the AP.

Democratic Maryland Gov. Wes Moore has created a special commission to recommend a new congressional map. But Democratic Senate President Bill Ferguson remains opposed and insists that a majority of residents also do not want new districts.

In Kansas, some Republicans want to redraw U.S. House districts to try to gain an additional seat. But House Republicans have failed to gain the two-thirds support needed to override a likely veto by Democratic Gov. Laura Kelly.

House Speaker Dan Hawkins told reporters that he has no plans to hold a vote on congressional redistricting during the annual legislative session that starts Monday.

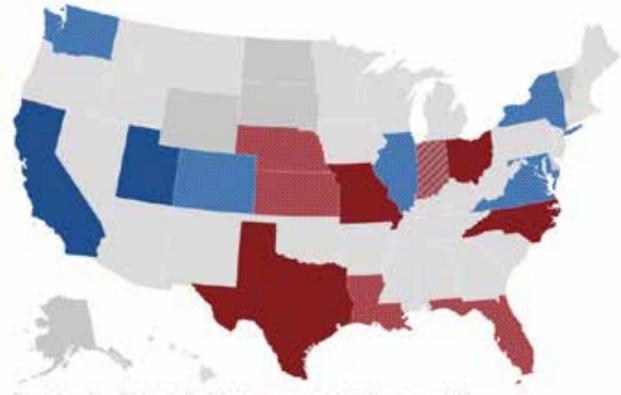
"I do not have the votes," Hawkins said.

Which states are considering redistricting?

Tracking states where officials have adopted new congressional districts or indicated they are open to redrawing them, by party that could benefit.

U.S. House after 2024 elections: 220 Republicans 215 Democrats

Targeted by Democrats: Considering, Adopted new map
Targeted by Republicans: Considering, Rejected, Adopted new map
Single district state, No status



Marine Seeks Justice Over Camp Lejeune Water Contamination

PRE News & Ideas— More than three years after lawmakers gave the go-ahead to people sickened by decades of toxic drinking water aboard Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune in Jacksonville to sue the federal government for illnesses caused by the contamination, thousands are still waiting for their cases to move forward.

Marvin Cox served in the United States Marine Corps from 1981 to 1985. His last duty station was Camp Lejeune. He has since been diagnosed with cancer and was unable to get his care and treatment covered by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

"So of course, I was there during the time that the water contamination happened," he said, "The interesting part is that the VA has acknowledged that I was exposed to contaminated water. I met the time requirement and they said I was in a toxic exposure risk activity. However, since colon cancer is not on their presumptive list, they will not offer any compensation."

The drinking water at Camp

Lejeune was found to be contaminated by industrial solvents and other chemicals from the 1950s through the 80s, and the and the federal government and the U.S. military kept the contamination under wraps for years. The CDC determined more than a million people may have been exposed.

The Camp Lejeune Justice Act of 2022, part of the PACT Act, allowed veterans and others exposed to contaminated water at the base between 1953-1987 to file lawsuits against the U.S. Department of Justice and the Department of the Navy for related health issues, seeking damages for illnesses like cancers, kidney disease, and more.

Another bill was introduced early last summer that would make adjustments to the original legislation. The Ensuring Justice for Camp Lejeune Victims Act would allow cases to be heard in more federal courts, it would limit attorney fees, and make clear that those sickened by the water have the right to a jury trial and not just a bench trial decided by a federal judge.

Cox, age 62, doesn't believe the legislation will ever be acted upon. He said, "I'm not expecting Congress to do anything. It's a divided Congress, and of course they'll say, 'Well, it passed under the Biden administration, so of course, if anything passed under the Biden administration, we're not going to move forward with this.'"

The Plaintiff's Legal Group — the group of attorneys taking the lead in representing those that have filed claims — filed a motion in November, stating that the government filed more than 30 challenges to the admissibility of expert testimony in an attempt to exclude every expert witness and dismiss all Track 1 bellwether cases.

Cox said the government agencies that are being sued have been consistently dragging their feet on moving the cases forward and are not communicating with the victims of the contaminated water exposure.

"The DOJ is fighting everything and the Department of the Navy has like over 400,000 claim files that they have really not touched," Cox



said. "They're really supposed to give us an acknowledgement after six months that they received our claim, and I can tell you I've heard nothing from the Department of the Navy as it relates to the administrative claim

that I filed."

In mid-December, the judges rejected the government's attempt to block seven Daubert motions from the plaintiffs, including evidence from the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry. That evidence uses computer models to reconstruct how and when drinking water at Camp Lejeune was contaminated, especially during the 1950s to 1980s when actual water testing was limited.

The judges said the government's effort to exclude this evidence was inconsistent, especially since the government itself had previously relied on ATSDR's work to link contaminated water to disease.

The court found the ATSDR's research crucial for proving causation and criticized the government for trying to undermine its own scientific findings with weak arguments about minor technicalities.

"We see that as a win for plaintiffs, so I think we'll end up going to trial," Cox said, but added, "When that's gonna happen, I'm not sure."

U.S. Magistrate James Gates is

one of the judges presiding over the Camp Lejeune water litigation. He ordered the lawyers in October to develop a settlement framework by the end of the year. However, it's now 2026 and that settlement framework has not been completed.

Cox is also fighting with the Department of Veterans Affairs over his colon cancer diagnosis and has filed an appeal of a determination that his medical costs would not be covered.

"The Camp Lejeune Justice Act has a tier one system where they're showing colon cancer as being strong evidence that it's in the contaminated water, but the VA does not. So, you got two federal groups and you got two different systems operating. So, the efficiency at the VA is very lacking," he said.

Cox is also calling on the VA to update the list of adverse health conditions that are presumed to have been caused by the toxic water at Camp Lejeune; he said, "The presumptive list was last updated in 2017, so you're talking about 8 years, and you know that the scientific evidence has changed over that time."

How Blacks In NC Lost Ground In 2025 — Part Two

By Cash Michaels

Contributing Writer

As 2026 proceeds, this is Part 2 of a look back at 2025 that raises important questions for African-Americans in North Carolina about how much social and political capital was lost last year, and whether much, if any, can be regained in the coming year.

According to a new study from UNC researchers, one-in-four Black middle school students have had thoughts of suicide, 1-in-6 "made plans to take their own lives, and 1-in-10" actually made a suicide attempt.

In 2025, the Trump Administration moved to permanently close the U.S. Dept. of Education. Maurice "Mo" Green, Democratic state superintendent of NC Dept. of Public Instruction, issued a statement on X saying, "Dismantling the U.S. Department of Education raises significant

concerns for our state's schools, as federal funding represents nearly 11% of our education budget and supports over 14,000 public school positions. These funds are critical for all of our students, particularly our most vulnerable such as those with disabilities and from low-income families."

On May 3rd, a class of only 25 students at embattled St. Augustine's University (SAU) in Raleigh received their diplomas, amid controversy over lost accreditation, and a long expected lawsuit filed by a former president. Meanwhile the outstanding debt at the small HBCU continued to mount, forcing SAU to start the 2025 semester totally with remote classes on online. Its interim president left, and questions about SAU's future grew.

Now that President Trump's so-called "One Big Beautiful Bill" has been passed by Congress and signed into law, political observers, even here

in North Carolina, say those living on the margins, especially in the black community, will suffer most because of the largest spending cuts ever, approximately \$1 trillion, to the nation's social safety net.

Dr. Charity Oyedeji, a black Duke University School of Medicine sickle cell anemia hematology researcher, told media outlets across the nation that she received a letter from the federal National Institutes of Health on June 16th, informing her that her \$750,000 grant was being slashed.

That was bad enough, but the language used in the missive as to why, citing diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), was "racist."

In 2025, the world lost several black notables whose contributions to American life were undeniable.

Black Mountain, NC Grammy Award winning singer Roberta flack passed away at the age of 88. She will forever be known for the classic ballads "Killing Me Softly with His Song" and "The First Time Ever I Saw His Face."

A Misunderstanding Lead To Racial Terror

By Jordan Meadows

Staff Writer

When the United States entered the First World War in April 1917, it proclaimed itself a defender of democracy abroad. At home, however, the pressures of war exposed and intensified long-standing racial and economic injustices. Nowhere was this contradiction more violently revealed than in the racial riots and massacres that erupted during the summer of 1917—most notably in East St. Louis, Illinois, and later in Houston, Texas.

World War I reshaped the American labor market almost overnight. As millions of men were drafted or enlisted into military service, industrial employers in northern cities faced severe labor shortages. At the same time, European immigration slowed dramatically due to the war. To fill the gap, industries increasingly turned to Black American labor.

This demand coincided with the Great Migration, during which Black Americans fled the rural South in search of industrial jobs, education, and freedom from lynching and Jim Crow laws. Cities such as the industrial hub of East St. Louis, Illinois, became major destinations. By the spring of 1917, as many as 2,000 Black migrants were arriving in St. Louis each week.

White workers—many of them European immigrants themselves—often viewed these newcomers with hostility. Competition for jobs and housing, combined with racist fears that Black workers would accept lower wages, fueled resentment. Employers frequently worsened tensions by hiring Black workers as strikebreakers, while white unions attempted to exclude Black labor altogether. Economic competition thus became racialized, with Black workers blamed for conditions they did not create.

Beginning in late May 1917 and culminating in early July, white mobs launched a campaign of terror against the city's Black residents. On May 28, after a meeting fueled by labor grievances and racist rhetoric, between 1,000 and 3,000 white men marched through downtown East



The 1917 Silent Parade in New York City

St. Louis, attacking Black Americans in the streets and on streetcars and burning buildings. A state labor investigation later blamed Black migrants themselves, claiming they had been "misled" into coming to the city by unscrupulous labor agents.

The deadliest violence occurred on July 1-2, 1917. On July 1, a Black Ford Model T occupied by white men drove through a Black neighborhood, firing shots into a crowd. When another car passed through the area an hour later—carrying two white police detectives and a journalist—Black residents, believing they were under attack again, opened fire. One officer was killed instantly, another mortally wounded.

The following day, thousands of white spectators gathered to view the bloodstained police car. The crowd soon turned into a mob, which surged into Black neighborhoods south and west of downtown. What followed was a massacre. White rioters beat, shot, lynched, and burned Black residents, including women and children. Fire hoses were deliberately cut so entire neighborhoods could be destroyed, and people fleeing the flames were shot as they ran. Some whites openly called for lynchings, claiming Black people "deserved" such punishment.

A reporter for the St. Louis Post-Dispatch wrote that "black skin was

Noted Charlotte defense Attorney James E. "Fergie" Ferguson II, who co-founded North Carolina's first integrated law firm, worked to successfully desegregate public schools in Charlotte and across the nation, and served as defense attorney for the later exonerated Wilmington Ten, among other noteworthy accomplishments, died at the age of 82.

He was an inspiration to many young black civil rights attorneys, like Democratic NC Supreme Court Associate justice Anita Earls, who was sadly

diagnosed with breast cancer as 2025 ended, but announced that she will continue her reelection bid in 2026.

Another important figure in North Carolina history was U.S. Air Force Major Gen. (Retired) Joseph McNeil of Wilmington at age 83. McNeil, along with three other students at NC A&T University in Greensboro, jumpstarted the stalled civil rights movement in 1961 by violating racial segregation laws by having lunch at an all-white lunch counter in Greensboro in February 1961.

about 100 Black Americans were killed, while journalist Ida B. Wells reported between 40 and 150 deaths. The NAACP estimated as many as 200.

Approximately 6,000 Black residents were left homeless, and property damage reached \$400,000—nearly \$10 million in today's dollars. When schools reopened that fall, Black enrollment had dropped by 35 percent.

The massacre drew national attention. At the end of July 1917, 10,000 Black Americans marched silently down Fifth Avenue in New York City to protest lynching and racial violence. Former President Theodore Roosevelt denounced the massacre as "an appalling outbreak of savagery," rejecting attempts to excuse the violence as an inevitable result of labor competition. W. E. B. Du Bois praised Roosevelt's stance, particularly as President Woodrow Wilson remained silent for a full year.

Black nationalist leader Marcus Garvey went further, calling the massacre proof of America's hypocrisy. While condemning German abuses

(See **RACIAL TERROR** P. 6)

TAX CUT IMPASSE CONTINUES

Continued from page 1

Democrats like Rep. Rodney Pierce, D-Halifax, say they're disappointed there's been no progress in funding Medicaid or passing raises for teachers and state workers.

"We're ready to work," Pierce said. "But we don't control the calendar. We don't control the agenda. We don't control budget negotiations. ... It's just sad and a shame that we're the only state in the country that doesn't have a budget, and the fact that we may not get one until after the primaries."

Pierce says he's been hearing from teachers and state employees in his district who are upset they haven't received a raise, and some are considering leaving their jobs or taking a similar position across the state line in Virginia.

The salary for an entry-level teacher in Greensville County, Va. — a short drive north from Roanoke Rapids — is \$51,787 this school year, according to the district's website. North Carolina's starting salary for teachers this year is \$41,000, although many districts offer local salary supplements that increase the amount.

"These are people who are dealing with cost-of-living increases but are not dealing with any cost-of-living increase in terms of raises," he said. "And it particularly hurts in rural communities like ours, because we don't have the economic resources to make up the difference."

While there won't be any action on bills, several legislative oversight committees will meet later this week. They'll get updates on Medicaid, federal changes to the SNAP (food stamp) program, and discuss possible changes to property taxes.

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Business & Finance

DOJ Investigation Of Fed Chair Powell Sparks Backlash

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration's criminal investigation of Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell appeared on Monday to be emboldening defenders of the U.S. central bank against the efforts of President Donald Trump to control the Fed.

The backlash reflected the bigger stakes of a contest about the fate of the Fed's independence, the balance of power within the federal government, and the path of the U.S. economy. Trump has long publicly lashed out against Powell for not slashing the Fed's benchmark interest rates to his liking, but the prospect of a criminal indictment was a step too far for an institution that has an outsized influence on both inflation and the job market.

Several Republican senators have condemned the Department of Justice's subpoenas of the Fed, which Powell revealed Sunday and characterized as "pretexts" to pressure him to sharply cut interest rates as Trump has demanded. Powell also said the Justice Department has threatened criminal indictments over his June testimony to Congress about the cost and design elements of a building renovation.

Trump has repeatedly used investigations — which might or might not lead to an actual indictment — to attack his political rivals, including Fed governor Lisa Cook, New York Attorney General Letitia James and James Comey, the former FBI director.



White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt told reporters that Trump did not direct his Justice Department to investigate Powell.

"One thing for sure, the president's made it quite clear, is Jerome Powell is bad at his job," Leavitt said. "As for whether or not Jerome Powell is a criminal, that's an answer the Department of Justice is going to have to find out."

A bipartisan group of former Fed chairs and top economists on Monday compared the Trump administration's actions to moves made in more impoverished countries. Some analysts said that the financial market's muted response reflects a widespread belief that Powell could successfully fend off the

allegations that his description to lawmakers of the Fed's \$2.5 billion project was criminal.

"I think this is ham-handed, counterproductive, and going to set back the president's cause," said Jason Furman, an economist at Harvard and former top adviser to President Barack Obama. It could also unify the Fed's interest-rate setting committee in support of Powell, and means "the next Fed chair will be under more pressure to prove their independence."

The subpoenas apply to the price tag of renovating Fed buildings, including its marble-clad headquarters in Washington, D.C. They come at an unusual moment when Trump was teasing the likelihood of announcing his nominee

this month to succeed Powell as the Fed chair, after Trump last summer played down the idea that the Fed's renovation costs were a fireable offense.

