



With Food Prices Rising, Starting a Home Garden Can Help Stretch Your Budget

NORTH CAROLINA - As grocery prices continue to climb, more households are looking for ways to stretch their food budgets. One increasingly popular solution is returning to a traditional practice: growing food at home.

Agriculture experts say even a small backyard or container garden can help families supplement their grocery purchases with fresh vegetables and herbs. Universities across the country, including North Carolina State University, provide free research-based guidance to help beginners get started.

According to resources from NC State Extension, a home vegetable garden can produce a steady supply of fresh food throughout the growing season with the right planning and care. Their online guide, Home Vegetable Gardening: A Quick Reference Guide, offers practical advice for first-time gardeners.

Here are a few tips experts recommend for starting a productive home garden.

Start Small and Build Over Time
Beginning gardeners are often encouraged to start with a manageable space. A small plot, raised bed, or even a few large containers can produce a surprising amount of food. Starting small helps gardeners learn basic techniques without becoming overwhelmed.

Choose a Sunny Location
Most vegetables require at least six to eight hours of sunlight per day. Experts recommend choosing a garden location that receives full sun and has well-drained soil. Good sunlight is one of the most important factors for healthy plant growth.

Focus on High-Yield Crops
Some vegetables produce more food per plant than others. Crops such as tomatoes, cucumbers, beans, peppers, and zucchini are often recommended for beginners because they produce multiple harvests throughout the season.

Leafy greens like lettuce and spinach also grow quickly and can be harvested several times.



Prepare the Soil

Healthy soil is the foundation of a successful garden. Gardening experts recommend adding compost or organic matter to improve soil quality and provide nutrients for plants.

Good soil helps vegetables grow stronger and can reduce the need for fertilizers.

Plant According to the Season
Timing is also important. Different vegetables grow best during different parts of the year. Extension programs often provide regional planting calendars so gardeners know when to plant crops for the best results.

In North Carolina, warm-season vegetables such as tomatoes, peppers, and squash are typically planted in the spring, while cool-season crops like lettuce and broccoli grow well in early spring or fall.

Water Consistently

Vegetables need consistent watering to produce healthy harvests. Experts recommend watering deeply rather than lightly and making sure plants receive about an inch of water each week from rainfall or irrigation.

Mulch around plants can help retain moisture and reduce weeds.

Grow What You Already Eat
Another important tip is simple: grow foods your household already enjoys. Gardening can save money when it replaces produce you would normally buy at the grocery store.

Herbs, tomatoes, peppers, and salad greens are among the most commonly grown vegetables for home kitchens.

Additional Tips for a Successful and Budget-Friendly Garden
Use Raised Beds or Containers

For people with limited yard space, raised beds and containers are effective alternatives to traditional gardens. They can be placed in small yards, patios or balconies and allow gardeners to control soil quality more easily.

Practice Succession Planting

Succession planting means planting crops at different times so harvests continue throughout the season. For example, gardeners can plant lettuce every few weeks to ensure a continuous supply instead of harvest-

ing everything at once.

Save Seeds for Future Seasons
Saving seeds from successful plants can help gardeners reduce costs in future seasons. Crops like beans, tomatoes and peppers often produce seeds that can be collected and replanted the following year.

Grow What Your Household Eats
One of the simplest ways to make gardening cost-effective is to grow foods your family already buys regularly. Herbs, tomatoes, salad greens and peppers are commonly grown because they are frequently used in everyday meals.

Control Weeds Early
Weeds compete with vegetables for nutrients and water. Removing weeds regularly—especially early in the growing season—helps plants grow stronger and produce larger harvests.

Harvest Frequently
Many vegetables produce more when they are harvested regularly. Picking cucumbers, beans and tomatoes often encourages plants to continue producing throughout the season.



Wake Co. School Board Vote Goes Against "A School On The Hill"

By Karl Cameron

An Analysis

The long and winding road to the decision on the renovation of Ligon Magnet Middle School Building came to a bitter end for many Ligon alumni and community leaders on Tuesday, March 3rd, as the Wake County School Board voted to rebuild the school on the athletic field of the property. The decision came after a Tuesday afternoon work session, where board members heavily debated what to do to improve the school for the long-term and did not agree yet on a solution before the board's regular meeting and vote later that night.

Board Member Lynn Edmonds said she was still full of new questions and concerns, and suggested a special meeting for board members to think about what they had heard. Edmonds said, "I felt like we didn't have this discussion until today. Board chairman, Tyler Swanson, said he had already looked at the calendar and didn't think there was any available room for any further discussion, and he urged a vote for Tuesday night."

The board voted that Tuesday night after an hour and a half discussion. Board member Toshiba Rice commented, "When I constantly hear about the options, when we talk, it basically is set in stone", which obviously was the case as Wake County Public School Superintendent, Robert Taylor, has all along supported Option 3, which was to rebuild the school on the ballfield.

The entire decision making process was flawed by a lack of openness to Raleigh's African-American community, as the first meeting Ligon alumni became aware of in May 2025, they were not invited to. However, alums

(See **SCHOOL BOARD VOTE**, P. 2)



NC MEDICAID FACES \$319M GAP AS LAWMAKERS EXAMINE COSTSS

By Jordan Meadows

Staff Writer

State lawmakers on Tuesday afternoon pressed North Carolina Medicaid officials about rising costs, enrollment trends and funding gaps during a meeting of the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Medicaid at the North Carolina General Assembly.

The briefing from officials with the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services came as lawmakers prepare to return to Raleigh next month to negotiate a long-delayed state budget and address a projected \$319 million shortfall in the Medicaid program. The funding discussion also follows a call from Josh Stein for lawmakers to fast-track a \$1.4 billion "critical needs" spending package to cover Medicaid costs and other state obligations. Medicaid officials began the presentation by outlining the scale of the program, which covers more than three million residents across the state.

"One out of every four North Carolinians is enrolled in Medicaid," said Melanie Bush, assistant secretary for North Carolina Medicaid. "Two out of every five children in North Carolina are covered through the program." Bush added that Medicaid also supports some of the state's most vulnerable populations, including "three in ten people with disabilities in North Carolina and five in eight people living in nursing facilities."

"There's a lot of big numbers in this stack... so I want to talk about who is being impacted," Bush told lawmakers.

(See **NC MEDICAID, \$319 GAP**, P. 5)

GOVERNOR STEIN PROPOSES \$1.4 BILLION CRITICAL NEEDS BUDGET TO KEEP NORTH CAROLINA STRONG

(RALEIGH) Today Governor Josh Stein called on the General Assembly to fast-track a \$1.4 billion Critical Needs Budget focused on addressing North Carolina's most urgent needs while lawmakers continue work on a comprehensive state budget.

"North Carolina has gone nearly two and a half years without passing a new state budget - the only state in the country to finish 2025 without one," said Governor Josh Stein. "While lawmakers work toward a full, fiscally responsible budget this spring, there are urgent needs facing our state right now like fully funding Medicaid and giving law enforcement, teachers, and other public servants a long-deserved pay raise. This budget invests in critical public safety, education and health care services for the people of North Carolina that cannot wait."

SAVING MEDICAID

Medicaid provides health coverage for more than 3 million North Carolinians, including children, seniors, people with disabilities, expectant mothers, and working families. It also supports rural hospitals, nursing homes, and health care providers across the state. The Governor's budget recommends \$319 million to fully fund Medicaid and protect access to care for families and communities that depend on it.

"The health of three million North Carolinians who depend on North Carolina Medicaid is in jeopardy," said NC Health and Human Services Secretary Dev Sangvai. "We are counting on our partners at the General Assembly to fully fund Medicaid so our friends, neighbors, and communities can continue to receive the essential care they need to be and stay healthy."

Promoting Public Safety

North Carolina ranks 49th in starting salaries for state troopers and correctional officers. Low pay has contributed to severe staffing shortages and vacancy rates across the state. To keep families safe, Governor Stein's budget helps make public safety careers competitive and reflect their high-risk responsibilities. This includes pay raises for correctional officers, law enforcement officers, youth counselors, probation and parole officers, nurses, and behavioral health technicians. It also supports operational stability for the Department of Adult Correction and the State Bureau of Investigation.

"Our troopers respond to crashes, criminal activity, and emergencies across all 100 counties. Our telecommunicators are the calm voices behind the radio, coordinating responses and ensuring help gets where it is needed," said Colonel Freddy Johnson, Commander of the State Highway Patrol. "Providing competitive salaries is essential if we want to keep the experienced professionals we have and attract the next generation of troopers and telecommunica-

(See **\$1.4 BILLION BUDGET PROPOSAL** P. 2)

Duke Energy Reaches Agreements In NC

CHARLOTTE, N.C. -- Duke Energy and a variety of organizations have reached settlement agreements on the proposed combination of Duke Energy Carolinas and Duke Energy Progress designed to provide measurable, trackable benefits for customers.

Settling parties include the North Carolina Public Staff - the independent agency representing utility customers - the North Carolina Attorney General's Office, Google, Nucor, Walmart and a variety of other intervening groups.