While Powell's term as chair ends in May, he has a separate term as a Fed governor until January 2028. Trump's moves could make it more likely that Powell will stay on the Fed's governing board after his term as chair ends in May in order to defend the Fed's independence from politics in making its decisions on interest rates, Furman said.

While an interest rate cut was already considered unlikely at the Fed's next meeting in about two weeks, the news of the Justice Department investigation likely means that the Fed would avoid cuts at the next meeting in order to send the message that it cannot be pressured by politics, economists said.

Powell quickly found a growing number of defenders among Republicans in the Senate, who will have the choice of whether to confirm Trump's planned picks for Fed chair.

Sen. Thom Tillis, a North Carolina Republican and member of the Senate Banking panel, said late Sunday in response to the subpoenas that he would oppose any of the Trump administration's nominees for the Fed, including to replace Powell.

"If there were any remaining doubt whether advisers within the Trump

Administration are actively pushing to end the independence of the Federal Reserve, there should now be none," Tillis said.

Sen. Lisa Murkowski, an Alaska Republican, backed Tillis' approach Monday.

"After speaking with Chair Powell this morning, it's clear the administration's investigation is nothing

more than an attempt at coercion," Murkowski said. She voted against the White House's nomination of Stephen Miran to the Fed's board in September, which was barely approved by a 48-47 vote. Miran continues to be Trump's chair of the White House Council of Economic Advisers, although he is on leave due to his post at the Fed.

LAWMAKER QUESTIONS DEI PRACTICES

Continued from page 1

Smith also highlighted education and internship programs she said improperly exclude certain racial groups. One example was the Medical Mentorship Program run by the Mountain Area Health Education Center (MAHEC), which offers a semester-long shadowing experience for high school seniors interested in medicine. Eligibility criteria limit applicants to Black, Indigenous, People of Color, and underrepresented Asian communities, excluding white students and prevalent Asian ethnicities such as Chinese, Indian and Korean students. A watchdog group, WNC Citizens for Equality, filed two federal civil rights complaints this week alleging the program continues to use discriminatory criteria despite recent changes.

Additional examples included the City of Asheville's 2021 creation of race-specific scholarships using proceeds from a water fee class-action settlement. Funds were directed to scholarships for Black students and BIPOC educators through the Asheville City Schools Foundation, prompting a legal challenge from Judicial Watch.

Smith also referenced litigation involving Asheville's Human Relations Commission, where white applicants were allegedly required to demonstrate additional "plus factors"—such as sexual orientation, disability or housing status—to qualify, while non-white applicants were not.

The Asheville City Council voted in August 2025 to eliminate all race-based preferences for commission appointments, and a federal judge later ordered the city to pay more than \$81,000 in legal fees to the plaintiffs. Lawmakers also raised concerns about the Asheville-Buncombe Community Reparations Commission, which received \$7.7 million in funding and spent nearly \$5 million on consultants, outreach and media efforts.

No representatives from Asheville or Buncombe County testified at Wednesday's meeting, though lawmakers said they were open to hearing from local officials in the future.

The committee also heard testimony from Raleigh Mayor Janet Cowell and City Manager Marchell Adams-David following an undercover video released by the conservative group Accuracy in Media. The video, recorded in February and released in October, appeared to show a city employee referring to a department as a "champion for DEI," prompting allegations that Raleigh violated a federal ban on DEI programs.

Adams-David told lawmakers the video was misleading and edited out of context, noting the city was still reviewing President Donald Trump's January 2025 executive order banning DEI in federally funded programs at the time of filming. She said Raleigh has since suspended equity training initiatives, restructured departments, and renamed its Department of Equity and Inclusion as the Department of Economic and Social Advancement to comply with federal law.

Legislators asked few follow-up questions, and no immediate action was announced. The Republican-controlled General Assembly has passed multiple measures in recent years restricting DEI initiatives in schools, universities and state governments, arguing such programs constitute unlawful racial preferences.

The committee is expected to continue reviewing DEI-related practices across state and local governments, including within the UNC System and municipalities like Asheville and Raleigh, in future meetings.

Author Announces Forthcoming Book

Nationwide — In a professional culture that rewards performance while punishing humanity, certified confidence coach, author, and anti-trafficking activist Deondrea Cantrice is asking a question many high achievers are afraid to voice: What if winning at work is costing us ourselves?

Her forthcoming book, *Overqualified. Overworked. Overlooked: How to Win Without Losing Yourself*, scheduled for release in February 2026, confronts the silent crisis facing professionals who appear successful on paper yet feel depleted, unseen, and disconnected internally. The book is a bold examination of what happens when ambition is weaponized, confidence is slowly eroded, and excellence becomes a liability rather than a shield.

Cantrice, known for her incisive

commentary on leadership, identity, and self-trust, brings a sharp, human lens to the realities many professionals normalize but rarely name.

Drawing from her coaching practice, lived experience, and advocacy work, she exposes the unspoken cost of being perpetually capable—and the emotional and mental toll of carry-

ing systems that were never designed to carry you back.

"Being overqualified doesn't protect you," Cantrice asserts. "It often makes you exploitable. And being overworked doesn't mean you're valued—it usually means you're convenient. This book is for the people who've done everything right and

still feel like they're overlooked."

Beyond her work as an author and coach, Cantrice is a committed anti-trafficking activist whose advocacy centers on empowerment, awareness, and systemic accountability. Her leadership extends into community service as an active member of Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc., where scholarship, service, and social justice intersect—values that deeply inform her work and worldview.

Through 1:1 coaching, group programs, and online courses, Cantrice supports individuals who are not looking for surface-level motivation but for restoration professionals ready to rebuild confidence that has been chipped away by chronic overextension, silence, and survival-mode success.



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Small Businesses Say They Aren't Planning To Hire Many Recent Graduates For Entry-Level Jobs, And Here's Why

THE CONVERSATION - Small businesses are planning to hire fewer recent college graduates than they did in 2025, making it likely harder for this cohort to find entry-level jobs.

In our recent national survey, we found that small businesses are 30% more likely than larger employers to say they are not hiring recent college graduates in 2026. About 1 in 5 small-business employers said they do not plan to hire college graduates or expect to hire fewer than they did last year.

This would be the largest anticipated decrease in small businesses hiring new graduates in more than a decade.

Small businesses are generally those with fewer than 500 employees, based on standards from the U.S. Census Bureau and federal labor data.

This slowdown is happening nationwide and is affecting early-career hiring for people graduating from both college and graduate programs - and is more pronounced for people with graduate degrees.

Nearly 40% of small businesses also said they do not plan to hire, or are cutting back on hiring, recent grads who don't have a master's of business administration. Almost 60% said the same for people with other professional degrees.

National data shows the same trend. Only 56% of small businesses are hiring or trying to hire anyone at all, according to October 2025 findings by the National Federation of Independent Business, an advocacy organization representing small and independent businesses.

Job openings at small employers are at their lowest since 2020, when hiring dropped sharply during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Some small businesses may change their hiring plans later in the spring, but our survey reveals that they are approaching hiring cautiously. This gives new graduates or students getting their diplomas in a few months information on what they can expect in the job market for summer and fall

2026. How small businesses tend to hire new employees

Our survey, which has been conducted annually at the LeBow Center for Career Readiness at Drexel University, collected data from 647 businesses across the country from August 2025 through November.

About two-thirds of them were small businesses, which reflects their distribution and proportion nationally.

Small businesses employ nearly half of private-sector workers. They also offer many of the first professional jobs that new graduates get to start their careers.

Many small employers in our survey said they want to hire early-career workers. But small-business owners and hiring managers often find that training new graduates takes more time and support than they can give, especially in fields like manufacturing and health care.

That's why many small employers prefer to hire interns they know or co-

operative education students who had previously worked for them while they were enrolled as students.

Larger employers are also being more careful about hiring, but they usually face fewer challenges. They often have structured onboarding, dedicated supervisors and formal training, so they can better support new employees. This is one reason why small businesses have seen a bigger slowdown in hiring than larger employers.

Then there are small businesses in cities that are open to hiring recent graduates but are struggling to find workers. In cities, housing costs are often rising faster than starting salaries, so graduates have to live farther from their jobs.

In the suburbs and rural areas, long or unreliable commutes make things worse. Since small businesses usually hire locally and cannot pay higher wages, these challenges make it harder for graduates to accept and keep entry-level jobs.

Industry and regional patterns

Job prospects for recent college graduates depend on the industry. The 2026 survey shows that employers in health care, construction and finance plan to hire more graduates than other fields. In contrast, manufacturing and arts and entertainment expect to hire fewer new graduates.

Most new jobs are in health care and construction, but these fields usually do not hire many recent college graduates. Health care growth is focused on experienced clinical and support roles, while construction jobs are mostly in skilled trades that require prior training or apprenticeships instead of a four-year degree.

So, even in growing industries, there are still limited opportunities for people just starting their careers.

Even though small businesses are hiring less, there are still opportunities for recent graduates. It's important to be intentional when preparing for the job market. Getting practical experience matters more than ever. Internships, co-ops, project work and short-

term jobs help students show they are ready before getting a full-time position.

Employers often say that understanding how the workplace operates is just as important as having technical skills for people starting their careers.

We often remind students in our classes at LeBow College of Business that communication and professional skills matter more than they expect. Writing clear emails, being on time, asking thoughtful questions and responding well to feedback can make candidates stand out. Small employers value these skills because they need every team member to contribute right away.

Students should also prepare for in-person work. Almost 60% of small employers in our survey want full-time hires to work on-site five days a week. In smaller companies, graduates who can take on different tasks and adjust quickly are more likely to set themselves apart from other candidates.



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Health and Wellness

Millions of Americans Are Expected To Drop Their Current Affordable Care Act Plans And They're Looking For A Plan B

KFF NEWS – It's feeding time for the animals on this property outside Nashville, Tennessee. An albino raccoon named Cricket reaches through the wires of its cage to grab an animal cracker, an appetizer treat right before the evening meal. "Cricket is blind," said Robert Sory, who is trying to open a non-profit animal sanctuary along with his wife, Emily. "A lot of our animals come to us with issues."

The menagerie in Thompson's Station includes Russian foxes, African porcupines, emus, bobcats, and some well-fed goats.

The Sorys are passionate about their pets and seem to put the animals' needs before their own.

Both Robert and Emily started 2026 without health insurance.

Robert had been covered through a marketplace plan subsidized through the Affordable Care Act. His share of the monthly premiums was \$0. When he looked up the rates for 2026, he saw that a barebones "bronze"-level plan would cost him at least \$70 a month. He decided to forgo coverage altogether.

"When you don't have any income coming in, it doesn't matter how cheap it is," he said. "It's not affordable."

Dumping Coverage

Marketplace plans from the Affordable Care Act no longer feel very affordable to many people, because Congress did not extend a package of enhanced subsidies that expired at the end of 2025. Last week, the House did pass legislation to extend the expired subsidies, and negotiations have moved to the Senate. Without a deal, an estimated 4.8 million will go without coverage this year.

But even without a health plan, people will still need medical care. Many, like the Sorys, have been thinking through their plan B to maintain their health.

The Sorys both lost jobs in November, within days of each other. Robert worked as a farmhand. Emily worked at a staffing firm and lost her insurance along with her position.

"It's a horrible, horrible market right now. Really tough," she said.

The first time she had to pay out-of-pocket for her three monthly prescriptions, the cost was \$184.

"To equate that to kind of how we think about it, you're talking about 350 pounds of food for these animals," Robert said. He pointed to his bobcats, who eat only meat.

Workarounds for the Newly Uninsured

To keep kibble in the food bowls, the Sorys are prepping for an uninsured future. They see the same psychiatrist and met with him to make a plan. He was willing to work with them by charging \$125 per visit. They'll have to go every three months to keep their prescriptions current.

And if other medical problems emerge? They're hoping for the best.

"I'm not somebody who gets sick super often, thank God," Robert said. "And if I do, generally I go to an emergency room where they're going to bill me later." Robert said he would arrange a repayment plan for bills like that.

Emily has costly health conditions and has already taken on substantial medical debt. "It's just sitting there, and I've racked up money," she said. "But I've had to go to the doctor."

Donated Drugs and Sliding Scales

Hospitals and clinics are bracing for the influx of newly uninsured patients. They're also concerned that people won't know about alternative ways to get medical care.

"We don't have marketing dollars, so you're not going to see big billboards or radio ads," said Katina Beard, CEO of Matthew Walker Comprehensive Health Center in Nashville. It's one of the country's 1,400 federally qualified health centers, also called FQHCs.



FQHCs are partially funded by the federal government. Although they do not usually offer free care, their fees tend to be lower or on a sliding scale.

Uninsured people who get care receive a bill, Beard said, "but the bill will be based on their ability to pay." FQHCs often have on-site phar-

macies, and some offer prescription medications free of charge through a partnership with the Dispensary of Hope, a Nashville-based nonprofit.

Many hospital pharmacies also partner with the nonprofit, which has distributed medication donated by pharmaceutical companies to 277 sites in 38 states. Participating

pharmacies must make the medicine available free of charge to people without insurance who have annual incomes below 300% of the federal poverty limit.

The organization primarily sources medications for chronic conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes, and mental health. Demand is expected to outstrip supply in the new year, according to CEO Scott Cornwell.

"We're projecting and engaging with our manufacturers and asking them, 'Are you willing to help support, for this future status that we are anticipating?'" he said. "By and large," he said, pharmaceutical companies have said they're willing to step up.

"It's a continuous conversation that we're having," Cornwell said.

A Medicaid 'Gap' in 10 States

Hospitals will also have to find a way to care for more patients who cannot pay. Industry groups such as the Federation of American Hospitals have been vocal about the threat to hospitals' financial health and have urged Congress to extend the

enhanced subsidies, which take the form of tax credits.

The impact might be most acute in states like Tennessee that have not expanded Medicaid to cover people who work but do not have job-based insurance and cannot afford it on their own.

Ten states have chosen not to expand Medicaid to uninsured, low-income adults — an optional provision of the ACA that is mainly paid for by federal funds.

This Medicaid "gap" is expected to cause uninsured rates to jump, at the high end of the spectrum, by as much as 65% in Mississippi and by 50% in South Carolina, according to the Urban Institute.

As Emily Sory pets a Russian fox, she admits she is keenly aware that she will soon become part of this growing population. After all, her last job involved health care staffing. Her mother is a nurse.

"I understand the system. And I get it's people like me that don't pay their bill are why it suffers. And I feel bad," she said. "But at the same time, I don't have the money to pay it."



THE GOLDEN YEARS

By Judykay Jefferson

MONEY MATTERS

When I talk with other African American seniors about money, I hear the same thing again and again: "I just want to make smart choices with what I have." And I feel that. At this stage of life, I'm not trying to gamble with my savings or chase the latest trend somebody's nephew mentioned at Thanksgiving. I want stability, clarity, and a return I can actually count on.

Over the years, I've learned that realistic investing isn't about being flashy. It's about choosing tools that protect your hardearned savings while still giving you a little growth. And the good news is, we have options that fit exactly where we are in life.

These days, I lean toward investments that don't jump around. High-quality bonds, CDs, and savings bonds fall into that category. They won't make you rich, but they will give you predictable income.

Bond: A bond is a loan you give to a government or company. They pay you interest over time and return your original amount — the principal — when the bond matures.

Keeping Cash Working

I used to think cash just sat there. Not anymore. With many banks offering competitive CD rates, even a small amount can grow without risk.