Our view: "We're pleased that Public Staff and the Attorney General's Office agree our customers will see significant future cost savings and

other meaningful benefits from combining our two utilities," said Kendal Bowman, Duke Energy's North Carolina president. "It reduces customer costs, simplifies operations, promotes regulatory efficiencies and supports economic growth across the Carolinas."

Why it matters: Combining Duke Energy Carolinas and Duke Energy Progress will enable Duke Energy to meet the Carolinas' growing energy needs at a lower cost than would otherwise occur, with estimated savings of billions in projected future costs shared by customers across North Carolina and South Carolina.

As part of the settlement, Duke

Energy has guaranteed hundreds of millions of dollars of future savings to customers - savings that can only be achieved through the combination. These savings include both lower production costs (through more efficient operation) and lower capital costs (through more efficient planning).

Examples of production cost savings include the ability to use less fuel and the ability to avoid or reduce purchases of out-of-state energy. An example of lower capital costs includes the elimination of 200 megawatts of battery storage from Duke Energy's long-range plan while still maintaining reliability. The guaranteed savings will be assessed over a 14-year

period.

More savings are expected over time as the company's long-range plan evolves. A new analysis of the potential cost savings was filed in October based on updated modeling in the 2025 Carolinas Resource Plan - that analysis projected customer savings of approximately \$2.3 billion from 2027 to 2040, after any expenses, with additional savings expected in the 2040s.

Per the agreement, if the combination is approved, Duke Energy will track and annually report to state regulators the customer savings achieved until the transaction has fully covered its costs.

Cooper Seeks To Extend Winning Streak

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — North Carolina does not mind electing Democrats as governor, but it is a different matter when it comes to sending them to the U.S. Senate.

Roy Cooper, who led the state for two terms, is trying to change that with a campaign that could reshape power in Washington.

Standing in his way is Michael Whatley, who has Donald Trump's full backing after previously serving as the president's chosen Republican National Committee chairman.

Both Cooper and Whatley easily won their party's primaries this week, solidifying one of this year's marquee Senate races. The campaign will draw hundreds of millions in spending because North Carolina is critical to Democratic efforts to pick up the four seats necessary to win a Senate majority.

Republicans want to frame Cooper as too far left for a state that Trump won three times. That tried-and-true tactic echoes past victories over Democrats they cast as out-of-step rubber stamps for liberal leaders, and it will test Cooper's bond with voters established across four decades of winning campaigns as a state lawmaker, attorney general and governor.

Cooper wants to turn that narrative on its head, charging his Republican opponent with being a tool of "well-connected friends in Washington" who cannot effectively represent the state.

"Look, I'm going to be a strong, independent senator for North Carolina," Cooper said Wednesday. He said he would work with Trump when it



made sense.

Whatley does not shrink from his alliance with the president.

"His leadership has changed our country, and I am proud to stand with him in the fight to secure our border, to strengthen our economy and put America first," Whatley said.

Whatley has history on his side but isn't well known

North Carolina is a perennial political battleground that often renders a split verdict. Democrats have kept their grip on the governor's office for more than a century, ceding it to only three Republicans during that time. Since 1968, Republican presidential candidates have won the state in every election except for 1976 and for 2008 - the same year a Democrat last won a Senate race.

Whatley needs those trends to

make up for his lack of name recognition as a first-time candidate. As a former political staffer, lobbyist and party leader, he has deep ties in Raleigh and Washington, but less exposure to voters.

"It's one thing to be the party guy, and it's another to be the guy on the ballot yourself," said former Gov. Pat McCrory, a Republican who narrowly lost to Cooper in 2016. "We're going to see find out whether he has it or not."

Whatley and his supporters began an advertising campaign in the primary even though he did not face a serious challenge for the nomination.

"I went to school, I went to church. I played sports. And I worked. I was able to pay my own way through college, through graduate school and law school," Whatley said on Tuesday

night. "I have lived the American dream right here in North Carolina."

Martha Goodson, 71, is not so sure. She voted for Cooper in the Democratic primary and has doubts about Whatley's commitment to the state.

"I'm just very hesitant about people that I haven't seen be thoroughly invested in North Carolina," Woodson said. "I know he has served the Republican Party in a leadership role," but "I don't know that I had heard his name before it came up for this."

Republican wants to poke holes in Cooper's record

Republicans in Washington say they are eager to mine Cooper's terms as governor, trying to turn his perceived strength into a weakness.

Although Democrats emphasize that Cooper has never lost a campaign for state office, McCrory cautioned that he never has faced the kind of negative attacks that he may this year. Looser rules on campaign spending "have changed the game," he said.

Republicans want to mix national fights over issues such as immigration and transgender rights with state-specific matters including crime and how Cooper managed hurricane responses and COVID-19 policy.

They have pointed to Cooper's veto of legislation that would have required sheriffs to cooperate with immigration agents seeking to pick up inmates believed to be in the country unlawfully.

"Roy Cooper chose criminal illegal

(See **ROY COOPER**, P. 2)

\$1.4 BILLION BUDGET PROPOSAL

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tors.”

RESPECTING TEACHERS

An investment in North Carolina's teachers is an investment in North Carolina's future. However, the state's teachers have been waiting for a meaningful pay raise, and the state remains in the bottom 10 nationally in average teacher pay. Governor Stein knows that competitive compensation is essential to attracting and retaining the best educators. That's why his budget raises starting and average teacher pay, restores master's degree pay, and increases compensation for senior teachers and other critical school personnel who keep students safe and healthy.

“If we truly want a highly qualified teacher in every classroom, then our students have to see teaching as a career worth pursuing—one with dignity, stability, and a respectable salary,” said John Lassiter, President of the North Carolina Principals and Assistant Principals' Association and a Perquimans County principal. “We need a raise that reflects the dignity and prestige this profession was once known for. And we need to compete for great teachers across state lines so North Carolina classrooms don't become training grounds for other states' workforces.”

SUPPORTING STATE EMPLOYEES & ADDRESSING WORKFORCE SHORTAGES

State employees perform essential services every day, from clearing roads during winter storms to serving veterans and military families. As costs rise due to inflation and health care premiums increase, state employees have not received pay adjustments to keep pace, let alone get ahead. The Governor's budget increases pay for state employees and provides a cost-of-living adjustment for retired state employees to offset rising costs.

MAINTAINING ESSENTIAL SERVICES

Without a comprehensive state budget, many of North Carolina's most essential services have been stretched beyond their limits. The Governor's budget proposal makes targeted investments for a safer, stronger, healthier North Carolina. The proposal helps supports child care access and affordability, protects scholarships for children of veterans, and maintains key government services.

Microschools Model Growing Across NC

CAROLINA PUBLIC PRESS - Alternative education models are on the rise in North Carolina. The number of the state's private schooled and homeschooled students both reached record highs in the 2024-25 school year according to data from the Division of Non-Public Education, with the exception of the 2020-21 school year that was marked by the pandemic. Somewhere in between the two is a new alternative model, microschools.

Microschools might not boast jaw-dropping statistics so far — but that's sort of the point.

An estimated 40 microschools were operating across North Carolina as of last year, though educators say more are likely not being included in that count. Microschools tend to serve 22 students on average, though some around the country have grown to as many as 100 students.

Barnett Berry, a senior research fellow at the Learning Policy Institute and education professor at the University of South Carolina, attributes the beginnings of the microschool movement to the COVID pandemic.

While learning virtually, schools and families found themselves having to get creative with education in the midst of something unprecedented. The pandemic allowed, or even required, parents and educators to think differently, Berry said. But once kids went back to school, much of that excitement dwindled in traditional school settings.

“Some of us were hoping that the pandemic would have served as a catalyst for this, but let me tell you what happened,” Berry said.

“Immediately, the government came back in at the state level, and they were pulling their hair out over what they called academic learning loss, and they started pouring all this money into just trying to catch kids up. Don't get me wrong, kids need loss of ground, but there was incredible innovation going on.”

The microschool movement, not necessarily traditional schools, capitalized on that pandemic-era innovation.

Microschools are at their best when educators, parents and students co-design the learning experience, Berry said. They are miniature hubs of what schools could be — deeper and more personalized lessons, project-based learning, a focus on what gets students excited and curious.

That idea is what propelled Margo Harper out of her position teaching agriculture at a Lenoir County public school and into opening the SELAH Institute, an agriculture-focused microschool outside of Kinston with just 12 seats to go around once it opens to its first class this fall. She plans to have more teachers for several classes in the future, but the school will always maintain a 12:1 ratio, she said.

Agriculture classes in K-12 often require time spent outside the classroom, whether it be working outdoors or traveling to Future Farmers of America events. Those field trips are essential to getting a well-rounded agriculture education, Harper said, but it can also result in lots of missed assignments and time



in core classes.

She found experiential learning to be the most impactful for her students and on her as an educator and imagined a school in which “extracurriculars” like agriculture didn't take away from core classes but added to them.

SELAH will operate on a hybrid model, so students will spend time at agricultural internships or part-time jobs Monday and Friday doing “work-based learning” and in-person instruction Tuesday through Thursday. At the end of the semester, students will have a portfolio of work they completed and what they learned.