Certificate of Deposit/CD: A CD is a savings product where you agree to leave your money in the bank for a set period in exchange for a guaranteed interest rate.

Annuity: contract with an insurance company where you pay money upfront and receive regular income payments later, often for life.

Annuities — With Caution

Some seniors like the idea of guaranteed monthly income for life. I understand the appeal. But annuities can be complicated, so I always tell folks: don't sign anything until someone you trust explains it in plain English.

Stock: A share of ownership in a company. When the company grows, your investment can grow too — but prices can also fall.

Stocks — But the Calm Kind

Not daytrading; not "hot picks." This is keeping a small portion in broad index funds because the stock market, over long periods, has historically grown more than most other investments.

Index Fund: A collection of many stocks bundled together to match the performance of a market index (like the S&P 500). It spreads out risk and keeps costs low.

Staying Away from Hype

Every time I turn around, someone is talking about Bitcoin.

Bitcoin: A digital currency that isn't backed by any government. Its price can swing wildly — up one day, down the next.

Cryptocurrency: A digital form of money secured by computer code rather than banks or governments. Prices can be extremely unpredictable.

Even modest returns add up when you give them time.

It takes time to see a Return On Investment (ROI). ROI is a way to measure how much your investment has grown compared to what you originally put in.

This is the part nobody explains clearly, so I'll say it plainly. It is possible to see small returns within months, but meaningful, reliable growth usually takes 3–5 years.

In 0–12 months you may see your balance move — up or down — pretty quickly. That's normal. But these early changes are small and not the best measure of success. At 1–5 years this is when most people start to feel like, "Okay, I see what's happening now." Interest builds. Market ups and downs begin to smooth out. At 5+ years wise investing really shines. Compounding has time to work (Compound Interest: Interest that earns interest. Your money grows faster because each year builds on the last).

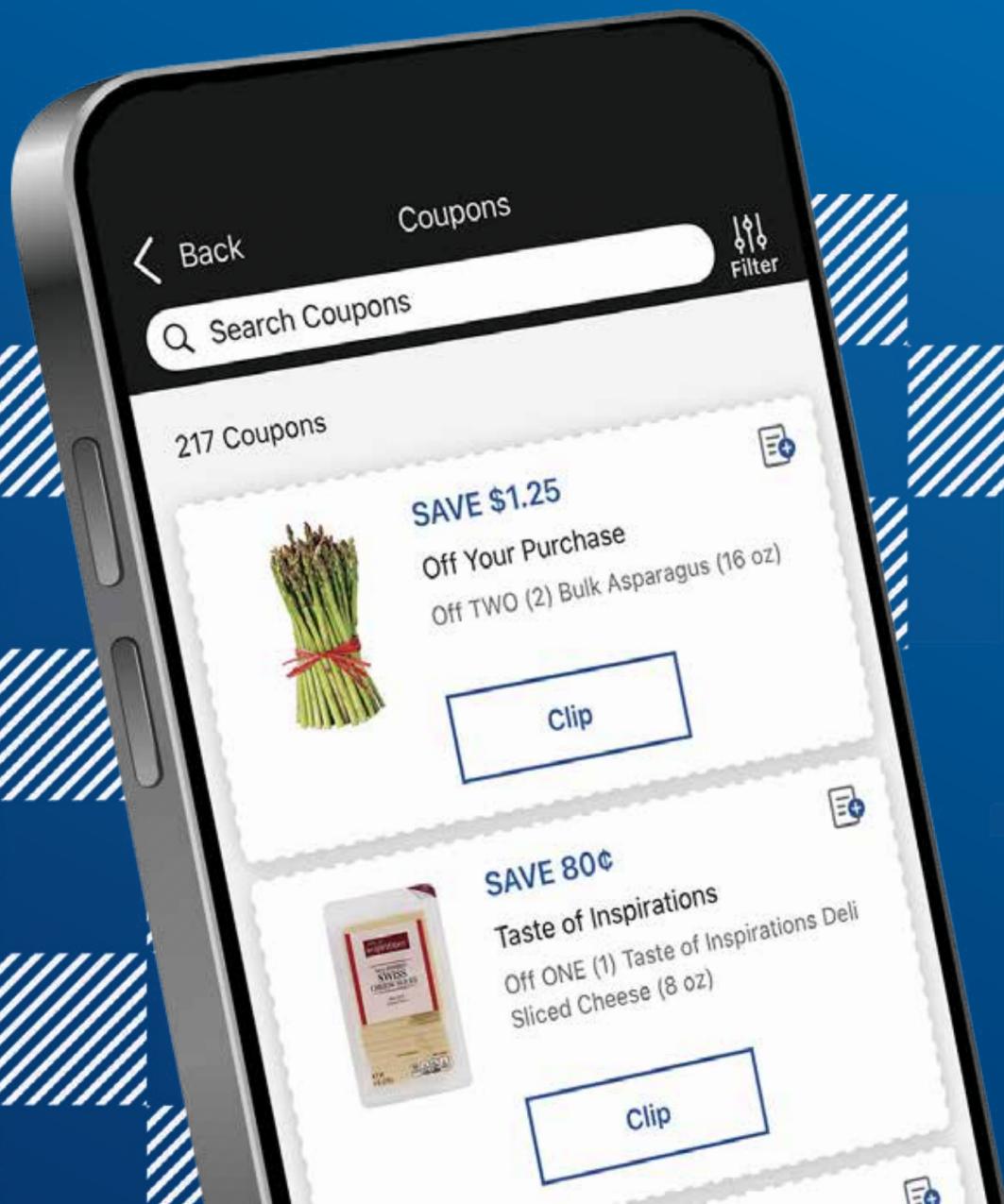
As African American seniors, we're often targeted by financial scams. I remind myself — and everyone I love — of a few simple rules:

- If someone promises "guaranteed high returns," that's a red flag.
- If you don't understand it, don't invest in it.
- If they pressure you to act fast, walk away.

At this stage of life, I'm investing for peace of mind. I want my money to support the life I'm living now — my home, my health, my family, my joy. And that means choosing investments that are steady, understandable, and aligned with my values.

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Arts & Culture

Statue of Black Teen Activist Replaces Robert E. Lee Image At U.S. Capitol

NATIONWIDE — The statue of Barbara Rose Johns, an African American civil rights leader who led a student strike at her segregated Virginia high school in 1951, now stands in the U.S. Capitol. It replaces a statue of Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee and honors her fight for equal education and lasting impact on American history.

According to CBS News, the unveiling in Emancipation Hall drew Virginia officials, members of Congress, and more than 200 of Johns' relatives. The Eastern Senior High School choir performed songs like "Ain't Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me 'Round," setting a celebratory tone for the historic moment.

At just 16, Johns led hundreds of her classmates at R.R. Moton High School in Farmville, Virginia, in a protest against poor school conditions. Their strike attracted NAACP lawyers, contributing to the Brown v. Board of Education case that ended school segregation in 1954.

The bronze statue shows Johns holding a worn book above her head beside a lectern. Its pedestal reads,

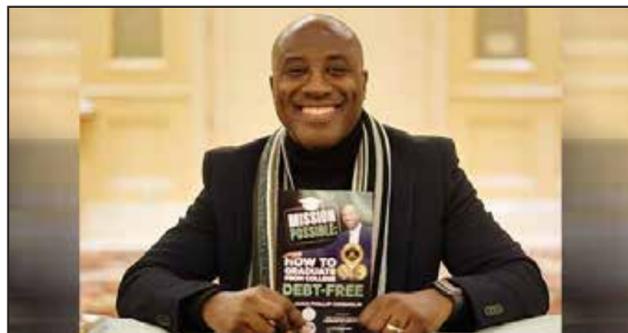


"Are we going to just accept these conditions, or are we going to do something about it?" and includes the Biblical line, "And a little child shall lead them." It symbolizes her courage and leadership at a young age.

The statue replaces the Robert E. Lee figure, which stood for 111 years before being removed in 2020 amid renewed attention to Confederate monuments. Virginia leaders said the change honors a true patriot who fought for justice rather than a figure tied to slavery.

Sculpted by Steven Weitzman, the statue now joins the National Statuary Hall Collection in the Capitol's Crypt, representing Virginia alongside George Washington. Visitors can see it as part of a larger display of 35 statues across the Capitol, celebrating influential Americans.

After her activism, Johns became a librarian, raised five children, and continued to make a quiet impact until her death at 56. Her story is remembered at the Virginia Civil Rights Memorial, and her former high school is now a museum and National Historic Landmark.



HBCU Grad Turned Award-Winning Author Recognized As Global Film Festival Winner

Nationwide — Dr. Juan P. Chisholm, an HBCU graduate and award-winning author of *Mission Possible: How to Graduate from College Debt-Free*, has been recognized with a Best Inspirational Short Film Award by the Global Film Festival in Los Angeles, California, for *The Mission Possible Book Award* documentary movie.

The documentary is based on the success of Dr. Chisholm's award-winning book, *Mission Possible: How to Graduate from College Debt-Free*. Additionally, the movie documentary encapsulates a remarkable story about hope, overcoming challenges, beating the odds, bouncing back after the loss of loved ones, and turning all that adversity into something positive, inspirational, and extraordinary.

Also, *The Mission Possible Book Award* movie uses archival photos and videos to bring the story to life, as Chisholm uses special moments from the past in photos and videos to showcase an even brighter light on the significance of the present-day successes. Also, viewers will experience the transformation from humble beginnings to being catapulted into international acclaim.

Moreover, having a film and a book both selected and recognized by the Global Film Festival is an incredible and remarkable accomplishment. It also is a testament to the overall impact of the award-winning book, *Mission Possible: How to Graduate from College Debt-Free*, as well as the truly inspirational nature of *The Mission Possible Book Award* movie as a 42-minute documentary film.

Movie Director and award-winning author, Dr. Juan Phillip Chisholm, shared that "One of my goals was to present my authentic story to inspire viewers to know that their dreams, goals, and aspirations are still possible, and even if you are the only one, you can still rise to the top and be successful."

The Mission Possible Book Award film has also received an Official Selection from the American Golden Pictures International Film Festival, was selected as a "Finalist" by the Independent Short Awards, and the film received the distinction of an Honorable Mention in the Feature Documentary 2025 category from the Hollywood Independent Filmmaker Awards & Festival.

Look At The Bright Side Of The Moon During Astronomy Days January 24-25

By Jheri Hardaway

Staff Writer

NASA's Artemis 2 mission is less than one month away and will send four astronauts on a 10-day trip around the moon, the first such mission in more than half a century. Find out more about Artemis 2 and the history of lunar explorations when the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences hosts Astronomy Days, Saturday and Sunday, Jan. 24-25, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. This free event gives space enthusiasts of all ages a chance to explore the wonders of the universe through technology, telescopes, engaging talks by scientists and special guests, and plenty of hands-on activities. The N.C. Museum of Natural Sciences is part of the N.C. Department of Natural and Cultural Resources.

RACIAL TERROR

Continued from page 1

abroad, the United States, he argued, permitted "one of the bloodiest outrages against mankind" at home. For many Black Americans, East St. Louis shattered any illusion that wartime rhetoric about democracy applied equally to them.

Just weeks later, another eruption of racial violence involving Black soldiers in uniform occurred. In August 1917, members of the all-Black 24th Infantry Regiment were stationed at Camp Logan near Houston, Texas, to guard wartime construction. Their presence in a rigidly segregated city governed by Jim Crow laws immediately heightened tensions.

Black soldiers endured racist taunts, segregated facilities, and repeated assaults by the all-white Houston Police Department. The breaking point came on August 23, when police arrested and assaulted a Black woman and then brutally beat and arrested a Black soldier who questioned the arrest. When Corporal Charles Baltimore, a military police officer, attempted to investigate, he too was beaten and shot.

Rumors spread through the camp that Baltimore had been killed and that a white mob was approaching. Fearing for their lives, 156 soldiers armed themselves and marched toward Houston. In the chaos that followed, they killed eleven civilians and five policemen.

In the largest murder trial in U.S. history, 118 soldiers were tried in three courts-martial. A total of 110 were convicted; 19 were executed and 63 were sentenced to life in prison. No white civilians were prosecuted, and two white officers charged were released. Decades later, in November 2023, the U.S. Army formally set aside all convictions, acknowledging that the soldiers had not received fair trials due to racism.

President Wilson portrayed Germany as the foremost violator of human rights and cast American intervention as a noble crusade against tyranny. Yet the unchecked racial terror of 1917 exposed the illusory nature of this moral argument. The war magnified racial divisions and radicalized Black political thought, forcing many Black Americans to confront the reality that their greatest oppressor was not overseas.

Judge dismisses Salt-N-Pepa's lawsuit to reclaim master recordings from UMG

NEW YORK (AP) — A federal judge has dismissed the pioneering hip-hop group Salt-N-Pepa's lawsuit to reclaim ownership of their master recordings from Universal Music Group.

U.S. District Judge Denise Cote on Thursday sided with the recording

giant, arguing that the Grammy-winning group never owned the copyrights to their sound recordings and didn't transfer them to anyone else.

"Plaintiffs can only terminate copyright transfers that they executed," the judge wrote. "None of

the contracts identified by Plaintiffs indicate that they ever owned the Master Tapes."

UMG argued that the recordings were "works made for hire," which would not allow for the reclaiming of rights. Salt-N-Pepa's lawsuit said their agreements with the label made

it clear that they were not.

"Even with the court's complete rejection of their claims, we remain open and willing to find a resolution to the matter and turn the page so we can focus our efforts on working together to amplify Salt-N-Pepa's legacy for generations to come," UMG said in a statement.

Representatives for Salt-N-Pepa said in a statement that they disagreed with the judge's decision and "fully intend to pursue our rights on appeal," adding: "We remain committed to vindicating and reclaiming our rights as creators under the Copyright Act."

The Queens, New York, duo of Cheryl "Salt" James and Sandra "Pepa" Denton became Salt-N-Pepa in 1985. They were later joined by DJ Spinderella, who was not part of the early agreements under dispute and is not involved in the lawsuit.

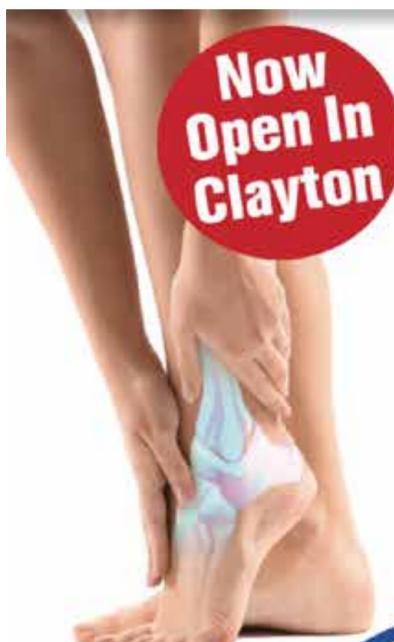
Salt-N-Pepa signed with Next Plateau Records and released their debut album "Hot, Cool & Vicious" in 1986. Next Plateau was an independent label at the time, and it's now under the banner of Universal's Republic label. Some of the group's hits include 1993's "Shoop" and 1987's "Push It."

In 1995 they became the first female rap group to win a Grammy, and in 2021, they received a Grammy lifetime achievement award. In November, they followed Missy Elliott as the second female hip-hop act in the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, handed the Influence Award.

At the podium during the induction ceremony, James noted the group's legal fight: "This is the Influence Award. We have to keep using our influence until the industry honors creativity the way the audience does — with love, respect and fairness."

In their lawsuit, Salt-N-Pepa claimed that the 1976 Copyright Act gives artists the right to reclaim ownership of master recordings and terminate past agreements after 35 years.

But the judge sided with UMG's argument that there is no evidence that James and Denton granted the label copyright that they can now reclaim.



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Mom, Maternal Health Advocate Sadly Dies At 30 From Birth Complications

Nationwide — Dr. Janel Green Smith, a South Carolina midwife and advocate for Black maternal health, died from complications during childbirth at just early 30s. She was a devoted professional, photographer, and mother, remembered for her work supporting Black families.

The American College of Nurse-Midwives called her death a "profound failure of the systems meant to protect birthing people." According to The Griot, they said it is both heartbreaking and unacceptable for a Black midwife to die after giving birth in the United States, highlighting systemic racism and gaps in care.

Known as a "Loc'd Midwife," Green Smith focused on supporting Black parents during early childhood. She partnered with HIVE Impact Fund, a nonprofit that offers resources for families, and used her platform to raise awareness about health disparities during Black Maternal Health Week.

She became a certified midwife in 2021 and earned her Doctor of Nursing Practice in 2024. Her journey included personal challenges, in-



cluding her mother's death in 2023, which briefly paused her studies. She shared on social media how faith and resilience helped her continue despite hardships.

Outside of midwifery, Green Smith pursued photography, capturing family portraits, baby announcements, and special moments. She often described herself as a "Certi-

fied Nurse Midwife catching babies & angles," blending her professional and creative passions.

Her sudden death has left the maternal health community in mourning. A GoFundMe has been set up to support her husband, Daquan, and their newborn, honoring her legacy and the lives she touched. It has so far raised over \$65,000.

Community

He Rebuilt The EPA With An Eye Toward Environmental Justice. Now, He's Watching It Come Down.

This article is adapted from reporting by Due South by WCCO. For more on U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Michael Regan, visit www.duesouth.com.



Environmental protection is inseparable from public health and civil rights, particularly for Black, Indigenous, rural, and low-income communities. In a wide-ranging conversation with Leoneda Inge on Due South, recorded in Durham, Regan reflected on how fragile those reforms can be when administrations change. He discussed the reality that environmental policy is often among the first areas reshaped by political ideology, even when the consequences directly affect people's health and safety.

Regan also spoke candidly about the emotional toll of watching programs he helped build face uncertainty. He noted that environmental



justice work has always been met with resistance, particularly when it challenges powerful economic interests or exposes long-standing inequities. Still, he emphasized that the movement predates his tenure and will continue beyond it, fueled by community advocacy and local leadership.

North Carolina remains central to Regan's perspective. Many of the environmental justice battles he encountered at the state level, from industrial pollution in rural areas to inequitable access to clean water, mirror national trends. He stressed

that these are not isolated issues but systemic ones that require sustained commitment beyond election cycles.

As he looks ahead, Regan framed the current moment not as an ending, but as part of a longer struggle. Policies may be weakened or reversed, he said, but the data, legal frameworks, and community awareness built during his time at the EPA cannot be easily erased. For Regan, the challenge now lies in ensuring that future leaders and organizers continue pushing for an environmental system that protects everyone, not just the most powerful.

Raleigh Native Jerolyn Rose Brown Earns PH.D.

Norfolk, VA – On September 8, 2025, Jerolyn Rose Brown successfully defended her dissertation to earn the Ph.D. in Instructional Design and Technology from the Darden College of Education & Professional Studies at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, VA, on December 13, 2025. Dr. Brown's dissertation title is "Marginalized Pre-Service Teachers' Digital Competence: An Exploration of Epidemic Beliefs and Lived Experience."



A native of Raleigh, NC, Dr. Brown is the daughter of Jerome and Gwendolyn B. Brown and the granddaughter of the late Lovelace and Bessye Malone Burwell and Andrew and Ella Mae Brown. An honor graduate from Southeast Raleigh High School and the University of NC at Greensboro,

she also earned advanced degrees at UNCG and East Carolina University. Currently employed by the Apple Corporation, Dr. Brown is a specialist in Apple Professional Learning at Norfolk State University.

Appeal For Help: North Carolina Association of Educators of Wake County

By Jheri Hardaway

Staff Writer

Wake County Public School System is entering its 50th anniversary year. Serving more than 161,000 students across 203 schools, the work requires dedication and consistency to educate and inspire our future leaders. Superintendent Dr. Robert P. Taylor reported in the Greater Raleigh Chamber Business & Economy booklet that the class of 2025 included more than 12,600 graduates. Extraordinary things are happening, yet there are also calls for more support. According to the NC Association of Educators of Wake County, Wake County Schools have paid out \$1.3 million in special education settlements. Complaints are up, and so are the taxpayer dollars allocated for settlements. Change is necessary, and NCAE is organizing for productive change. Here are the core asks:

1. One additional behavior support position per school
2. Behavior support response teams at every school
3. Creation of a SPED Program Specialist/Coordinator role and funding for 100 positions
4. \$200 per month increase in SPED incentive pay
5. A guaranteed minimum of six hours for part-time SPED safety assistants and eight hours for full-time safety assistants
6. Reduced SPED caseload caps by five to ten below state minimums

Our public schools' special education programs are truly in crisis from the federal to the state, and down to the county level. Without intervention to improve conditions for our local workers and students, we are all at risk. When staff struggle, so does the process of teaching and learning for everyone involved. Our educators are stretched thin and continually asked to do more with less. Most recently, with the cellphone ban going into law, teachers are now being asked to police student phones on top of educating, dealing with mental health challenges, hunger, and countless other issues that only those who stand in the classroom for six to eight hours a day can truly understand. Do you want to stand with the teachers and demand more?

Join Wake NCAE at their Quarterly Mass Meeting on January 22nd, 5:30PM - 7:30PM at Pullen Memorial Baptist Church. Educators deserve better.

Denslo "Dee" Page and Backyard Gardening

By Jheri Hardaway

Staff Writer

Water, light, food, and air are the major keys, according to Denslo "Dee" Page. A breath of fresh air, and an avid gardener, Dee began gardening in 1978, mostly inside. She has plants nearing the ceiling that she has nursed for years. A vegetarian and health enthusiast Dee decided to begin growing food. Beginning in pots, she noticed her plants growing and thriving, so she moved on to garden beds. She now has three beds that are four by eight feet and was able to feed thirty families this past year. Just last year, her cucumbers were eight to nine inches long. She



contemplated entering competitions at the State Fair, but the produce didn't last until it was time to compete.

Lovingly known as the "Pepper Lady," Dee grows peppers of all kinds, tomatoes, cucumbers, yellow and green squash, sweet potatoes, okra, corn, green beans, peas, and eggplant, among others. Her expertise is vast, with suggestions like, "For my garden to be productive, I make sure that I feed the garden. So much is taken out of the soil for the vegetables that are produced. I mix new soil in with the old and worm castings." She suggests the Miracle-Gro garden feeder that attaches to the hose to ensure a thriving garden.

Dee mentioned feeling like a tourist attraction as people pass by and admire her garden. She begins in February with her seedlings, so sprouts are prepared for spring. One special tip she shared was "Only water the roots." She discussed, "how fruits cleanse, and vegetables heal. This helps to ignite papain in digestion." I asked Dee what gardening does for her mental health, "It gives me a lot of satisfaction to see plants grow! You get better and better every year. It doesn't get any fresher than this!" Are you ready to grow your own food? Grab an almanac and stay tuned to The Carolinian for more tips and insights from area farmers and hobby gardeners.

J.W. Ligon Reno Listening Session Held

By Karl Cameron

Special To The Carolinian

The J.W. Ligon Magnet Middle School Renovation Listening Session set for Jan. 8, 2026 came off as planned at the school's auditorium, beginning promptly at 6:00 p.m. Wake Public School Superintendent, Dr. Robert Taylor, was the host for the session, which was attended by nearly 100 interested persons, many of who were former students of the school when it was a senior high school. Dr. Taylor made a point to the attendees that on this evening he, staff, and two school board members were "there to listen and not answer questions. Additional key points Dr. Taylor made were that the word "Renovation" simply meant that funds had been designated for a project. He also said that there should have been a better job done of communicating to the public.

At that time he turned the microphone over to attendees to offer their input on the project. Currently the architect, LS3P, has three options on the table: Option 1: Renovation of Existing Building, Timeline 51 Months, Total Construction Cost \$102,317,529; Option 2: Build New School on Existing School Site, Timeline 56 Months, Total Estimated Construction Cost \$147,966,807; and finally Option 3: Build New School on existing Ballfield Site, Timeline 45 Months, Total Estimated Construction Cost \$121,845,232. The majority of the 20-attendees that came to the microphone favored Option 1 or Option 2, and two expressed the need for an Option 4. Dr. Taylor called attention to Option 3, which offered the possibility of an "alumni pavilion" for community gatherings and to honor the J.W. Ligon Jr./Sr. High School legacy. He went on to say that, "It is important to honor Ligon's History is a very



LIGON RENOVATION LISTENING SESSION HELD—Dr. Rober Taylor (right), Wake County Public Schools Superintendent, followed through on the first of listening sessions he promised regarding the Ligon Magnet Middle School Renovation on Thursday, Jan. 8th. Nearly 100 interested persons were in attendance at the session held in the Junior High School Auditorium. 20-presenters took the microphone, and voiced their opinions of the two hours session on three options presented to the Wake County School Board. Two of the presenters also suggested that a fourth option be developed. Tony Farrell Photos

real way." Daniel Coleman, Southeast Raleigh Building Contractor, was the evening's first presenter. He pointed out that Option 1 represents the lowest responsible bid, and went on to say that distinction matters, "a difference of \$20 Million in not insignificant. Those dollars could be used to restore longevity pay for our teachers, Contribute to fully funding the Leandro Plan, and help cap rising health insurance premiums", were some of his points. Coleman further said, "we should consider the concentration of magnet middle schools in downtown Raleigh, and explore expanding access across Wake County's 11 municipalities and unincorporated areas.

Coleman also urged attendees to look at the broader financial picture. "Wake Co. is contemplating a \$650 million school construction bond, while the City of Raleigh is consid-

ering a \$200 million housing bond within the same timeframe. That is nearly \$850 million in new bond debt that taxpayers, like you and me, are being asked to shoulder."

Bertha Young, J. W. Ligon Class of '71 urged listeners to "think outside of the box. In 5, 10, or 15 years many of us won't be here. We have the opportunity to use these funds to do better. Why wouldn't we want something better, newer?"

Carol Gartrell, J.W. Ligon Class of '65 said that she would favor Option 1 or 2, stating that others schools, citing Daniels and Broughton renovated where streets were wiped out to make it possible. Ms. Gartrell went on to say, "There is no figure that can replace history. We must weigh in on other interest like condos across the street. I prefer not to have to one day see a sign reading tis is where Ligon was."

An African-American Ligon Mag-

net Middle School parent said, "I'm excited for my daughter to come to a historic Black School. Ligon Magnet Middle School would not be Ligon without what came before it. This is not the first time that a historic Black School has been jeopardized."

Yvette Holmes said that a budget should be dedicated to a historic piece, and that a curriculum should be developed and taught. She also suggested that Chavis Heights should be connected. Ms. Holmes recommended a community planning group to provide input, and thought that group should be compensated.

Veronica Scott Johnson, the granddaughter of John Scott stated, "I'm a history buff and it ears me apart. I didn't want to leave Ligon to go to Sanderson. It wasn't the best situation, but I made the best of it.

(See J.W. LIGON P. 9)

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How AI Is Redefining Death, Memory And Immortality Digitally

THE CONVERSATION – Imagine attending a funeral where the person who has died speaks directly to you, answering your questions and sharing memories. This happened at the funeral of Marina Smith, a Holocaust educator who died in 2022.

Thanks to an AI technology company called StoryFile, Smith seemed to interact naturally with her family and friends.

The system used prerecorded answers combined with artificial intelligence to create a realistic, interactive experience. This wasn't just a video; it was something closer to a real conversation, giving people a new way to feel connected to a loved one after they're gone.

Virtual life after death
Technology has already begun to change how people think about life after death. Several technology

companies are helping people manage their digital lives after they're gone. For example, Apple, Google and Meta offer tools to allow someone you trust to access your online accounts when you die.

Microsoft has patented a system that can take someone's digital data – such as texts, emails and social media posts – and use it to create a chatbot. This chatbot can respond in ways that sound like the original

person.

In South Korea, a group of media companies took this idea even further. A documentary called "Meeting You" showed a mother reunited with her daughter through virtual reality. Using advanced digital imaging and voice technology, the mother was able to see and talk to her dead daughter as if she were really there.

These examples may seem like science fiction, but they're real tools available today. As AI continues to improve, the possibility of creating digital versions of people after they die feels closer than ever.

Who owns your digital afterlife?

While the idea of a digital afterlife is fascinating, it raises some big questions. For example, who owns your online accounts after you die?

This issue is already being discussed in courts and by governments around the world. In the United States, nearly all states have passed laws allowing people to include digital accounts in their wills.

In Germany, courts ruled that Facebook had to give a deceased person's family access to their account, saying that digital accounts should be treated as inheritable property, like a bank account or house.

But there are still plenty of challenges. For example, what if a digital clone of you says or does something online that you would never have said or done in real life? Who is responsible for what your AI version does?

When a deepfake of actor Bruce Willis appeared in an ad without his permission, it sparked a debate about how people's digital likenesses can be controlled, or even exploited, for profit.

Cost is another issue. While some basic tools for managing digital accounts after death are free, more advanced services can be expensive. For example, creating an AI version of yourself might cost thousands of dollars, meaning that only wealthy



people could afford to "live on" digitally. This cost barrier raises important questions about whether digital immortality could create new forms of inequality.

Grieving in a digital world
Losing someone is often painful, and in today's world, many people turn to social media to feel connected to those they've lost. Research shows that a significant proportion of people maintain their social media connections with deceased loved ones.

But this new way of grieving comes with challenges. Unlike physical memories such as photos or keepsakes that fade over time, digital memories remain fresh and easily accessible. They can even appear unexpectedly in your social media feeds, bringing back emotions when you least expect them.

Some psychologists worry that staying connected to someone's digital presence could make it harder for people to move on. This is especially true as AI technology becomes more advanced. Imagine being able to chat with a digital version of a loved one that feels almost real. While this might seem comforting, it could make it even harder for someone to accept their loss and let go.

Cultural and religious views on digital afterlife

Different cultures and religions have their own unique perspectives on digital immortality. For example:

The Vatican, the center of the Catholic Church, has said that digital legacies should always respect human dignity.

In Islamic traditions, scholars are discussing how digital remains fit into religious laws.

In Japan, some Buddhist temples are offering digital graveyards where families can preserve and interact with digital traces of their loved ones.

These examples show how technology is being shaped by different beliefs about life, death and remembrance. They also highlight the challenges of blending new innovations with long-standing cultural and religious traditions.

Planning your digital legacy
When you think about the future, you probably imagine what you want to achieve in life, not what will happen to your online accounts when you're gone. But experts say it's important to plan for your digital assets: everything from social media profiles and email accounts to digital photos, online bank accounts and even cryptocurrencies.

Adding digital assets to your will can help you decide how your ac-

(See **AI AND DEATH** P. 9)

Obituaries

CHARLES VERNON BROWN, JR.



On November 1, 1951, God sent us a devoted and passionate disciple, Charles Vernon Brown, Jr. He was welcomed with love by Charles Vernon Brown, Sr., and Lillian Coppedge Brown in Raleigh, NC. A loving big brother to his younger sister, Ann, he graduated from Enloe High School and then attended N.C. A&T State University where he played the drums in the Blue & Gold Marching Machine.