“That could be working on a watermelon farm, volunteering at an animal shelter, anything related to agriculture to get some experience,” she said.

“So for our students, it looks different than homeschool because instead of that Monday and Friday being home work days where they're largely spending their time continuing to learn about the things that we're doing in class, they're going to be spending eight hours each of those days on a work experience. That's either them logging eight hours of practice on how to weld, or they might be working in their home garden and they eventually want to can strawberries and sell strawberry jam.”

Harper could easily handle more than 12 students if she chose thanks to her public school background, but she finds microschools more conducive to mentoring and simply getting to know her students.

“If 12 was enough for Jesus, 12 is enough for me,” she said. The hybrid schedule is similar to what homeschool advocates say makes homeschooling beneficial and unique, as many choose a mix of meeting weekly in homeschooling co-op groups, learning individually at home, taking classes at community college and working part-time. So what distinguishes microschools from the myriad of homeschool options?

At Harmony Homeschool Academy in Cary, cofounders Laura Greene, a licensed psychologist with a background in school psychology, and Angela Ruth, a former federal employee turned educator, blend the two by bringing together homeschooled students for in-person instruction up to three days a week.

In-person group learning for homeschooled students isn't revolu-

tionary, but Ruth said the primary difference between the typical homeschool co-op and their microschool is the background of the instructor. While homeschool co-ops can certainly be academically rigorous in their own right, Ruth said, Harmony employs either certified educators or subject matter experts to teach classes, which are capped at 15 students.

Harmony's approach as a microschool is that a child's education be

a dual effort between the educators and the parents. Harmony's classes tend to act as supplemental where parents can't fully meet their student's needs.

“Every single material given to the student is actually put in the classroom, and many of the parents take that material and build upon it at home,” Ruth said. “Because we're hybrid, a lot of the work has to be done at home, and that's where the parents come in, but we're giving them the tools and the resources to be able to do that.”

Harmony also places an emphasis on Social Emotional Learning and easing the anxiety many of their students have around school. The smaller class sizes make it easier to offer accommodations for learning disabilities and mental health that traditional private schools often don't.

That comes in the form of pass/fail homework grades, options to use talk-to-text technology and extensions on assignments when requested by the student. When it comes to accommodations, Harmony recognizes the value in students knowing how to ask for what they need.

“Self advocacy plays a critical role here,” Ruth said.

SCHOOL BOARD VOTG

Continued from page 1

and community leaders found out, showed up, and expressed their concerns about the renovation/rebuilding of the Middle School. Three listening sessions followed with one being conducted by Board Member, Toshiba Rice in order to gain clarity by listening to what the community had to say regarding the issue.

Two more Listening Sessions followed, hosted by Superintendent Robert Taylor at the Middle School Auditorium. Those sessions produced two clear camps on the issue, the parents of current middle school students, and Ligon alumni and community leaders, with the second listening session having presenters that asked for an option that would not require students to be housed on site during the construction as all of the current options require.

Now there is no option! Option three will be executed keeping students in the current building while the school system builds a new school on the site of the ballfields. The cost of the project would be \$121.8 million, and the project would take 45 months. It would move the campus from the top of the hill to the lower back of the property. This site will require raising the terrain a minimum of 10 feet by infilling with materials suitable to comply with existing building codes. School officials reportedly say they also could preserve the history and legacy of the original school through design elements on the new building.

So, is this the fate of the Raleigh school system's only Black high school building? This in addition to the lamentable occurrence in 1971 when then Ligon Senior High School students were removed from their high school in the name of desegregation.

Everyone in this discussion concedes that the existing Ligon Magnet Middle School building has a laundry list of “poor” or “failing” conditions. However, as Board Member, Chris Heagarty, pointed out that with Option three, “The Ligon Project is going to be a lot more challenging than we're being presented with here.” He noted the hill at Ligon will have to be graded to house sports facilities.

Heagarty further stated that he was disappointed the district and project developer didn't do more to focus on historical preservation from the start of the Ligon Project, the way the developer had done with a historic high school in Charlotte. The Developers Tuesday night meeting response was that it would be done in the design phase of the project, which they said hasn't begun yet.

Additionally, what is the effectiveness of the school system's tool called “ThoughtExchange”? In the Ligon Magnet Middle School Building case, it did not result in any modifications of the original options. To discount the community turnout, and observations presented over four “Listening Sessions” is proof that the community was only invited to “Listen” and not to participate.

It's a sad commentary for Wake County Public Schools how this all played out. That this happens after having staffed the former J.W. Ligon Senior High School with some of the most outstanding teachers in the district. This after producing some of the most outstanding students, and contributors to our current way of life.

All of this doesn't say much for any considerations for the future. Yes, Mr. Wake County school board chairman, Tyler Swanson, you may come out of this with a new building that may last another 70 years, but at a price you can't measure in dollars that make sense.

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e-mail: info@caro.news

www.caro.news

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Why Is Allergy Season Longer?

NC NEWSLINE - If it seems like your seasonal allergies start a little earlier every year, it's not all in your head. North Carolina is seeing a longer allergy season as a result of climate change, according to a new report from Climate Central.

Raleigh's allergy season has lengthened by 41 days — more than a month — between 1970 and 2025, according to the analysis published March 4.

The increase of 41 days is nearly twice the national average growth of 21 days since 1970. The average increase across the Southeast was 19 days.

It's a problem across the country. The freeze-free growing season became longer in 87%, or 173, of the

198 U.S. cities examined in the report.

Each climate region in the country has seen its freeze-free growing season lengthen, according to the analysis.

Kristy Dahl, vice president for science at Climate Central, said a longer allergy season indicates carbon pollution and a warming world.

“As temperatures rise, freeze-free seasons are stretching in every region of the country, giving plants weeks of extra time to grow and release pollen,” she said in a statement. “For millions of Americans, that means earlier, longer, and often more intense allergy seasons that can take a real toll on health and daily life.”

Pollen from trees is already at a moderate level in Raleigh this week, according to the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality. Other types of pollen, like from grasses and weeds, are still at low levels, but they're expected to increase, too, as the weather gets warmer.

The Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America ranked Raleigh as the seventh most challenging place to live in the U.S. with pollen allergies in its 2026 report, the same placement as the previous year.

The placements are based on pollen scores for tree, grass and weed pollen, over-the-counter allergy medication use and the number of allergy specialists, according to the study.

Roy Cooper — CONT. FROM PAGE 1

aliens over North Carolina communities,” Whatley said during his nomination acceptance speech.

Republicans have also focused on last summer's fatal stabbing of Ukrainian refugee Iryna Zarutka on a Charlotte light-rail train. The murder suspect had more than a dozen prior criminal arrests before his most recent charges in federal and state court. Trump highlighted the slaying during his State of the Union with Zarutka's mother in the gallery.

Democrats see health care as a strength for Cooper

The former governor has countered with a focus on the economy, including health care costs. He notes that he persuaded the Republican-controlled General Assembly to expand Medicaid coverage. The issue is back in the spotlight after Republicans refused to extend pandemic-era subsidies for insurance plans purchased through the Affordable Care Act.

Meanwhile, Cooper already is trying to turn discussion of crime and immigration back on Trump and Republicans after two protesters, both U.S. citizens, were killed by federal immigration agents in Minneapolis.

He said Wednesday that he wants “secure borders” and would “insist on federal resources to deport violent criminals” and “fight violent crime.”

But, he said, “I think this administration is losing focus on that.”

Trump will be a constant, even when not named

Cooper is not criticizing Trump in harshly personal terms, as some Democrats are. That is likely recognition that his gubernatorial victories came in part from winning votes from at least some Trump supporters. Rather, Cooper criticizes administration policies that he says hurt the state, especially working-class and middle-class voters, and then hammers Whatley for supporting that agenda.

Democrats see that as a way to capitalize on Trump's declining public support overall without Cooper risking alienating right-leaning voters he might be able to attract.

For Whatley, there is no option to continue embracing Trump while trying to maximize Republican voters, McCrory said.

“I don't think he has any choice but to bring him in,” McCrory said. “The president hand-selected him.”

That message is tailored to Republican voters such as Kevin Cattell, 71, who said he wants representatives in Washington who “support and see the value and the vision that President Trump is putting forward.”

McCrory knows firsthand how powerful Trump's backing can be. In 2022, he unsuccessfully ran against Ted Budd for the Republican Senate nomination.

Once Trump endorsed Budd, McCrory said, “I might as well have been at the beach.”

Business & Finance

Affordable Housing Tax Loophole Threatens Local Budgets

THE CONVERSATION - A growing number of apartment complex owners in Wake County and elsewhere in North Carolina are taking advantage of a state law that grants property tax exemptions to nonprofits that provide affordable housing to low-and moderate-income residents, Wake County officials say.

In a scheme that one longtime affordable-housing developer refers to as a "rent-a-nonprofit structure," for-profit apartment complex owners can hand over fractions of ownership to nonprofits to qualify for generous tax exemptions. The move can result in significant reductions in property tax value for cities and counties, sometimes tens of millions of dollars.