Charles enlisted in the U. S. Air Force and earned the Associates Degree in Electronics. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree in Interpersonal Communications from N.C. State University. He later received his Master of Divinity degree from the Shaw University Divinity School.

Family meant the world to Charles. To him, any time with family was time well spent. He was blessed to be united in marriage to Bonita Tillman on April 27, 1995. She lovingly welcomed his three children, and together they shared eight grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Charles worked in Human Resources for the State of North Carolina for over 10 years before establishing his own computer business. However, his true love was Ministry.

A strong Christian Disciple who loved serve the Lord, He served God through his church as an usher, Boy Scout Master, Sunday School Teach-

er, Discipleship Ministry Leader, Couples Ministry Leader, Deacon, Youth Minister and Minister of Outreach and Evangelism. Rev. Charles Brown was licensed to the Gospel ministry in December of 1990. The first moderator and administrator of Christian Faith Baptist Church, he served as an Associate Minister at Christian Faith until he was led to Pastorship at Wesleyan First Church of Deliverance in 1998.

In addition to his work within the churches he served, Charles was also a part of many religious organizations, including at one time serving as president of The Raleigh Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance and founding "Yes We Can Ministries." Rev. Brown also was the host of "CrossPrayers" on WCLY 1550 AM and "CrossPoint" on WAUG-TV

Digital Cable and RTN Cable Channel 22. He served Wesleyan for over 20 years until his retirement in 2019. Most passionate about leading others to Christ and to ministry, Rev. Brown led the Wesleyan Campus of New Life School of Ministry and Bible Institute. Many students graduated with the Master of Religion degree. He was instrumental in implementing foundational training for anyone who wanted to prepare for Kingdom work.

After a major health challenge in 2009, his strong faith helped him persevere. He knew that the Lord had a plan for him and that his story was a true testament to the miracles that the Lord can and will perform. He never complained about the hand he was dealt and tried to strengthen his body and mind every day.

On December 17, 2025, Rev. Charles Brown passed away, surrounded by his loving family. He was preceded in death by his wife, Bonita Tillman Brown, in April of 2023.

Left to cherish his memory are his beloved sister, Ann Brown; children, Charles Brown III (Melissa), Autumn Brown (Anthony), and Byron Brown, Sr.; grandchildren, Amber, Byron Jr., Ariana, Frederick, Charles, Alexandra, Cameron and Kayden; great-grandchildren, Robert and Leia, and a host of relatives, friends, and many people whose hearts and lives he touched. All are comforted by the fact that he has gone to be with the Lord and is no longer in pain.

Practical Biblical Principles

THE WISE AND THE FOOLISH Read: Matthew 25:1-13

By John L. Caldwell, Pastor
New Jerusalem Baptist Cathedral
Jesus departed the temple, having lamented over Jerusalem (Matthew 23:37) and being rejected by the multitude. Jesus went to the Mount of Olives with His disciples. The disciples began to ask Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will the things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming and at the end of the age?"

It was here on the mount that Jesus spoke the great Olivet Discourse. The subjects were "The signs of the times and the end of time, The great Tribulation, Then coming of the Son of Man, The parable of the fig tree, No One knows the day or hour, The faithful and evil servant, the Parable of the "Wise and foolish virgins," The Parable of the talents. And lastly, the Son of Man will Judge the nations. It was under the evening stars, and the cool evening breeze Jesus explained the entire scenario of the "end times" to His disciples.

One of the most interesting parables Jesus told was that of the "Wise and Foolish Virgins." The disciples understood this story simply because it was about the traditional Jewish wedding and how it was carried out.

The tradition starts when the bridegroom leaves his father's home to claim his bride. After a series of festivals and celebrations including the wedding, the couple would make their way, usually after sunset, to the bridegroom's home. Guests who wanted to accompany them in procession needed to bring lamps.

During the engagement period, the bridegroom is away from her preparing a home for her. This could take several months or more. The bride is in a waiting period not knowing when her new husband will come to claim her.

The unspoken part of the Jewish wedding is that it is the father of the bridegroom who gives the Son permission to get His bride. This permission is given only after the father gives approval of his son's home preparations for his bride. Now when the home is completed and with the father's approval, the bridegroom now travels to get his bride. Depending upon the distance the bridegroom travels, there is no specific time schedule upon the bridegroom's arrival. Therefore, the procession must wait for whatever time it takes for the bridegroom's arrival be it day or night.

The most important part of Jesus's parable was the procession of guests who would follow the wedding. Here Jesus, being a great storyteller, focuses upon the ten virgins who represented those striving for the Kingdom of Heaven. According to Jewish tradition, these virgins were to escort the bridegroom to his bride. The bride is waiting for her new husband to arrive, and the ten virgins are waiting outside the new home to escort the bridegroom to his new bride. Then the wedding celebration begins.

The oil is the symbol of the Holy Spirit. And the five wise virgins represent those who have the Holy Spirit (oil). The five foolish virgins represent those who have not truly been saved (Matthew 25:3). Believers cannot impart the Holy Spirit to those who are not truly saved. Each person must receive salvation for him/herself before it is too late.

The Groom arrives at the wedding's location and as soon as he is spotted, the announcement of his arrival is called out. In this case, it is just after night fall. The crowd is asleep waiting for the bridegroom to come and then follow him into the wedding. The crowd awakes. The first thing all the virgins did was to trim

their burning lamps. Not knowing how long the bridegroom would take to arrive, the wise virgins had taken some extra oil because nighttime was coming. The five foolish virgins, having trimmed their lamps, realized they would not have enough oil to last through the night, before entering the wedding celebration. The foolish virgins then asked the wise virgins to share their oil with them only to be denied. To do so would not allow the wise virgins to have enough oil for themselves to get to the wedding. The foolish virgins were told to go and buy some more oil for themselves. And as the foolish virgins went to purchase additional oil, the wedding party entered the wedding location. The way Jesus tells the story this wedding appeared to be a large private wedding held inside of a secured location. The wedding party arrived, and the door was shut.

When the foolish virgins finally arrived at the wedding door, calling out to be let into the wedding, "Lord, Lord open to us!" The reply from the bridegroom (the Lord), inside the wedding celebration was, "Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you."

Having finished the parable, Jesus to His disciples, "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of man is coming." Jesus is implying there will be an indefinite period between His first and Second coming. We will all have to be ready!

The Lord of the household is not being rude when He denies entrance to the foolish virgins; He assumes those who really want to join in the festivities will be prepared.

It is not that Jesus is slow in coming back, but the truth of the matter is Jesus is giving us all the time needed to receive Him and prepare for His coming. God's silence is only the prelude of His coming.



Inter-Faith Food Shuttle with the support of Walmart and Sam's Club transferred the title of a high roof refrigerated van to Bishop-Elect William "Billy" Eli Ratcliff and the Lincoln Park Holiness Church on January 7, 2026 at the Vernon Malone Center for \$1, to God be the Glory!!!



SERMON of the WEEK



Who Do You Love?

By Dr. Derrick L. Sauls

Sermon Text: "So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonah, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs." John 21:15 KJV

There is something about breaking bread with others. As you sit there eating every morsel and sipping on your favorite drink, there is a calming effect for satisfying the body. However, at this dinner, it was not business as usual. Jesus had a serious question, and it involved love. He was asking Peter, "Who do you love? Of course, Peter was caught off guard. [You know how it is when you are trying to figure out how to answer the question and the spotlight is on you.] When you are in a relationship, you find yourself repeatedly asking the person, Do you love me?"

There are three points to take into consideration: 1) Jesus is preparing his disciples, to weather the coming storm. There is something about family love: it is not just a feeling; it is a commitment. Jesus told Peter, "If you love me, feed my lambs." Now here we sit, loving God and his son

Jesus, all one big happy family. The question was not "Do you like me?" It was not a letter with two boxes: check 'yes' or 'no'. It was not a Valentine's card where everyone in the class gets one. It was a direct question to find out who has our heart. Jesus knew that it would take some deep-down gut-wrenching love for his disciples to endure the future. We find in church leadership and family that true love must abound for the difficult days ahead. Today I ask you, who do you love?

Point 2 evaluates a world in which love has gone out of order. Romans 1:25 – "Who changed the truth of God into a lie and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen." We find that image is loved more than identity. I must keep the look, but when asked, "Are you one of them?" you deny Jesus. Survival is loved more than righteousness. I do not want to rock the boat or go against the grain. I will just fit in and go with the flow instead of standing on the promises of Jesus. Hustle is loved more than holiness. I need the hook-up; let me check out the system. How can I get over, instead of believing trouble does not last always. Stepping out on God's word to the utmost, Jesus saves and endures in his love. We think we are living and loving right, but in Proverbs 14:12 NKJV – "There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death." This scripture lets us know that we do not need to be amongst the walking dead. Who do you love? The enemy is at the gate trying to take everything you love: broken family structures, celebration of self-destruction in music and media, substance abuse and responses due to trauma, distrust of institutions, violence normalizing death, spiritual apathy mixed with religious familiarity, just to name a few.

Do you love God or the systems and survival mechanisms formed by the creature?

Point 3 is amazing because in John 14:15-16 – "If ye love me keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever." Jesus loved us and left the "Spirit of Truth". In that truth, we find love and devotion; love is not emotion, love is not culture, it is obedience. What happens when your emotions change? What happens when the culture changes? Do you still love? Who do you love? There is a Godly mandate that we reorder love, get back to that first love, the butterflies in the stomach, the tears of joy, and a serene peace within our souls. It is true that we protect what we love, and if we love God, we will:

(1) Protect our children and not sacrifice them to the streets.

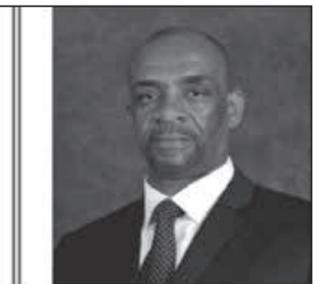
(2) Honor our elders, and not overlook their wisdom.

(3) Treat our bodies as temples, and not as disposable property.

(4) As we obey God's will, build families, and followers of Christ.

We have survived, but it is not like salvation. When we genuinely love God, our lives will be transformational, and in obeying his word, we will see miracles and healing. All these things happen when we walk in righteousness and love. We do not have to deny Jesus, for today his love will have purpose as he replaces the pain. There will be healing to replace the hatred, and unity to replace the division. Who do you love? One day, he heard my cry, and I found the song: "I love the Lord."

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.

INDIVISIBLE: PART THREE PROJECT CAPE FEAR

By Jheri Hardaway

Staff Writer

Recently, I was visiting the state library. Some books you can check out, and some live there at the library. The state library is such a valuable resource. I've met inspiring and informative people there, bonded with librarians over our shared history, and, above all, uncovered facts and documents that change the way I look at our world. On a recent trip to the library, I found a book that I reviewed in a previous edition of The Carolinian titled Angier North Carolina From An African American Perspective. I fell in love with this book, however I am boycotting purchasing from Amazon as much as possible. Until Amazon shares more of its massive profit with employees and treats warehouse workers with dignity, I am committed to shopping local. So I thought, how can I buy this book without Amazon and even better I wondered if I could buy this book from the state library. When the book became due, I asked a librarian this very question. She looked at me perplexed. I asked again, "Would it be possible to pay for this book instead of returning it?" She expressed that that was not an option, and I shared that I felt it should be.

So this is my suggestion, in efforts to keep local revenue amongst the people of North Carolina in place of Amazon, how about a statewide library initiative to sell books to citizens? I would not mind paying more to ensure libraries profit from these transactions. I'd like to call it Project Cape Fear, since that is the river that runs near us. I've never actually seen the Amazon River, but I feel a natural connection to the Cape Fear River. Project Cape Fear could inject much-needed capital into our library system and create revenue for more community programming. Have you ever fallen in love with a library book? Would you buy books from your local library? Let me know your thoughts Jheri@caro.news.

We Must Finish the Work Dr. King Died Doing

To honor Martin Luther King Jr. honestly is to remember that he was organizing to make the dream real—and to decide whether we are willing to carry that dangerous, unfinished work forward.

By Ben Jealous

This year, let's honor Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday by remembering his final mission—and by picking up the mantle he left behind.

Every year, America remembers a dream. But the work that placed Dr. King in the greatest danger was not dreaming. It was organizing to make the dream real.

Dr. King was assassinated in Memphis in April 1968 while supporting striking sanitation workers and preparing to launch the Poor People's Campaign. He was there because he had come to understand something fundamental about American life: that racism and economic exploitation are intertwined, and that neither can be defeated without confronting both.

He was not killed while leading a desegregation battle in a northern suburb. He was killed while trying to unite economically struggling Americans across racial lines around shared demands for dignity, wages, and opportunity.

When that unity fails—when workers and the poor are kept divided—the consequences are not abstract. Wages stagnate. Healthcare becomes conditional. Food insecurity spreads quietly. People turn on one another while decisions that shape their lives are made far out of reach. Division does not just weaken movements; it deepens suffering.

The Poor People's Campaign was designed to confront that reality directly. King envisioned a coalition of poor people drawn from many communities—Black and white, Native American, Latino, Asian American, and other communities pushed to the margins—coming together to demand economic rights that democracy had long promised but rarely delivered.

History reveals a pattern we are often reluctant to name.

In the United States, one of the most dangerous roles a leader can take on is the work of uniting poor and working people across racial lines—especially when that unity threatens systems that depend on division to function.

Fred Hampton understood that early.

Most people remember Hampton only as a Black Panther, frozen in time at age 21, killed during a pre-dawn police raid in Chicago in December 1969. But before joining the Panthers, Hampton first gained recognition as a teenage organizer in the NAACP. As a youth leader, he showed a rare ability to mobilize people, build coalitions, and translate moral clarity into action.

That instinct carried forward.

As a Panther leader, Hampton helped build the original Rainbow Coalition—bringing together the Black Panthers, the Puerto Rican Young Lords, and the Young Patriots Organization, made up largely of poor white Appalachian migrants. In one of his most consequential public moments, Hampton stood at a press conference alongside William "Preacherman" Fesperman, a leader of the Young Patriots, to declare that poor and working people had more in common with each other than with the forces exploiting them.

That image—Black, brown, and white organizers standing together, unapologetically—was the point.

Less than a year later, Hampton was killed by Chicago police in a pre-dawn raid.

The same pattern appears, with devastating clarity, in the lives of Harry and Harriette Moore.

Harry Moore was the founding president of the Florida NAACP and one of the most effective organizers the association ever produced. Under his leadership, Black voter registration in Florida surged despite poll taxes, intimidation, and violence. He fought for equal pay for Black teachers and worked closely with labor and progressive allies, believing racial justice and economic justice could not be separated.

Harriette Moore was not simply his wife. She was an organizer, educator, and strategist who sustained the work under constant threat.

Despite Harry Moore's effectiveness, he was never elevated into the national leadership of the NAACP. The historical record offers no single explanation. What it does show is that his work—rooted in voter power, labor solidarity, and interracial organizing—placed him at extraordinary risk in the Jim Crow South.

On Christmas night in 1951, a bomb exploded beneath their home in Mims, Florida. Both Harry and Harriette Moore would die from their injuries. Their crime was not extremism. It was effectiveness.

Malcolm X's life followed a similar arc. After returning from Mecca in 1964, he spoke and wrote about encountering a brotherhood that crossed racial lines. His politics remained complex and uncompromising, but the direction was unmistakable: away from race as destiny and toward coalition as possibility. Within a year, he was assassinated.