"This is a huge leak in your tax base, and the City of Raleigh's also," Wake County Tax Administrator Marcus Kinrade told county commissioners during a recent meeting. "Most of these things are occurring in the city, so it's affecting them even worse than it's affecting the county."

Lower tax values mean less revenue for counties to fund schools, libraries, public safety and health and human services, which can force local governments to reduce services or raise taxes.

Exemptions in Wake County have nearly doubled — from 66 in 2020 to 136 in 2025, Kinrade said. The exemptions for low-and moderate-income housing account for a projected \$776 million reduction in taxable property value, the equivalent of \$4 million in revenue, he said.

"This is, in my opinion, the biggest threat to the revenue stream in this county that I could ever imagine," Kinrade said.

This year, the county received



THE NC COURT OF APPEALS RULED IN 2013 THAT CANE CREEK VILLAGE WAS ENTITLED TO A PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION.

about 170 applications for exemptions before the Feb. 1 deadline. The taxable value of those properties is \$1.2 billion, which would result in a loss of \$6.2 million in county tax dollars, Kinrade said.

Wake County isn't alone when it comes to losing taxable value this way. Cities and counties across the state are having billions of dollars worth of formerly taxable properties wiped from the tax rolls as a result of the "loophole" in state law.

How we got here
The law was adopted in 2010 to help increase the supply of low-and moderate-income housing by giving owners a break on property taxes. Such housing generally offers rents at or below 80% of area median income.

The loophole was created in 2013 when the NC Court of Appeals ruled

that Cane Creek Village, a low-income housing project in Mitchell County owned by a for-profit limited liability company but controlled by a nonprofit, was entitled to a property tax exemption.

Northwestern Housing Enterprises, Inc., the nonprofit in that case, owned 0.1% of Blue Ridge Housing, which held the title to the property. A for-profit partnership, North Carolina Equity Fund III Limited Partnership, owned 99.9% of Blue Ridge Housing.

Although the loophole has existed since 2013, Kinrade said apartment owners began to take advantage of it in greater numbers starting in 2023 after several law firms and real estate brokers began marketing it to apartment owners.

Properties receiving exemptions are generally older apartment com-

plexes, Kinrade said. Because of their age and condition, owners can rent them to tenants earning 80% of area median income or less, he said. Eighty percent of area median income or less is generally accepted as the standard for low-and moderate-income housing.

An analysis by Durham-based Self Help, the nonprofit developer and lender that coined the "rent-a-nonprofit" phrase, estimates that 94% of multi-family units in Wake County could eventually be exempted from property taxes because they provide rents at 80% of area median income or below, Kinrade said.

If Self Help's analysis proves true, Kinrade said, the amount of property removed from the county's tax base would cost \$140 million in revenue.

"Just doing a little work on the ownership structure can qualify these properties for full exemption based on the Blue Ridge Housing model," Kinrade said.

To illustrate how the loophole works, Kinrade used the Village at Broadstone Station Apartments in Apex, which was built in 2013. The apartment's website bills it as a luxury apartment community.

Kinrade said the owner paid property taxes until 2024 when the apartments were sold to an investment group in Beverly Hills, California for \$66.2 million that year. He said the investment firm partnered with an Oregon nonprofit called the Foundation for Affordable Housing and used the loophole to qualify for a property tax exemption.

"To my knowledge, they didn't change the rents," Kinrade said. "The rents are the same as they were prior to the purchase. It just so happens that because incomes are high in

Wake County, 80% of median income is pretty high too."

NC Newsline was unable to reach the foundation or the complex's owners for comment.

Fixing the problem

County leaders' concerns have gotten the attention of lawmakers. State Rep. Erin Paré (R-Wake) has pledged to work to close the loophole.

"Closing the 'loophole' in the law will recover forgone revenue (tax revenue lost) that would otherwise go to funding schools and other essential services," Paré said in a social media post.

Paré co-chairs the House Select Committee on Property Tax Reduction and Reform that House Speaker Destin Hall created to review the factors contributing to rising local property taxes and to identify ways to reduce the burden on homeowners.

In January, Self Help told the House Select Committee on Property Tax Reduction that property tax exemptions for affordable housing are critical to alleviating the state's affordable housing crisis, but the current wording of the law is too vague, ripe for abuse and "deviates from the original spirit."

Self Help recommended lawmakers require qualifying properties to be 100% nonprofit-owned and operated as affordable housing. It also

wants properties to have federal, state and local government financial support, long-term affordability restrictions and a nonprofit general partner with control and a long-term ownership option.

The North Carolina Association of County Commissioners made similar recommendations to the committee, but also said the state should require an annual application process in which owners would report the number of low-income units it has in an apartment complex.

Kinrade said lawmakers must change the law to clearly define low-and moderate-income housing.

"We're not against affordable housing, but we want it to be in the classic form of affordable housing and not this rent-a-nonprofit structure we think is just taking advantage of taxpayers," Kinrade said.

He said there must be more oversight to ensure owners who receive exemptions provide housing to residents earning 80% or less of area median income.

"There's really no ability to ensure that the residents who are receiving these affordable rents qualify based on their income unless the tax office gets in the business of auditing these properties every year, which is going to strain our resources," Kinrade said.

State Senate Leader Phil Berger has also formed a committee to take a look at property tax concerns.

PROPOSED DATA CENTER IN WAKE COUNTY IS WITHDRAWING ITS APPLICATION

WUNC — The developer of New Hill Digital Campus is withdrawing its annexation and rezoning applications for the property that was set to house the proposed 300 MW data center.

This comes as "the Town continues its deliberations over zoning ordinance changes necessary to permit data center development within the Town's limits," said Michael Natelli, president of Natelli Holdings, in an email to WUNC News.

Natelli indicated that if, in the future, Apex does approve zoning changes that would allow data centers within town limits, then it's possible the project could be revisited.

The facility was set to be located in Apex off Old U.S. Highway One, near Duke Energy's Shearon Harris Nuclear Plant and the Western Lake Regional Water Reclamation Facility.

The project faced intense community backlash. The Protect Wake County Coalition has expressed concerns with several issues, including noise, air pollution and energy and water use. In a statement, members of the Coalition said they're glad to see this withdrawal.

"The withdrawal gives Apex an opportunity to slow down, put the right ordinances in place, and make sure the community is protected before any data center proposals move forward," said the Coalition. "This isn't the end of the conversation."

Apex Town Council Member Terry Mahaffey said in a Substack post that he plans to propose "a one-year moratorium on any further applications, permits, or construction of data centers in Apex."

"This will give us the time we need to finish the work that we started... (and) to put firm rules in place to ensure that any future applicants not harm the health, the well-being, or the quality of life of any existing Apex resident," Mahaffey wrote.

In February, Chatham County approved a one-year temporary moratorium on the permitting of data centers, expressing similar sentiments of taking the time to properly investigate and plan ahead.

Mahaffey's proposal is expected at the Town Council's next meeting next week on Tuesday, March 10.

DIRTY DOZEN TAX SCAMS FOR 2026

WASHINGTON — The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has released its annual "Dirty Dozen" list of tax scams for 2026, warning taxpayers and businesses to stay alert for fraud that targets personal and financial information.

The list is part of the Security Summit, a partnership between the IRS, state tax agencies, and the tax industry. The effort is also tied to National Slam the Scam Day, which raises awareness about identity theft and tax fraud during filing season.

IRS Chief Executive Officer Frank J. Bisignano said scammers constantly change tactics to trick taxpayers, making it important to remain vigilant. The IRS has published the Dirty Dozen list for more than 20 years to highlight emerging threats.

A new addition to this year's list is abusive claims involving undistributed long-term capital gains, where some taxpayers falsely claim credits using Form 2439.

Key scams to watch for in 2026

- The IRS warns taxpayers to be cautious of the following schemes:
- IRS impersonation scams through emails, texts, or social media messages directing people to fake IRS websites.
- AI-enabled phone scams using robocalls, voice mimicry, or spoofed caller IDs to demand payment or personal information.
- Fake charities created to collect donations after disasters or tragedies.
- Misleading tax advice on social media encouraging people to claim credits they do not qualify for.
- Identity theft involving IRS online accounts where criminals attempt to access taxpayer information.
- Abusive capital gains credit claims using fabricated or overstated Form 2439 filings.
- Bogus "self-employment tax credit" promotions promising improper refunds.
- Ghost tax preparers who prepare returns but refuse to sign them or provide a PTIN.
- Inflated non-cash charitable deductions such as exaggerated appraisals of donated property or art.
- Overstated withholding schemes where scammers fabricate income and tax withholding to claim larger refunds.
- Spear-phishing attacks targeting tax professionals to steal client data or install malware.
- Misleading Offer in Compromise marketing from companies promising unrealistic tax debt settlements.
- How to protect yourself
The IRS advises taxpayers to:
- Avoid clicking links or attachments in unexpected messages.
- Hang up on suspicious callers claiming to be from the IRS.
- Report phishing attempts to phishing@irs.gov
- Visit IRS.gov/idtheft if they suspect their identity has been compromised.
- Suspected tax fraud or scams can also be reported through the IRS online tip tool at IRS.gov/SubmitATip.

Big Beautiful Refund? 5 Tax Code Changes That May Put More Money In Your Pocket

THE CONVERSATION - The days are getting longer and W-2s are blooming, which can only mean one thing — the U.S. tax season is here. Many Americans may receive a bigger tax refund than in previous years as a result of changes under what has been dubbed "One Big Beautiful Bill Act," a package of tax breaks and spending cuts that President Donald Trump signed into law on July 4, 2025.

The act renewed tax cuts originally put in place in 2017 that had been set to expire at the end of 2025. Had that happened, one estimate shows the average individual filer would have seen a US\$2,955 increase to their tax bill starting in 2026.

That hike would have come from factors including higher individual tax rates, while the standard deduction and child tax credit would have been slashed in half.

Instead, many filers can expect the new law to reduce their taxes for 2025 and beyond, with numerous provisions in place for the next three years.

Trump's tax and spending package has introduced a variety of provisions aimed at benefiting a broad cross-section of individual taxpayers. The changes under the act are retroactive, meaning that even though the law was signed in July, taxpayers can treat the provisions as if they went into effect at the start of 2025.

Here are some of the new things 2025 filers should know about:

1. INCREASED DEDUCTION OF



STATE AND LOCAL TAXES

People subject to steep local and/or state taxes can now deduct a significantly larger portion of those assessments.

Allowable property, sales or income taxes paid to state and local governments in 2025 are deductible up to \$40,000, or \$20,000 for married filing separately. That's up from the previous maximum of \$10,000 and \$5,000, respectively.

Higher income taxpayers — those with modified adjusted gross income exceeding \$500,000, or \$250,000 for those married filing separately — won't be able to take full advantage of the \$40,000 deduction. OB3 calls for gradual reductions in the deduction amount as income level rises.

In 2030, the state and local deduction reverts to the previous \$10,000 limit, or \$5,000 married filing sep-

2. TIP INCOME DEDUCTION

Workers in approved occupations, such as hospitality, cosmetology or personal training, who receive qualified tips will be able to deduct up to \$25,000 in tip income from their taxes for the first time.

This new deduction is phased out for single filers with a modified adjusted gross income over \$150,000 and married couples filing jointly over \$300,000.

This tax break is available through 2028.

3. OVERTIME PAY DEDUCTION

Have earnings from working overtime? From 2025 through 2028, filers can take a deduction for pay exceeding their regular rate.

For example, if an employee typically earns \$20 per hour and earns \$30 per hour when working over-

time, they qualify for a deduction of the extra \$10. The maximum annual deduction is \$12,500, rising to \$25,000 for joint filers.

As with many of these deductions, there is a phaseout for taxpayers with modified adjusted gross income over \$150,000, or \$300,000 for joint filers.

4. 'MADE IN AMERICA' CAR DEDUCTION

Purchased a new vehicle for personal use or thinking about buying one soon? From 2025 through 2028, buying a vehicle made in the United States means the filer can deduct vehicle loan interest.

Vehicles that qualify include cars, minivans, vans, SUVs, pickup trucks and motorcycles that underwent final assembly in the U.S.

The maximum annual deduction is \$10,000. The deduction starts to phase out for taxpayers with modified adjusted gross income over \$100,000; \$200,000 for joint filers.

5. NEW DEDUCTION FOR SENIORS

For tax years 2025 through 2028, individuals older than 65 are eligible for a deduction up to \$6,000 or \$12,000 total for a married couple when both spouses qualify. The deduction begins to phase out when modified adjusted gross income exceeds \$75,000 or \$150,000 for joint filers.

It's important to note that this deduction is in addition to the existing senior deduction that was passed under a prior law.

Gas Prices Spike as Iran War Sparks Political and Economic Concerns

(AP) — Standing alongside his son's Ford pickup truck at a central Iowa gas station off Interstate 80, Francisco Castillo was not happy.

He had voted for President Donald Trump in the last election. He believed Trump had strengthened the economy in his first term, and he wanted more of that.

"I thought that he was going to bring some of those things back," said Castillo, a 43-year-old factory worker. And now? "He said he was going to bring gas down, but the war in Iran is now making everything worse."

It seems a country divided on so many fronts is finding common ground in pain at the pump, where the cost of the Iran war is hitting Americans squarely in the wallet and aggravating people across the political spectrum.

For Castillo and many others filling their tanks on Monday at gas stations in Michigan, Pennsylvania, Florida, North Carolina and Iowa, it was a reminder that politicians' promises aren't going to pay the bills.

"They do what benefits them," Castillo said. "I have to go to work



every day no matter what."

Some are optimistic that the sticker shock will be short-lived. Others blame corporate interests rather than the president. Electric vehicle owners are especially grateful about their decision as they cruise past gas stations with escalating prices.

The national average gas price was \$3.48 a gallon on Monday, up from \$2.90 a month ago, before the war, according to tracking by AAA.

The higher prices are a reminder of how Trump has veered from his campaign promises. Not only were Americans embroiled in a new war overseas, they were paying for it every time they filled up their tanks.

The Republican president insisted the conflict was worth it.

"We're putting an end to all of this threat once and for all, and the result will be lower oil prices, oil and gas prices for American families," he said

at a news conference Monday. The war, he said, is "just an excursion into something that had to be done."

Robert Coon from Omaha, Nebraska, filled up on his way to Ames, Iowa. Though not a Trump voter, he believed the strikes in Iran needed to happen.

Even so, he fears U.S. involvement is not going to go the way he wants, which is "in, out, over."

A Quinnipiac poll conducted over the weekend found about half of registered voters oppose the U.S. military action against Iran while about 4 in 10 support it. The vast majority of Democrats were against it (89%), the vast majority of Republicans for it (85%) and independents against it (60%).

Overall, three-quarters were concerned about the war raising gas and oil prices. Recent polling also suggests that the vast majority of voters expect the U.S. action against Iran to last months or longer, and many worry it is making the U.S. less safe.

"I've been pretty grateful that the gas prices have been really reasonable" at least until the last week, said

(See **GAS PRICES**, P. 4)

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Gas Prices Spike as Iran War Sparks Concerns — CONT. FROM PAGE 3

Albrecht, 67, who identified as an independent voter.

At the same gas station, Republican-leaning Tyler Nepple, 23, said the price of gas for his Toyota Tacoma may shape his vote in the midterm elections this fall but won't change his driving habits.

"You've just got to fill it up and bite the bullet and hope that the prices go back down — that's all I can really do," said Nepple, who runs a startup in the Orlando, Florida, area. "I still have to get from point A to point B, and I need gas to do that."

A retiree cuts back in Pennsylvania Kathryn Price Engelhard, 70, gassed up her Subaru Forester at a Wawa in Morrisville, Pennsylvania, in the Philadelphia suburbs. A retired non-profit executive director and "strong Democrat," she said she had to stop at over a half a tank because she's on a fixed income. Last week, she paid only \$30 to top herself off.

Similarly, she cut her order for home heating oil by half because that cost is up, too. "I look at the prices of oil in the past and the stupid war,

how did we — how did anybody — think that that was not going to impact oil?" she asked. "Of course it's impacting oil."

In Fairless Hills, Pennsylvania, Vivian Knight, 53, is hoping her fill-up last week will last her a month. She is a former exterminator out on disability. "If I had to go to work or something like that, gas prices would be ridiculous," she said.

Speaking of Trump, she said "he kind of starts some problems that really don't need to be started," and she puts the Iran war in that category.

The saga will have no effect on how Joey Perillo, 74, will vote in November.

"The gas price could have gone down to two cents a gallon and I'd vote against him," said the volunteer firefighter, retired actor and political independent from Yardley, Pennsylvania.

In Michigan, gratitude for electric cars

In the Detroit suburb of Livonia, Anthony Gooden, 57, sized up the

plight of gas-powered vehicle owners while waiting for his Chevy Equinox EV to charge at a station.

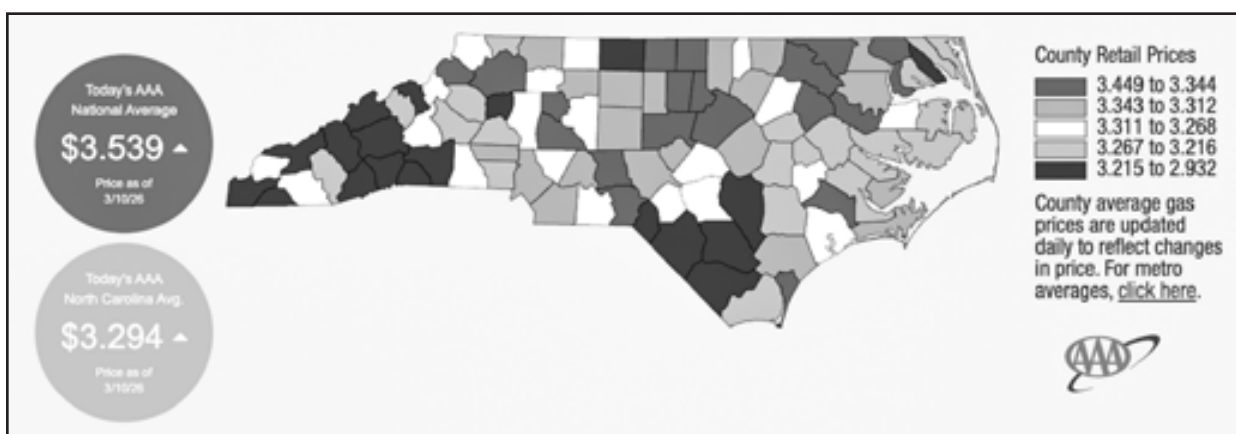
"Whoa, they're going through it right now," said Gooden, 57, from nearby Redford Township. "And it's only getting worse."