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X@afbranco T@afbranco



DUPED BY OUR OWN EYES?

Kristi Noem stated last year that anyone who is a citizen of this country or who is here legally has nothing to fear. She also said that Immigration and Customs Enforcement has jurisdiction only over immigration matters. ICE does not possess general police powers. Its agents do not have authority to stop vehicles at will. They must have reasonable cause to believe a vehicle contains an undocumented immigrant. They cannot detain a person without reasonable cause to believe that person is undocumented, nor can they detain a U.S. citizen simply for being present in an area. They may not draw their weapons unless there is reasonable cause to believe their lives are in immediate danger.

Those principles were abandoned last week in order to justify the actions of ICE, when an unarmed 37-year-old U.S. citizen, Renee Good, was accused of committing domestic terrorism. Renee Good was not merely shot. She was killed. She was killed by Jonathan Walsh, a veteran ICE agent.

That accusation was the first official response, not only from ICE, but from the President and Vice President of the United States and others within the administration. They have further claimed that the agent involved has absolute immunity. What we are witnessing is not accountability, but the rewriting of facts to fit a predetermined narrative. Once again, the victim is portrayed as the aggressor, and the perpetrator is reframed as the victim.

The president claimed the agent was run over by her vehicle and hospitalized, expressing surprise that he survived. Responsibility was shifted to Democrats and the political left, accusing them of inciting violence. Yet neither Democrats nor the left shot anyone. We are once again being asked to believe that our eyes and ears are lying. Disturbingly, many people are repeating these claims even after viewing video evidence.

Abraham Lincoln is often quoted as saying that the people are the rightful masters of Congress and the courts, not to overthrow the Constitution, but to overthrow those who would pervert it. The Constitution protects the right of citizens to protest unjust government actions. It also affirms that when government denies people their rights, citizens have a duty to resist injustice.

Few violations are more serious than an administration asserting the right to arrest and deport human beings without due process, and then killing a citizen who stands in the way. It does not get more serious than that.

We are now standing at a dangerous precedent of government lawlessness. When ICE is deployed into American cities, particularly those led by the opposition party, and that occupation results in the death of a citizen, the danger is unmistakable. When the FBI overrides state authority and excludes states from investigations occurring within their own jurisdictions, the integrity of those investigations cannot be trusted.

As African Americans, we have lived with government revisionism for generations. What is different now is the expanding scope. The willingness to use lethal force is no longer confined to marginalized communities. It is being extended to anyone who does not comply. I agree with the term domestic terrorism, but not as it has been applied to Renee Good. Domestic terrorism is the deliberate creation of fear through violence or threat of violence in order to intimidate and control a population. Historical examples include Oklahoma City, January 6, and September 11. ICE raids function in this way. The fact that agents wear masks instead of hoods and are paid rather than volunteering does not make their actions less intentional. The objective is fear, compliance, and submission.

No healthy person wants to die for these realities. Still, we are called to stand against evil. If we do not, we risk sliding into internal conflict on our own soil. Our strongest nonviolent response remains participation in democracy, voting those who abuse power out of office.

We must pay attention to contradictions and refuse to be misled by words that do not align with actions. This administration demonstrates a desire to dominate and control, not only its own citizens, but other nations as well. Trump has openly threatened retaliation against corporate leaders who disagree with him and has spoken about denying access to resources that do not belong to him. He has discussed taking Greenland, confronting Iran, and excusing the killing and intimidation of protesters.

We are living in a moment many never imagined. But when a nation elects a man who encouraged violence, threatened his own vice president, and built a political strategy rooted in intimidation and grievance, the outcome should not surprise us.

This is not only about Trump. It is also about those who support him and those who have been deceived by him. Long after he is gone, they will remain here, carrying the consequences of what they chose to excuse, believe, and defend.

AI AND DEATH

Continued from page 8

counts should be managed after you're gone. You might want to leave instructions about who can access your accounts, what should be deleted and whether you'd like to create a digital version of yourself.

You can even decide if your digital self should "die" after a certain amount of time. These are questions that more and more people will need to think about in the future.

Here are steps you can take to control your digital afterlife: Decide on a digital legacy. Reflect on whether creating a digital self aligns with your personal, cultural or spiritual beliefs. Discuss your preferences with loved ones. Inventory and plan for digital assets. Make a list of all digital ac-

counts, content and tools representing your digital self. Decide how these should be managed, preserved or deleted.

Choose a digital executor. Appoint a trustworthy, tech-savvy person to oversee your digital assets and carry out your wishes. Clearly communicate your intentions with them.

Ensure that your will covers your digital identity and assets. Specify how they should be handled, including storage, usage and ethical considerations. Include legal and financial aspects in your plan.

Prepare for ethical and emotional impacts. Consider how your digital legacy might affect loved ones. Plan to avoid misuse, ensure funding for long-term needs, and align your decisions with your values.

Digital pyramids

Thousands of years ago, the Egyptian pharaohs had pyramids built to preserve their legacy. Today, our "digital pyramids" are much more advanced and broadly available. They don't just preserve memories; they can continue to influence the world, long after we're gone.

J.W. LIGON

Continued from page 7

It was a great loss when Ligon was converted to a junior high school. My main concern is that Ligon's history be preserved. I favor Option 1 or 2, and these needs to be a track field and a stadium."

Bryan Dozier said he personally favors Option 3. Mr. Dozier holds church services at the Magnet Middle School. He went on to say we must keep the history alive. "This is not only a physical place, but a state of mind."

Dorothy Shaw Thompson pointed out, "History is important, so we don't repeat it! Ligon should have stayed a Senior High School. Ms. Thompson went on to reference a number of its notable graduates, and say Ligon needs to stay the shining light on the hill." She also emphasized that the Ligon History must be taught." In closing Ms. Thompson urged don't repeat the cycle of the money not being spent on the preservation of the school over the years.

Former St. Augustine's University President, Dr. Everett Ward, felt compelled to speak. Dr. Ward referenced the nurturing he received from his parents. He recalled that his mother was in the first J. W. Ligon High School class, and his father was a Washington High graduate. He went on to reflect on the rich cultural tradition that existed at the then senior high school reflected in the plays, debate clubs, and the band, which he listened to from his grandparents' State Street home. Dr. Ward concluded, "We must fight to keep Ligon on the Hill!"

We talked to J. W. Ligon Alumni President, Toney Bethea, at presstime. He commended Mr. Coleman's presentation, but suggested a fourth option that would call for a mobile campus offsite. Bethea pointed out this would eliminate noise pollution, and the distraction from learning that construction can cause. Furthermore the funds spent on the mobile units would be a long term investment, since that could be used at other schools.

Another concern Mr. Bethea raised was the lack of timeliness in making the alumni, as well as the community aware of the dates, times, and places of the listening sessions. Dr. Taylor said at the Nov. 24th Listening Session at Southeast Raleigh YMCA that the schedule would consist of sessions on Jan. 8th and Jan. 17, 2026. He also went on to say that on Jan. 31st and Feb. 7th or 8th 2026 he would like to meet with J.W. Ligon Alumni Classes of the 60s, 70s, 80s, and 90s to determine, "How we honor the Ligon Legacy." We have no time or location for the upcoming Jan. 17th meeting at press time.

MLK EVENTS

Continued from page 1

This Black History Month, the Fuquay-Varina Black History Stakeholders Group, in partnership with the Town of Fuquay-Varina, invites you to a powerful panel discussion exploring the integration of our schools.

"Inspirations in Integration" features individuals who lived through the opening of Fuquay-Varina High School in 1975 and earlier steps toward integration in our community. Hear firsthand accounts of the struggles, resilience, and powerful leadership that emerged during this pivotal time. Discover how integration shaped the lives of students, teachers, and families in our town.

Be inspired by stories of a significant chapter in our community's history and discover the strength and courage that defined a generation.

Join us on Sunday, February 22nd at 2:00 PM at the Fuquay-Varina Arts Center, 123 E. Vance Street, Fuquay-Varina, NC. Tickets at \$10 each and can be purchased at www.FVArts.org.

HOLLY SPRINGS

In January, the community is invited to participate in a meaningful weekend of events dedicated to celebrating the enduring legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., fostering unity, and promoting service. The Town also begins a celebration of Black art and culture that will last into early March.

Holly Springs MLK Jr. Committee Activities on Sunday, Jan. 18
2:30 p.m. March from Oak Hall Commons
3:30 p.m. Presentation at Cultural Center

The Holly Springs MLK Jr. Committee organizes a Unity Weekend that includes an annual march, which begins at the Oak Hall Commons shopping center and proceeds down Main Street to the Holly Springs Cultural Center. There, a ceremony includes reflection on Dr. King's vision. For details on all Unity Weekend activities, please visit the Holly Springs MLK Jr. Committee website.

Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service
Monday, Jan. 19, 9 a.m., Hunt Center

The Town of Holly Springs is hosting a creative and interactive service project at the W. E. Hunt Recreation Center. Join neighbors in the multipurpose room to complete a section of a giant paint-by-number mural, transforming collaboration into a piece of community art. This location holds special significance, as the Hunt Center is named in honor of W.E. Hunt, a former community leader and principal of the school for Black children that once stood on this site. Preregistration is required for this free program to ensure adequate supplies; secure your spot.

Classifieds

CURRITUCK COUNTY

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
CURRITUCK COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

RE: THE ESTATE OF MARY JEAN SMITH – 25E000251-260

Having qualified as Administrator of the Estate of MARY JEAN SMITH, deceased, Currituck County, North Carolina, the undersigned does hereby notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the estate of said deceased to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 8th day of April, 2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. This the 8th day of January, 2026.

Charles Smith, Executor
DSR Legal, PLLC
PO Box 51596
Durham, NC 27717
1/8, 1/15, 1/22, and 1/29/2026

DURHAM COUNTY

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

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

File Number 26E000052-310

THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 13th day of January 2026, as EXECUTOR of the Estate of BARBARA A. REED, 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 16th day of April, 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 15th day of January, 2026.

Elizabeth Gualtieri-Reed, Executor
105 Hogan Glen Ct.
Chapel Hill, NC 27516

1/15, 1/22, 1/29, and 2/5/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF DURHAM

NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION

In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division

FILE NO.: 24SP001412-310

IN THE MATTER OF THE FORECLOSURE OF A DEED OF TRUST EXECUTED BY ANGELA RENEESIMPSON DATED JANUARY 13, 2004 AND RECORDED IN BOOK 4248 AT PAGE 641 IN THE DURHAM COUNTY PUBLIC REGISTRY, NORTH CAROLINA.

TO: Jennifer Simpson-Rogers
3004 Ivey Wood Lane
Apt. 219

Durham, NC 27703; and
Jamie Allen Bowen
2001 Keotuk Court
Apex, NC 27523

Take notice that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above action. The nature of the relief being sought is as follows: Petitioner has filed a Petition to for Surplus Funds.

You are required to make defense to such pleading no later than the 24th day of February, 2026, which is 40 days from the first publication of this notice. Upon your failure to file a pleading by the above date, party seeking service against you will apply to the Court for the relief sought.

This the 15th day of January, 2026.

Thomas K. Reardon attorney for Robert E. Levin, Petitioner
Haywood, Denny & Miller, L.L.P.
P.O. Box 51429

Durham, NC 27717
Telephone: 919-403-0000
The Carolinian: 1/15, 1/22, 1/29, and 2/5/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

FILE NO: 25E001317-310

In the General Court Of Justice
Superior Court Division
Before The Clerk

ESTATE OF AURIEL CIMONE LOWE
ADMINSTRATORS NOTICE TO CREDITORS

THE UNDERSIGNED having qualified as Administrator of the Estate of AURIEL CIMONE LOWE, Deceased, in the Office of the Clerk of Superior Court of Durham County, does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the said

Decedent to present the same to the undersigned on or before April 17, 2026, said date being at least three months from the date of the first publication or posting of this Notice as indicated below, or the same will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said Estate, please make immediate payment.

This Notice is given pursuant to the provisions of G.S. 28A-14-1.

This 15th day of January, 2026.
Name and Address of Administrator
Stephanie Thomas
29237 Garnet Canyon Drive
Santa Clarita, CA 91390
Name and Address of Attorney:
Steven Lundberg
1155 Kildaire Farm Rd, Ste. 204
Cary, NC 27511

Date of Publication: January 15, 22, 29 and February 5, 2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

The undersigned, Carl A. Harris, having duly qualified as Executor of the Estate of ANNIE H. COOPER, deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, hereby notifies all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the Estate to present them to the undersigned in care of Ronald G. Coulter, Attorney for the Estate, 3400 Croasdaile Dr., Ste 205, Durham, NC 27705, on or before April 17, 2026 or it will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons and legal entities indebted to the Estate will please make immediate payment. This the 15th day of January, 2026.

Carl A. Harris, Executor
C/O Ronald G. Coulter, Attorney
3400 Croasdaile Drive Ste 205
Durham, NC 27705
1-919-246-5775
Publication Dates: 1/15, 1/22, 1/29, 2/5/2026.

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF DURHAM

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

The undersigned, having qualified as Executor of the Estate of CATHERINE C. ASCOTT AKA CATHERINE CHAVIOUS ASCOTT, 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 16th day or April, 2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment.

Dated Januay 15, 2026.
Ashley Ascott Ahlers, Administrator
c/o Attorney Heather Hazelwood
PO Box 61182
Durham NC 27715

1/15, 1/22, 1/29, and 2/5/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF DURHAM

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

All persons, firms and corporations having claims against KATHLEEN DIANE CALLAHAN, deceased, of Durham County, NC, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 16th day of April 2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment.

This the 15th day of January 2026.
Peggy K. Callahan, Limited Personal Representative
c/o Trusts and Estates Law Group
4141 Parklake Avenue, Suite 310
Raleigh, NC 27612

1/15, 1/22, 1/29, and 2/5/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF DURHAM

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

The undersigned having qualified as Limited Personal Representative of the Estate of JOHN PHILLIP BENNETT, 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 17th day of April, 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 15th day of January, 2026.

Simone Bennett, Limited Personal Representative
Estate of John Phillip Bennett, Deceased
Robert A. Idol, Esquire
IDOL LAW, PLLC
Attorney at Law
PO Box 51759

Durham, NC 27717
(919)401.5151
1/15, 1/22, 1/29, and 2/5/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division

Before the Clerk

File Number 25E001163-310

THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 3rd day of September 2025, as EXECUTOR of the Estate of GEORGE WHITLEY BOLDEN, 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 16th day of April, 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 15th day of January, 2026.

Lesley Ruth Bolden, Executor
620 Wellingham Drive
Durham, NC 27713

1/15, 1/22, 1/29, and 2/5/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION

In the Superior Court

File Number 25CV013616-310

KATRINA BROWN, Plaintiff v. MELVIN SIMMS and wife LENA SIMMS, Defendants.

TO MELVIN SIMMS AND LENA SIMMS:

Take notice that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above-entitled action. The nature of the relief being sought is as follows: To quiet title and for adverse possession of the property located at 1008 Lancaster Street, Durham, North Carolina, parcel identifier 100419.

You are required to make defense to such pleading no later than forty (40) days after the date of the first publication of the notice of service of process. Upon your failure to do so, Plaintiff will apply to the court for the relief sought.

This the 15th day of January, 2026.