Gooden ditched his internal combustion engine vehicle over a year ago and said days like these reinforce that decision. "You're happier now," he said. "No comparison."

In Ann Arbor, Michigan, Elvana Hammoud, 55, a diversity strategist, drives a Mach-E electric SUV as well as a Ford Raptor truck that costs \$100 to fill up when gas is over \$3. It's an easy choice which to use more now.

"I mostly drive the EV, especially to work because I have a long commute," she said. The Raptor is for snowy days, short errands or when moving something big. "I used it more frequently just for fun when gas prices were lower."

Trump has put up a number of roadblocks to rapid expansion of electric vehicles in favor of policies promoting gasoline-powered ones.



AVERAGE GAS PRICES IN NORTH CAROLINA HAVE CLIMBED IN RECENT WEEKS, ACCORDING TO DATA FROM AAA.

Among them, his tax and spending bill passed by Congress last year eliminated federal tax credits that saved buyers up to \$7,500 off new and used EV purchases.

In North Carolina, worries about gouging

Kevin Kertesz, 65, filled his pickup at a Shell station in Graham, North Carolina, where unleaded started at \$3.34 per gallon, up from \$2.59 in

the area last week.

The Republican retiree asserted that "everyone who is selling fuel for these elevated prices is price gouging, and there's nothing we can do about it because we all have to have gasoline to keep driving."

Ken Shuttlesworth, a 70-year-old IT manager from Graham who described himself as an independent Democrat, said he can absorb higher

gas costs but worries about his children and grandchildren and others who live closer to the financial margins.

Trump, he said, should have consulted Congress and had a more public discussion before taking the country to war.

"We have somebody who doesn't follow the policy," he said. "He follows his instincts."



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Health and Wellness



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Continued from page 1

Officials said enrollment surged during the early months of expansion but has now stabilized.

"Enrollment continues its planned normalization following the pandemic-era continuous coverage requirements," Bush said. "Expansion enrollment has reached a stable plateau at around 700,000."

Even as enrollment declines slightly, Medicaid spending continues to rise. Rep. HEATHER RHYNE of Lincoln County asked officials why fewer enrollees still translated to higher costs: "Are they requiring costlier services—the ones still on Medicaid?" Rhyne asked.

Bush responded directly: "Yes."

She explained that many individuals leaving Medicaid as pandemic coverage rules expired were healthier residents who no longer qualified, leaving a population with more complex needs.

"People who are older and disabled have more complex needs. They are the more expensive population," Bush said. "Medical inflation in the U.S. is contributing to those costs."

Families and children account for roughly 79 percent of Medicaid enrollment but represent only 46 percent of total spending. By contrast, older adults and people with disabilities make up about 21 percent of enrollment but drive 54 percent of Medicaid expenditures due to higher-acuity care needs.

Much of the discussion centered on the state's annual Medicaid "rebase," a budgeting process that adjusts funding levels based on changes in enrollment, health care usage and inflation. It primarily funds the per-person capitation rates paid to managed care plans that administer benefits.

Although total program costs are projected to decline in fiscal year 2026, state funding requirements are increasing because of changes to federal matching rates and higher utilization of care.

The Medicaid team told lawmakers that \$319 million in additional state appropriations is needed to fully fund the program through the end of the current fiscal year. North Carolina has been operating without a new state budget since 2024, continuing under spending levels from the previous plan while negotiations stall over tax policy, raises for state workers and other priorities.

Earlier attempts by the state to manage the Medicaid funding gap included temporary provider rate cuts of 3 to 10 percent in October 2025. Courts later ordered those reductions reversed in December, leaving the underlying budget gap unresolved.

Sen. Jim Burgin of Harnett County asked officials what services were driving the largest increases in Medicaid spending.

"Three drivers of that rising cost is gene therapy, increase in eye services, [and] cost of prescription drugs," Bush said.

Sen. DeAndrea Cunningham of Charlotte also questioned officials about potential task forces to evaluate Medicaid policy proposals and asked who would appoint members. Bush said similar task forces are used in other states and that the structure in North Carolina could involve either legislative or executive appointments.

Cunningham also raised questions about Medicaid eligibility rules for long-term care, specifically how long individuals must wait after transferring assets before qualifying for coverage. Bush explained that Medicaid enforces a "five-year look-back" period for financial assets.

"If they're in your possession you may have to pay a penalty for it," she said.

Medicaid officials outlined several strategies aimed at controlling costs while maintaining coverage. Those include refining payment rates for managed care plans, increasing accountability through performance-based financial withholds and tightening medical loss ratio standards. The program is also expanding pharmaceutical cost controls and value-based payment models for expensive treatments like gene therapies.

Officials said direct negotiations with drug manufacturers generated \$2.3 billion in combined state and federal cost avoidance in fiscal year 2025.

North Carolina currently receives a 90 percent federal match for expansion coverage. If that rate were reduced, state analysts estimate the program could face a potential \$27 billion loss over 10 years, putting coverage for more than 640,000 residents at risk.

For now, Medicaid officials told lawmakers that enrollment and spending trends are closely tracking projections.

Therapy Smarts Founder Avani Shah Named a 2026 Triangle Business Journal Health Care Leadership Award Honoree

By Jheri Hardaway

Staff Writer

Durham - Avani Shah, founder and CEO of Therapy Smarts Inc., has been recognized as one of the region's outstanding health care leaders by Triangle Business Journal in its 2026 Health Care Leadership Awards. The annual awards celebrate individuals across the Triangle who are making a significant impact in health care through leadership, innovation, and dedication to improving patient outcomes.



Shah was selected among a distinguished group of physicians, executives, and innovators who are shaping the future of health care across the Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill region. The Health Care Leadership Awards recognize leaders whose work strengthens the region's health systems, expands access to care, and improves the well-being of the communities they serve.

As the founder of Therapy Smarts, Shah has spent over a decade transforming pediatric therapy services across the Triangle. Under her leadership, the company has grown rapidly while maintaining a strong mission: helping children overcome developmental challenges through compassionate, evidence-based therapy services. Therapy Smarts provides pediatric physical therapy, speech therapy, occupational therapy, Mental health, Psychology evaluations and applied behavior analysis (ABA) services to families throughout Durham, Chapel Hill, and surrounding communities.

"Being recognized by the Triangle Business Journal alongside so many inspiring health care leaders is truly an honor," said Shah. "At Therapy Smarts, our mission every day is to ensure that every child receives the support they need to grow, communicate, and thrive. This recognition is not just about me—it reflects the extraordinary dedication of our therapists, staff, and the families who trust us with their children's journeys. Together, we are turning challenges into meaningful progress and helping children reach their fullest potential." Founded in 2016, Therapy Smarts has grown into one of the region's fastest-expanding pediatric therapy providers, recently earning national recognition on the Inc. 5000 list of America's fastest-growing companies. The organization now serves families across the Triangle with clinics in Durham and Chapel Hill, and plans for continued growth to meet the increasing need for pediatric therapy services.

Beyond clinical care, Shah has also become a leading advocate for pediatric therapy access in North Carolina. She has worked with community leaders, policymakers, and health care partners to raise awareness about the importance of early intervention services and the impact policy decisions can have on children and families who rely on these essential therapies.

The 2026 Health Care Leadership Awards recognize leaders from across the Triangle who are advancing the region's health care industry through innovation, community service, and commitment to patient care. Honorees will be celebrated by Triangle Business Journal during a special awards program later this year.

A New Perk For State Workers: Free Surgery

NC Health News – What if your health plan offered free surgery, but only by surgeons on its approved list?

That's the incentive behind a new program the North Carolina State Health Plan is rolling out for more than 700,000 teachers, state workers and their families.

The plan connects members needing certain procedures with a select network of vetted surgeons and hospitals. Last week, officials announced that Novant Health will join OrthoCarolina in the program, expanding its reach to more of the state.

The plan is also in talks with Triangle area providers, with results expected to be announced soon, a spokeswoman said.

Health policy experts said the approach, called direct-to-employer health care, is becoming more common as employers look for ways to steer their workers to high-quality care and rein in rapidly rising health care costs.

The State Health Plan's new initiative is run through Lantern, one of several specialty care platforms nationwide helping employers launch and manage these types of programs.

The models are still relatively new, so it's not clear how much

money they will ultimately be able to save — or how willing patients will be to travel or switch doctors to get the lower prices. State Health Plan members don't have to use the selected surgeons, but skipping the Lantern-vetted surgeons would cost them more.