Christopher M. Vann
Vann Law Firm, P.A.
9912 Monroe Road, Suite 201
Matthews, NC 28105
Telephone: (704) 845-6050
Facsimile: (704) 845-1662

E-mail: chris@vannlawfirm.com
1/15, 1/22, 1/29, and 2/5/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION

In the General Court of Justice,
District Court Division

File No. 25CV010244-310

[CHILD CUSTODY PROCEEDING]
Debra & Douglas Brinkley,
Plaintiffs v. Unknown Father,
Defendant.

To Unknown father of a male child born to Crystal Wheeler on May 10, 2021, in Durham, Durham County, North Carolina:

TAKE NOTICE that a pleading seeking relief against you have been filed in the above-entitled action. The nature of the relief being sought is as follows: that permanent sole legal custody of

Hayden Salmon, born May 10, 2021 be granted to Debra & Douglas Brinkley.

You are required to make defense to such pleading no later than February 24, 2026, said date being forty (40) days from the first publication of this notice, and upon your failure to do so the party seeking service against you will apply to the court for the relief sought.

This, the 15th day of January 2026

Kayla Chargois, JusticeMatters, Inc. Attorney for the Plaintiff
P.O. Box 199
Durham, NC (919) 794-7511
January 15th, 22nd, and 29th 2026

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

25E001535-310

Having qualified as the Executor of the Estate of Allan K. Troxler, late of Durham County, North Carolina, the undersigned does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the estate of said decedent to exhibit them to the undersigned in care of the attorney for the estate, Colin K. Austin, Law Office of Colin K. Austin, PLLC, 128 W. Margaret Lane, Hillsborough, NC 27278, on or before the 9th day of April, 2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons, firms and corporations indebted to the said estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.

Kate T. Mitchell, Executor
Attorney for the Estate:
Colin K. Austin
Law Office of Colin K. Austin
128 W. Margaret Lane
Hillsborough, NC 27278

1/8, 1/15, 1/22, and 1/29/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Having qualified as Executor Administrator CTA of the Estate of ANN GAIL MURCHISON JOHNSON, deceased, of 4408 Berini Drive, Durham, Durham County, North Carolina 27705, the undersigned does hereby notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the estate of said decedent to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before 9th day of April, 2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

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

This the 8th day of January 2026.
Jeffrey L. Austin
Executor Administrator CTA
Law Office of Jeffrey L. Austin
PLLC
500 Westover Dr. #32043
Sanford, NC 27330

1/8, 1/15, 1/22, and 1/29/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division

File Number 25E001454-310

THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 15th day of December 2025, as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of JULIE ALLISON HARRISON, 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 9th day of April, 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 8th day of January, 2026.

Charles Benjamin Harrison Jr.
c/o Sonya Linton
Magnolia Legal
3001 Academy Rd, Suite 120
Durham, NC 27707
1/8, 1/15, 1/22, and 1/29/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division

Before the Clerk

File Number 25E001249-310

THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 30th day of December 2025, as ANCILLARY EXECUTOR of the Estate of LYDIA RUTH BLUNT A/K/A RUTH BLUNT, A/K/A LYDIA R. BLUNT, late of Kings County, NY, 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 9th day of April, 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 8th day of January, 2026.

Marvin M. Reina, Ancillary Executor
2445 Park Avenue Unit 18
Bridgeport, CT 06604
1/8, 1/15, 1/22, and 1/29/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division

Before the Clerk

File Number 25E001566-310

THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 31st day of December 2025, as EXECUTOR of the Estate of ELSIE OAKLEY STANFORD, 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 9th day of April, 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 8th day of January, 2026.

Genise Morris Fowler, Executor
c/o Anne Page Watson PLLC
3400 Croasdaile Dr.
Durham, NC 27705

1/8, 1/15, 1/22, and 1/29/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division

Before the Clerk

File Number 24-E-338

THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 8th day of March 2024, as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of CURTIS HOLLOWAY, 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 9th day of April, 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 8th day of January, 2026.

Trena Jones, Administrator
1406 Raspberry Run
Graham, NC 27253

1/8, 1/15, 1/22, and 1/29/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division

Before the Clerk

File Number 25E001257-310

THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 8th day of March 2024, as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of WILLIAM LEONARD BUTTERFIELD, 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 persons indebted to the Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned at the below listed address.

This, the 8th day of January, 2026.

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

In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division

Before the Clerk

File Number 25E001492-310

THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 24th day of December 2025, as CO-EXECUTORS of the Estate of AGNISH POOLE, 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 on or before the 9th day of April, 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 8th day of January, 2026.

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

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 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.

Brendan Hugh O'Donnell, Executor
c/o Moeller & Smith, PA
607 Broad St.
New Bern, NC 28560

12/25/2025, 1/

DURHAM COUNTY

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

LENOIR COUNTY

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
LENOIR COUNTY
RE: THE ESTATE OF CHARLES COLE – 25E001580-530
Having qualified as Administrator of the Estate of CHARLES COLE, deceased, Lenoir County, North Carolina, the undersigned does hereby notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the estate of said deceased to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the day of 15th day of April, 2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. This the 15th day of January, 2026.
David Scott Russ, Administrator
DSR Legal, PLLC
PO Box 51596
Durham, NC 27717
1/15, 1/22, 1/29, and 2/5/2026

ORANGE COUNTY

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
ORANGE COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File Number 25E000780-670
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 5th day of January 2026, as EXECUTOR of the Estate of SANDRA SNEED JOSEPH, late of Orange 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 16th day of April, 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 15th day of January, 2026.
Bruce Michael Joseph, Executor
c/o Richard F. Prentis, Jr.
4 Consultant Pl.
Durham, NC 27707
1/15, 1/22, 1/29, and 2/5/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
ORANGE COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File Number 25E000066-670
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 29th day of October 2025, as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of ROLIN GHOLAM MAINUDDIN, late of ORANGE 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 2nd day of April, 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 1st day of January, 2026.
Christopher Hill, Administrator
311 E. Main St.
Durham, NC 27701
1/1, 1/8, 1/15, and 1/22/2026

HARNETT COUNTY

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
HARNETT COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File Number 24E000392-420
Having qualified as Executor of the Estate of IRWIN CLAUDE BENJAMIN, deceased, of 240

Rock Harbor Lane, Spring Lake, Harnett County, North Carolina, the undersigned does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the Estate of said Decedent to exhibit them to the undersigned at Steven Benjamin, c/o Susan Harman-Scott, Attorney at Law, PLLC, P. O. Box 1593, Nags Head, NC 27959, on or before the 8th day of April, 2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons, firms and corporations indebted to the said Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.
This the 8th day of January, 2026.
Steven Benjamin
c/o Susan Harman-Scott
Attorney at Law, PLLC
P. O. Box 1593
Nags Head, NC 27959
(252) 573-8248
1/8, 1/15, 1/22, and 1/29/2026

WAKE COUNTY

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
All persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the HILDA JANE HARPER, deceased, of Wake County, NC are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before April 20, 2026 or this notice will be pleaded in bar or recovery.
Debtors of the decedent of the Estate are asked to make immediate payment. This the 20th day of January, 2026.
Gwendolyn Kathy Riggs, Executor
Estate of Hilda Jane Harper
5050 Pender Road
Shalotte, NC 28470
Jan 22, 29, Feb 5, & 12, 2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF WAKE
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
ESTATE OF JAMES RANDOLPH FULLWOOD
FILE NO 25E004348-910
All persons, firms and corporations having claims against JAMES RANDOLPH FULLWOOD, deceased, of Wake County, NC, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before April 16, 2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This the 15th day of January, 2026. Ernest B. Fullwood, Jerelene Fullwood-Carver, and Lorenzo Keith, Co-Executors, c/o Blue LLP, 205 Fayetteville St, Suite 300, Raleigh, NC 27601. The Carolinian, 1/15, 1/22, 1/29, and 2/5/2026.
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY
COMPLAINT TO ENFORCE POSSESSORY LIEN ON MOTOR VEHICLE
In The General Court Of Justice
District Court Division
Small Claims
File No. W
ANTHONY WILSON, Plaintiff VS.
UNKNOWN VIN: 136177A181112, 1967 CHEVROLET, Defendant
TO UNKNOWN OWNER:
TAKE NOTICE the petitioner has filed with the clerk a petition in proper form indicating that the petitioner has a valid lien against a 1967 CHEVROLET, ID No. 136177A181112 and that the petitioner shall have the right to sell to the highest bidder the motor vehicle listed on February 11, 2026 at WCCH, 316 Fayetteville St., 3rd Floor, Raleigh, NC 27601, at 1:30 p.m. You are required to make a defense to such pleading before such date and time.
This the 15th day of January, 2026.
Anthony Wilson, Plaintiff
13100 Callens Ln.
Willow Spring, NC 27592
1/15, 1/22, and 1/29/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY
NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION
In the General Court of Justice
District Court Division
File No. 25CV000889-910
To: JESSICA MADDEN, Defendant.
TAKE NOTICE that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above entitled action. The nature of the relief being sought is as follows: The Plaintiff has filed a COMPLAINT FOR JUDGMENT FOR ABSOLUTE DIVORCE. You are required to make defense to such pleading no later than February 19, 2026 said

date being at least thirty (30) days from the first publication of this Notice, and upon your failure to do so, the Plaintiff, ERIN MADDEN, will apply to the court located at 316 Fayetteville St., Raleigh NC 27601 for the relief sought.
This, the 15th day of January, 2026.
Erin Madden, Plaintiff
933 Rand Street
Smithfield, NC 27577
1/15, 1/22, and 1/29/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File Number 25E002418-910
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 25th day of August 2025, as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of MARY ALICE POTEAT TRAPP, 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 9th day of April, 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 8th day of January, 2026.
Cynthia Poteat Brandon
Administrator
12677 Talon Drive
Zebulon, NC 27597
1/8, 1/15, 1/22, and 1/29/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF WAKE
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
Having qualified as Executor of the Estate of Louis Randolph Barbee, deceased, this is to notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the Estate of LOUIS RANDOLPH BARBEE to present them to the undersigned on or before the 9th day of April 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons, firms, and corporations indebted to said Estate, please make immediate payment.
This the 8th day of January, 2026.
Linda C. Evans, Executor

c/o John W. Perry, Attorney of the Estate of Louis Randolph Barbee
Post Office Drawer 2051
Durham, North Carolina 27702
Telephone: (919) 683-8685
1/8, 1/15, 1/22, and 1/29/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
File Number 25E001464-310
Having qualified as Executor of the Estate of EDWARD LOWELL THOMAS, JR. aka EDWARD L. THOMAS, JR. deceased in Wake County, this is to notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to present them, duly verified, to the undersigned at 5108 Curriegan Court, Fuquay Varina, NC 27526 on or before the 8th day of April, 2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said Estate will please make immediate settlement with the undersigned.
This the 8th day of January, 2026.
Donna R. Thomas, Executor
5108 Curriegan Court,
Fuquay Varina, NC 27526
File # 25E002984-910
1/8, 1/15, 1/22, and 1/29/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY
NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION
In the General Court of Justice
District Court Division
File No. 24CV021463-910
To: CHARLENE DOUGLAS, Defendant.
TAKE NOTICE that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above entitled action. The nature of the relief being sought is as follows: The Plaintiff has filed a COMPLAINT FOR JUDGMENT FOR ABSOLUTE DIVORCE. You are required to make defense to such pleading no later than February 9, 2026 said date being at least thirty (30) days from the first publication of this Notice, and upon your failure to do so, the Plaintiff, THERESE MCCULLERS, will apply to the court located at 316 Fayetteville St., Raleigh NC 27601 for the relief sought.
This, the 9th day of January, 2026.
Therese Mccullers, Plaintiff

2702 Verde Dr. Apt. D
Raleigh, NC 27603
1/8, 1/15, and 1/22/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY
NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION
In the District Court Division
File No. 25CV037854-910,
Alcerro v. Sanchez
To: CRISTIAN J. BANEGAS SANCHEZ
Take notice that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above-entitled action. The nature of the relief being sought is for child custody. You are required to make a defense to such pleading no later than February 17, 2026, said date being at least forty (40) days from the first publication of this Notice, and upon your failure to do so, the Plaintiff, SINDY G. POLANCO ALCERRO, will apply to the court for the relief sought.
This, the 8th day of January, 2026.
Yvonne Armendariz, Esq
Attorney for Plaintiff
Armendariz Law Office, PLLC
6110 Lake Wheeler Road
Raleigh, NC 27603
Office: (919) 656-1524
Yvonne@armendarizlaw.com
1/8, 1/15, and 1/22/2026
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

MECKLENBURG COUNTY

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
MECKLENBURG COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File Number 25E004303-590
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 13th day of January 2026, as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of BARBARA JONES HANKS, late of Mecklenburg 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 16th day of April, 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 15th day of January, 2026.
Thomas Myers, Administrator
30 North Gould Street, Suite R
Sheridan, WY 82801
1/15, 1/22, 1/29, and 2/5/2026

Classifieds

SEEKING INDIVIDUALS AND BUSINESSES

Woda Construction INC is constructing a single building, 50 unit community (consisting of one and two bedroom units). This project is known as Iris Ridge. We are seeking qualified Section 3 individuals and business concerns to fill various new hire positions and subcontracting contracts for a variety of trades. On the job training will be provided to the right candidate if necessary. If interested, please contact Grayson Johnston at (984)399-5500 or gjohnston@wodagroup.com by January 30th 2026.

SEEKING DBE/WBEs

Woda Construction INC is constructing a single building, 50 unit community (consisting of one and two bedroom units). This project is known as Iris Ridge. We are seeking qualified DBE/WBE individuals and business concerns to fill various new hire positions and subcontracting contracts for a variety of trades. On the job training will be provided to the right candidate if necessary. If interested, please contact Grayson Johnston at (984)399-5500 or gjohnston@wodagroup.com by January 30th 2026.



ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS

The North Carolina Department of Adult Correction has the following contract in McDowell County out for bid: C- C11831 Marion FA Replacement . The bid opening is scheduled for: Tuesday, 02/17/2026 . To obtain the Notice to Bidders, any Pre-Bid Requirements, and any Addenda visit: <https://evp.nc.gov/solicitations/details/?id=067ff40d-8ded-f011-8407-001dd80a67c90>

D/M/WBE

SUBCONTRACTORS/SUPPLIERS WANTED

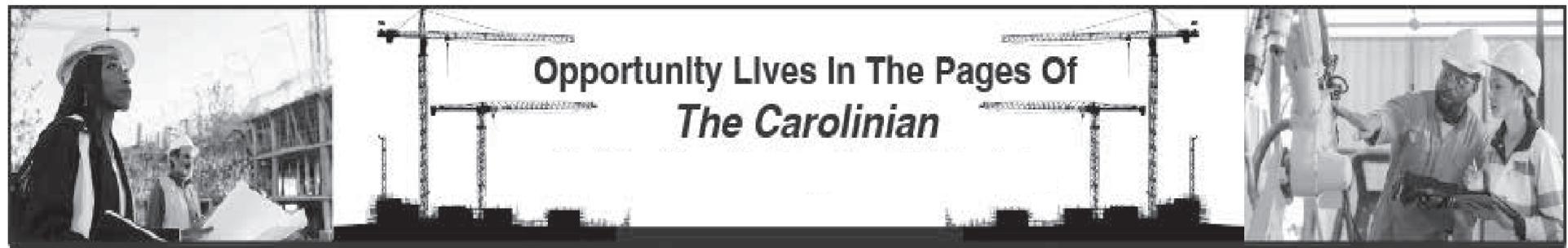
T. A. Loving Company (NC General Contractor License No. 325) is seeking certified DBE, MBE, and WBE subcontractors and suppliers for the Phase V Annexation Project XV Construction Area 32 East Section II project for the Fayetteville Public Works Commission which bids on January 28, 2026, at 2:00 PM. Plans and specifications for this project are available at the following locations: T. A. Loving Company; 400 Patetown Road; Goldsboro, NC 27530 * Fayetteville PWC Procurement website * Fayetteville State University Construction Resource Office website * ConstructConnect (formerly iSqFt) website * NC Institute of Minority Economic Development (NCIMED) website.

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

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

WANTED WBE, MBE & DBE BIDS

for the following job:
ECU Health Medical Examiner Complex-BP3100 Sitework
Bid# 24220 Pitt Co. Bid Date: January 22nd
These projects may involve some or all of the following aspects of construction: construction survey, clear and grub, trucking, drainage, milling, paving, incidental concrete, fence and guardrail, signs, structures, traffic control, utilities, signals, pavement marking, erosion control and seeding.
Bids can be emailed to stw.quotes@stwc.com
Please contact S. T. Wooten at 252-291-5165,
Fax 252-243-0900 no later than 5:00 p.m. the day before the bid date.



Sports

Forty Years On, Did Proposition 48 Protect US College Sports, Or Did It Just Continue To Punish Black Athletes

THE GUARDIAN – Tony Rice noticed the looks and smirks during his first week of freshman classes in the fall of 1986 at Notre Dame.

He had accepted his fate a few months earlier when standardized test results led to the decision that he would not be eligible to participate in collegiate sports his freshman year. But nothing prepared him for this.

“People were looking at me,” Rice says. “They knew I was a football player and they knew why I wasn’t playing. I’m sure they were thinking, ‘Why is he here when he can’t cut it at Notre Dame academically.’”

Tuesday marks the 40th anniversary of Proposition 48, approved by member schools of the National Collegiate Athletic Association, which tied freshman athletic eligibility to minimum grade-point averages and standardized test scores. Four decades later, Proposition 48 remains one of the NCAA’s most controversial decisions – a policy its architects said would protect academic standards but which critics viewed as a blunt instrument that disproportionately punished Black athletes and students from underfunded schools. The rule barred hundreds of freshmen from competition based on test scores that many educators questioned as measures of college readi-

ness, forcing athletes like Rice to sit out while facing stigma on campus. Though the policy has since evolved, its legacy still shapes debates over standardized testing, racial equity, and who gets to define merit in college athletics.

Rice wasn’t alone in that stigma. In the fall of 1986, 401 recruits were ineligible to compete that season under the new rule. In football, 81% of players ruled ineligible were Black, according to the NCAA. These student-athletes arrived on campuses as recruited prospects but were immediately marked as academic failures, unable to practice with teams or suit up for games, their scholarships intact but their status uncertain.

“It was kind of hard to sit out that year after playing sports my whole life,” Rice says. “There were three other guys at Notre Dame who had to sit out. We encouraged each other to do our best.”

The NCAA said it was trying to improve the academic perception of its student-athletes. The road to Proposition 48 began in the early 1980s when a series of academic scandals – including revelations that some athletes were graduating functionally illiterate – pressured the NCAA to act. Led by the American Council on Education and college presidents



Michigan State tailback Levi Jackson trots down the sideline for the game-winning touchdown with just 3:30 to play in the Spartans' 16-13 upset of Ohio State on Nov. 9, 1974.

concerned about the integrity of their institutions, the reform movement culminated in January 1983, when delegates at the NCAA convention in San Diego voted 427–93 to approve new academic standards.

The NCAA adopted the proposal, setting minimum requirements: a 2.0 grade-point average (on a 4.0 scale) in 11 core courses and a minimum score of 700 on the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) or a minimum score of 15 on the ACT.

NCAA member schools implemented Proposition 48 on 13 January 1986, and it went into effect with the fall freshman class that year.

But the new policy quickly drew criticism because it disproportionately affected Black student-athletes. While Black students made up roughly 25 percent of Division I athletes in major sports, they accounted for more than 80 percent of those barred under Proposition 48 in its early years. The SAT score

requirement of 700 – later raised to 820 – hovered near the national average at the time, yet still eliminated disproportionate numbers of Black recruits, particularly those from under-resourced schools in the South and inner cities.

The criticism was swift and fierce. Civil rights leaders, educators, and coaches argued that standardized tests were culturally biased measures that had long been used to exclude Black students from educational opportunities.

The NAACP and the National Alliance of Black School Educators condemned Proposition 48, arguing it would reduce opportunities for Black students without addressing the root problem: unequal K-12 education. They pointed to research showing that standardized tests often under-predicted the college success of Black students, who frequently performed better academically than their test scores suggested.

“Proposition 48 appears to be racially discriminating legislation, but it’s actually an economic discriminatory practice,” says Gary “Doc” Sailes, an author and sport psychologist. “Plenty of studies have proven that. It affects poor Blacks, poor females, poor whites and poor Asians. My research also disclosed that the higher the income in a county, the higher the tax base, the more resources that are available for education.”

Supporters of Proposition 48 pushed back, arguing that without minimum standards, colleges were exploiting athletes and setting them up for failure. They pointed to athletes who left school without degrees, unprepared for life after sports. The debate, they insisted, wasn’t about access but about accountability – for both athletes and the institutions recruiting them.

The NCAA made changes. In 1992, the organization replaced Proposition 48 with Proposition 16, introducing a sliding scale that allowed students with higher GPAs to qualify with lower test scores – and vice versa. A student with a 3.5 GPA, for example, could be eligible with an SAT score as low as 620, while a student with a 2.0 GPA would need at least 1,010.

The NCAA continued tweaking the requirements over the next two decades. In 2003, it raised the number of required core courses from 13 to 16. In 2016, it increased the minimum GPA to 2.3 for Division I athletes. Each adjustment was presented as a step toward higher academic standards.

But the landscape around Proposition 48 was shifting in ways its architects never anticipated. By the 2020s, more than 1,800 colleges and universities had made SAT and ACT scores optional for admission, citing the same concerns about bias and inequity that critics had raised decades earlier. The Covid-19 pandemic accelerated that trend, with even elite institutions such as Harvard and Yale modifying their test-score requirements.

The NCAA, however, still requires standardized test scores for initial eligibility.

Four decades later, the question remains: did Proposition 48 achieve what it set out to do?

The NCAA points to improved graduation rates as evidence of success. In 1984, just 52% of Division I football players graduated within six years. By 2023, that number had climbed to 81% for players who entered college in 2016. Men’s basketball showed similar gains, rising from 41% to 90% over the same period.

Since 2002, Black student-athlete graduation rates have increased from 56% to 82% in 2023. When analyzed by sport, Black Football Bowl Subdivision student-athlete graduation rates rose from 54% to 82%, and from 46% to 84% for Black men’s basketball players. For Hispanic/Latino student-athletes the graduation rate rose from 64% to 89% and the rate for all student-athletes went from 74% to 91%.

But researchers caution against drawing a direct line from Proposition 48 to those improvements. The rise in graduation rates across higher education during that period may relate to expanded support services, tutoring programs, and greater attention to student retention. Many academic support systems for athletes today, such as study halls, academic advisors, and progress tracking, emerged not because of Proposition 48, but as schools worked to help admitted athletes succeed.

Among those who proved doubters wrong was Rice, who said the situation Proposition 48 put him in helped him in the long run. Sitting out his first year became an unexpected gift. Without the demands of practice and games, he immersed himself in his studies, determined to prove that the test score that sidelined him did not define his capabilities.

“Academically, I had something to prove to my critics and to myself,” Rice says. “Sitting out that first year gave me opportunities other football players didn’t have. I was able to develop relationships with other members of the student body that wouldn’t have happened if I was playing football my first year. It was a blessing.”

Rice became eligible as a sophomore. After a solid junior year, he guided the Fighting Irish to an undefeated 12–0 season, which included victories over Michigan, USC, and Miami. He ended the season with a national title – the school’s most recent one – he received the Johnny Unitas Golden Arm Award and finished fourth in Heisman Trophy voting.

He achieved a higher goal after the football season. He earned his degree in Psychology.

“Graduating was important because I didn’t want to let my mother, grandmother, or anyone affiliated with me down,” says Rice, who now works in insurance for the Howden Group. “I didn’t want to be considered a failure. If I’m out in public and someone’s hating on my school, I just show them my ring and tell them, ‘I got two things you don’t have – a national championship and a Notre Dame degree.’”

Panthers’ Made Return To The Playoffs And Rekindled The Hope In Charlotte

By Jordan Meadows

Staff Writer

It had been eight long years since the Carolina Panthers last played a postseason game, and nearly a decade since the franchise ruled the NFC South. Saturday evening, that drought officially ended.

Matthew Stafford and the Los Angeles Rams survived a dramatic 34–31 thriller against the Panthers, using a late 71-yard touchdown drive to advance to the divisional round. Still, the loss did little to diminish the significance of the moment.

Despite finishing 8–9, tied with two other NFC South teams, the Panthers won critical tiebreakers. In the process, Carolina became the only team in NFL history to make multiple playoff appearances with a losing record. The Panthers have not had a winning season since 2017, but they obtained their highest win total this year since then.

The playoff game itself mirrored the Panthers’ rollercoaster season: Carolina fell behind 14–0 in the first half but clawed back relentlessly. After battling back to take the lead twice, the Panthers appeared on the brink of a signature upset late in the fourth quarter. A blocked punt ignited a touchdown drive that gave Carolina a 31–27 lead and sent Bank of America Stadium into a frenzy.

But Stafford’s three-touchdown performance—despite an interception—culminated in the season-saving drive that ended Carolina’s run.

Panthers quarterback Bryce Young, whose future has been the subject of heavy scrutiny after uneven late-season performances, delivered his strongest statement when



it mattered most. The former No. 1 overall pick threw for 264 yards and a touchdown, while also rushing for 24 yards and another score, proving he could go punch-for-punch with an elite veteran.

The Panthers did face adversity up front. Left tackle Ikem Ekwonu exited early with a knee injury and did not return, while right guard Robert Hunt briefly left with a pectoral injury before returning in the second half.

The playoff berth capped a dramatic turnaround for a franchise that, entering the season, had only one team with a longer postseason drought than Carolina: the New York Jets.

The return to relevance coincides with a reshaped front office and

coaching staff. Dave Canales was hired as head coach on Jan. 25, 2024, becoming the seventh head coach in franchise history. Just days earlier, on Jan. 22, Dan Morgan was named President of Football Operations and General Manager after serving three seasons as assistant GM. Together, Canales and Morgan are tasked with stabilizing a franchise long defined by turnover, and maximizing the promise shown during this improbable playoff run.

At a sold-out Q&A put on by The Charlotte Observer, Panthers legends from the 2016 Super Bowl team reunited to celebrate the 10-year anniversary of the season that redefined football in the Carolinas. Luke Kuechly, Greg Olsen, Thomas Davis, Julius Peppers, Steve Smith, Jona-

than Stewart, Ryan Kalil, Kurt Coleman, Josh Norman, and former head coach Ron Rivera were among those extensively interviewed. The Q&A panel following the premiere also featured long snapper J.J. Jansen — the lone remaining player from that team still active with the Panthers in 2025.

One notable appearance at the game, beating the ceremonial “Keep Pounding” drum, was Superman himself: 2015 NFL MVP Cam Newton.

Newton, the face of the 2015 team and the franchise’s most iconic player, did not participate in the documentary. Still, Kuechly strongly defended his former quarterback and expressed confidence that Newton’s relationship with the organization will eventually heal.

“He’ll be back,” Kuechly said. “I think it’s just one of those things that’s gotta work out timing-wise.”

Newton has publicly voiced frustration in recent months, noting on his “4th and 1” podcast that he didn’t see photos of himself displayed prominently at Bank of America Stadium and was hurt not to be included in the Panthers’ trip to Germany alongside other legends. Kuechly said he hopes Newton returns to Charlotte for more public appearances, reinforcing the bond forged during the Panthers’ golden era.

Former wide receiver Jerricho Cotchery, longtime team president Danny Morrison, and former North Carolina governor Pat McCrory were also among the 250 attendees who filled two sold-out theaters – a reminder of how deeply the Panthers’ success once resonated beyond the field.

Shaw Women’s Basketball Defeats Lincoln University 65–54



RALEIGH, N.C. — The Shaw University women’s basketball team earned a strong 65–54 victory over Lincoln University in a regular-season CIAA matchup on January 8, 2026, showcasing depth, defensive pressure, and timely scoring in front of a home crowd.

Shaw guard Leasia Matthews (12) set the tone in the second half, repeatedly pushing the pace and attacking the lane. Matthews was a consistent force in transition, driving the ball

down court and finishing through contact as Lincoln attempted to slow Shaw’s momentum. Her aggressive play energized the Bears and helped maintain control during key stretches of the game.

The Bears continued to apply offensive pressure with Arianna Lopez (0), who converted multiple strong drives to the basket against the Lincoln defense. Lopez’s ability to finish at the rim kept Shaw’s offense balanced and forced Lincoln to collapse defensively,



opening passing lanes and second-chance opportunities.

Inside the paint, D’Ayzha Atkinson (3) provided a steady presence, navigating traffic and looking to distribute from the lane against Lincoln’s defenders. Shaw also capitalized on defensive stops, including a momentum-shifting steal by Sokhna Toure (24), who turned defense into offense with a fast-break push late in the second half.

Guard play remained a key factor throughout the contest, with Mikyah

Finley (1) helping to control tempo and advance the ball crosscourt under pressure. Shaw’s defensive intensity limited Lincoln’s scoring opportunities, particularly in the closing minutes, allowing the Bears to protect their lead and secure the win.

With the 65–54 victory, Shaw continues to build confidence in conference play, demonstrating balanced scoring, disciplined defense, and strong execution on both ends of the floor as the CIAA season progresses.



21-Year Old Makes History As The First Black Woman On The team USA Olympic Hockey Roster

Nationwide — Laila Edwards is set to make history after earning a spot on Team USA’s women’s ice hockey roster for the 2026 Winter Olympics in Italy. She will become the first Black woman to represent the United States in women’s ice hockey at the Olympic Games.

Edwards, 21, is a senior at the University of Wisconsin and was named to the 23-player roster for the Milano Cortina Games, scheduled from February 6 to February 22. According to Black Enterprise, Team USA announced the lineup on Friday, January 2, confirming her place in the historic group.

The Cleveland Heights native has risen quickly through the ranks of elite hockey. She joined the U.S. women’s national team at 19, becoming the first Black woman to do so, and continued breaking barriers the following year.

At 20, Edwards became the youngest American to win the Most Valuable Player award at the women’s hockey world championships. Her performance helped the United States secure its 11th world championship title last April. She also became the first Black woman to win an IIHF Women’s World Championship.

The Olympic selection brought an emotional response from Edwards. “It still hasn’t really kicked in yet. Getting that call is like a dream come true,” she said. “Always had dreams of playing in the pros, but the biggest dream was to go to the Olympics for sure.”

Edwards will join a roster filled with experienced players, including Alex Carpenter, Megan Keller, Taylor Heise, and Cayla Barnes, as Team USA prepares for another Olympic run.

As the Games approach, Edwards’ family is hoping to be in Italy to witness the moment. A GoFundMe campaign was launched to help cover travel costs, with a message stating, “We are asking for your help now so that we can be there to cheer Laila, to surround her with the love and support of family.” It has so far raised nearly \$19,000.