"We aren't taking away choice. We are creating an incentive," said State Treasurer Brad Briner, whose office administers the plan.

Briner said the goal is a rare "win-win-win": The surgeons get more patients, the employees get free surgeries and the state lowers its health care costs.

"Everyone is getting something out of it," he said.

A way to control surging costs

The State Health Plan has faced mounting financial pressure in recent years as its health care costs climbed. At one point, the plan was projected to run a deficit of about \$500 million this year and \$900 million next year.

State officials have since taken steps to stabilize the program — including raising premiums, increasing deductibles and launching new cost-control initiatives. The new surgery program is its latest effort.

Surgical procedures account for

15 percent to 30 percent of the State Health Plan's total spending, administrators said.

Lantern promises to bring those costs down by contracting with selected surgeons and facilities that agree to perform procedures at lower, pre-negotiated prices.

Based in Dallas, Lantern works with more than 1,000 employers — with 12 million insured parties nationwide — including 7-Eleven, Hyatt Hotels and the state of Florida, as well as window manufacturer JELD-WEN and property manager Greystar in North Carolina.

Lantern requires the surgeons in its network to meet quality standards, such as performing a minimum number of the procedure each year and meeting safety benchmarks from independent agencies such as The Leapfrog Group, said Lantern President Dickon Waterfield.

"If we can steer patients to high-quality surgeons at a lower price, everyone benefits," he said.

Providers agree to the discounts in return for a steady stream of patients, he added.

The math behind the savings

Nationwide, prices for the same operation can vary dramatically — sometimes costing up to 13 times

more at one facility than at another, and large consolidated hospital systems are typically the most expensive. Yet studies show no clear link between higher prices and higher quality.

Briner said Lantern has negotiated average savings of 25 percent to 35 percent on the covered procedures — from cardiac surgeries to joint replacements — for the State Health Plan.

To illustrate how the math works, he said, take a hypothetical \$50,000 surgery. If the State Health Plan gets a 30 percent discount, the price drops to \$35,000. Even when it pays the \$5,000 that a plan member would typically pay out of pocket for a surgery, the state still saves \$10,000 from that one procedure, he said.

"We do that over and over again, and now we're talking about real money," he said.

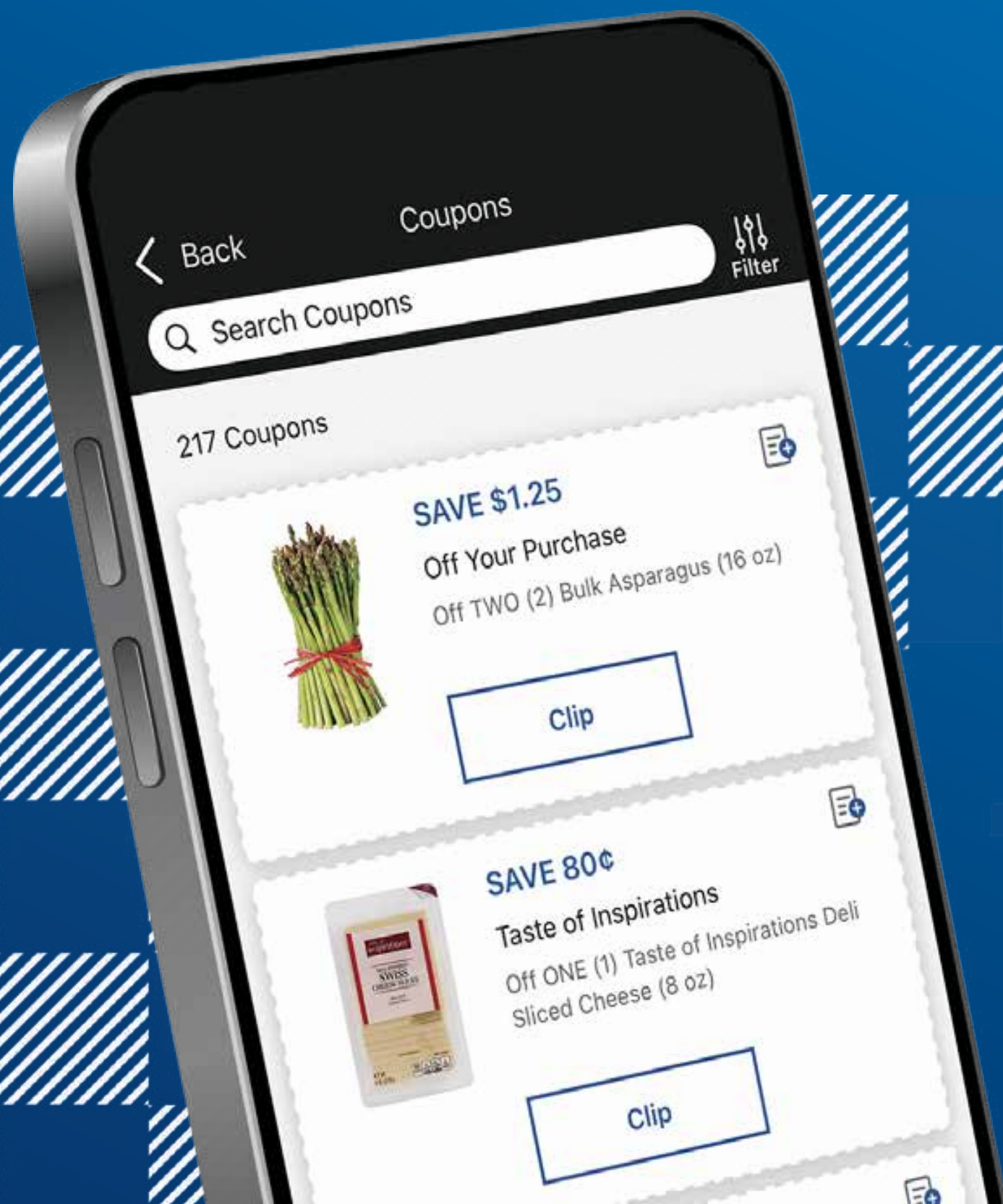
Using higher-quality surgeons should also lower the risk of complications and expensive follow-up hospitalizations, which would mean further savings.

Employers searching for solutions For years, employers have relied

(See **STATE WORKERS**, P. 7)

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Arts & Culture

'History Longs To Heal': How The Continent Of Africa Hopes To Advance A Campaign For Reparative Justice

THE GUARDIAN – One afternoon last October, at a hotel in a forest in a Nairobi suburb, a few dozen people sat quietly in a room watching the 2020 documentary *If Objects Could Speak*, which explores restitution by tracing the roots of a Kenyan artefact stored in a German museum.

The people were at the two-day Wakati Wetu ("Our Time" in Swahili) festival, aimed at sparking global conversations on reparative justice.

Last month, the African Union adopted a motion put forward by Ghana to label slavery and colonialism as crimes against humanity. This month, the motion will be tabled at the United Nations, with demands made for redress.

The motion, which was first announced at the UN general assembly last September, is the latest move in a strategic push by the African continent to seek reparative justice.

The AU declared 2025 the year of reparations, with a theme of Justice for Africans and People of African Descent Through Reparations, marking the first time the 55-country bloc had put the issue at the centre of its agenda. By July, the AU had extended the timeline by declaring 2026 to 2036 the Decade of Reparations to mobilise support for justice.

For decades, African countries suffered numerous injustices by the



west, including colonialism and the forced enslavement of its people. Efforts to redress these injustices and their lasting economic, social and psychological impacts have been few and far between, and largely confined to academia and nonprofit spaces. Progress has also been hindered by a lack of resources and coordinated strategy among activists, and reluctance by European govern-

ments to reopen old wounds.

With the Nairobi event, organisers hoped to get reparative justice movements on the continent to utilise arts and culture in their campaign. Liliane Umubyeyi, the co-founder and executive director of African Futures Lab, one of the organisers, said the arts could help make reparation discussions more accessible.

"The arts ... can speak to each one

of us as Africans," she said. "Art is a universal way to experience things. You don't have to have a degree to learn music."

In her keynote speech, the Kenyan author Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor said the festival offered "the hope of a sharp – often painful, yet healing – recognition" of the "cosmological scale" of the suffering that Africans had endured.

"I cannot overstate the overwhelming meaning of a space like this – a sliver of light in the long tunnel of the self we have silenced, buried and suffocated for so long," she said. "Trauma aches for redemption. History longs to heal."

She warned against what she termed "an unseemly rush" into restitution, and called for a historical audit of crimes and wrongs first to give the reparative movement a firm ideological foundation. "Reparation is first an act of moral autopsy and then moral exorcism," she said.

Analysts such as Adekeye Adebajo, the author of *The Black Atlantic's Triple Burden: Slavery, Colonialism and Reparations*, say the AU's strategic pivot on reparations might be the result of challenges posed by the current geopolitical climate.

"The AU knows this is a long-term struggle," said Adebajo, who is also professor of international relations

at the University of Pretoria, South Africa. "The current geopolitical environment is one in which [Donald] Trump is basically, in my view, a racist president."

He was echoing the thoughts of the Cape Verdean president, José Maria Neves.

"We see extremist, xenophobic, anti-immigration groups growing in former colonising powers," Neves told the news site *Brasil Já* in June 2024. "There are no political conditions to publicly discuss these questions at the moment."

The AU's moves to address historical injustices go as far back as the early 1990s at the first Pan-African Conference on Reparations, which produced the Abuja Proclamation of 1993 that demanded reparations for colonialism and the transatlantic slave trade.

However, despite multiple summits, and policy-level institutional progress, former colonial powers are yet to make amends. In 2024, France signalled a willingness to discuss reparations over the 1899 massacre of an estimated 400 people in Niger, but refused to acknowledge responsibility.

In one of the rare cases, Germany in 2011 recognised for the first time the colonial-era genocide of more than 70,000 Herero and Nama people in Namibia and promised €1.1bn in development aid to the southern African country. But Germany explicitly refused to call it "reparations", fearing that it could set a legal precedent for such claims.

Descendants of those killed in the genocide said they were excluded from negotiations and the amount was insufficient to cover the loss of life, land and livestock. They are also demanding the return of their ancestral land.

The conversation has evolved into a "Black Atlantic" movement: in September 2025, a month before Wakati Wetu, a landmark head-of-state summit took place in Addis Ababa. While Caribbean leaders such as the Barbados prime minister, Mia Mottley, attended there was a low turnout of African heads of state, sparking concerns about priorities.

However, Ghana has emerged at the forefront of the AU's latest efforts. The country, which marked 2019 as the Year of Return to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the first enslaved Africans arriving in Virginia, has positioned the diaspora as its "13th ethnic group".

Ghana's president John Mahama, the AU's champion for reparations, has established an Office for Global Reparations to institutionalise the fight, and called for a united continental push.

"The transatlantic slave trade ... is not merely a dark chapter of history, it is the greatest crime against humanity ever perpetrated," Mahama said during his speech at the UN general assembly last September.

At Wakati Wetu festival, 300 attendees participated in a mix of activities focusing on reparative justice, including documentary screenings, a standup comedy performance and panel discussions on topics such as reparation through litigation and the role of storytelling in seeking redress over past violations.

Keith Vries, a Namibian writer, activist and playwright whose work addresses and seeks to increase awareness of the Herero and Nama genocide, said art can play a huge role in delivering reparative justice.

"People must never, ever, underestimate the power of the arts and the culture in the delivery of justice," said Vries, a descendant of the Nama genocide victims. "Sometimes it bypasses race, age, culture, ideology and goes straight to the heart."

"I have an undying belief that artists could do a lot more for our people than politicians ever could."

Njahira Wangari, a Kenyan scholar and educator, noted that the reparation debate is more talked about in the Caribbean than in African countries and said the conversation was "ripe" but ought to be sensitive. "And it's not about revenge," she added. "It's about truth-telling and unravelling what's there."

There are plans for similar art and culture themed festivals to be held in different parts of the continent every two years, organisers said.

Kyeretwie Osei, the head of programmes at the Economic, Social and Cultural Council, the AU's civil society policy organ, said arts and culture would make more people care about the reparation debate and their involvement would help build momentum for the movement.

"You need pressure points from both sides," he said. "We need everyone on board and so people in the creative sector are really important in constructing the necessary narrative and building a story that will resonate among people. We deal with policy but, really, you need to combine the policy with storytelling."

36th Annual Black History Celebration



Last week's 36th Annual Black History Celebration in Raleigh, North Carolina, hosted by SAU alumna Octavia Rainey, Class of 1978, in partnership with the College Park, Idlewild, and Tarboro Road Community Center, served as a heartfelt tribute to the life and legacy of Dr. Prezell R. Robinson. At 105 years old, the esteemed alumnus and president emeritus continues to inspire generations through his remarkable life of scholarship, leadership, and service.

The event brought together numerous civic, educational, and community leaders to honor Dr. Robinson's enduring impact. Among those in attendance were U.S. Congresswoman Deborah Ross, North Carolina Senator Dan Blue, Wake County

Commissioner Tara Waters, Raleigh City Council Members Corey Branch and Stormie Forte, Saint Augustine's University Interim President Dr. Jennie Ward-Robinson, Shaw University President Dr. Paulette Dillard, members of the SAU Class of 1975, and Dr. Robinson's daughter, alumna JeSanne Robinson Johnson, Class of 1988. The keynote address was delivered by Rev. Dr. Al Leaston, the newly elected pastor of the historic First Congregational Church.

Dr. Robinson, born Prezell Russell Robinson in Batesville, South Carolina, came to Saint Augustine's College in 1944 after completing his associate's degree. A gifted athlete and accomplished scholar, he graduated in 1946 with a degree in sociology before continuing his education at Cornell University, where he earned

both his master's and doctoral degrees.

Following his studies, Dr. Robinson returned to Saint Augustine's and served the institution in several roles, including faculty member and dean. In 1967, he was appointed the college's eighth president, a position he held with distinction until 1995. During his presidency, the university experienced significant growth, including the construction of many of the buildings that still stand on campus today.

Throughout his career, Dr. Robinson received 12 honorary degrees and gained national and international recognition for his leadership. Presidents Jimmy Carter, George H. W. Bush, and Bill Clinton appointed him to roles spanning diplomatic and educational engagement with

Africa. Known affectionately on campus as "Prezi," he also served as Vice Chair of the North Carolina Board of Education and held leadership roles with the United Negro College Fund and the National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education. His peers once recognized him as one of the most effective presidents among the nation's 117 historically Black colleges and universities.

In addition to his administrative leadership, Dr. Robinson was a Fulbright Scholar who lectured internationally in India, Africa, and South America. Even after stepping down as president, his commitment to education never wavered. He continued teaching in the classroom until the age of 89 and remains an active presence at the university as President Emeritus.

First Black Boy Scout Troops in America

By Jordan Meadows

Staff Writer

Long before the Boy Scouts of America became a nationwide institution, Black communities were already working to bring the ideals of scouting to their youth. In the early twentieth century, African American leaders and volunteers organized some of the first Black Boy Scout troops in the country, helping open opportunities for young people who were frequently excluded from mainstream civic organizations.

Historians say identifying the first Black Boy Scout troop in the United States is difficult because many early troops formed before the national organization was officially established in 1910. Determining the first Black troop is even more challenging. Outreach to African Americans, Native Americans, Latinos and other minority groups was limited in scouting's earliest years, and records documenting those troops were often poorly preserved.

Still, one early unit frequently cited as among the first was founded in Elizabeth City, North Carolina, in 1911, just one year after the creation of the Boy Scouts of America.

The Elizabeth City troop encountered opposition almost immediately, but it continued meeting and became an important early example of African American participation in the movement. Similar efforts soon emerged in other communities. In 1916, the first council-sponsored Black troop in the South was organized in Louisville, Kentucky. Within a year, four officially recognized Black troops were operating in that



city. Despite these early developments, scouting opportunities for Black youth remained limited for many years. Because the national organization often allowed local councils to set their own policies, many communities refused to admit Black scouts or created separate troops with fewer resources. Some units allowed African American boys to participate but prohibited them from wearing official uniforms or imposed waiting periods before they could join.

Even outside the South, Black Boy Scouts sometimes faced hostility and violence. An account published in the newspaper *The Denver Star* in October 1913 described how a gang of white youths attacked a group of 75 Black scouts marching in their New York City neighborhood while accompanied by their own fife-and-drum corps. The scouts reportedly defended themselves until the attack-

ers dispersed. In another incident reported by *The Evening Star* in 1924, men dressed in hoods and robes burned a cross to intimidate a Black troop camping near Philadelphia.

Despite those challenges, the number of Black troops gradually increased. A 1927 report in the *Chicago newspaper* estimated there were roughly 600 Black Boy Scout troops across the United States, though only 18 of them were located in the South. By 1926 there were at least 248 all-Black troops with nearly 5,000 scouts nationwide, and the number continued to grow in the following decades.

Some of that expansion came from efforts within the national organization to extend scouting to minority communities. Leaders such as Stanley Harris, a white scouting official who later directed the Boy Scouts' Interracial Service program, worked to promote scouting among African

American and Native American youth beginning in the 1920s. Community leaders and volunteers also played a crucial role. In Mansfield, Ohio, for example, black Sunday school teacher Thompson Jackson helped establish Troop No. 7 in 1925 after organizing a group of boys in his church class. Twenty scouts from the troop received their first badges during a ceremony that year.

While the Elizabeth City troop is often recognized as one of the earliest Black Boy Scout units, other troops have also claimed that distinction. An article in the March 1936 issue of *Scouting magazine* noted that Troop 55 of Brooklyn, New York, believed it was the first African American troop in the country.

As more troops formed, scouting leaders slowly expanded outreach to Black communities. Councils began hiring Black field executives, developing camps specifically for Black troops and encouraging participation in national events. At the 1937 National Jamboree, African American troops from across the country attended, and Black adult leaders participated in national training programs for the first time.

By the end of World War II, the movement had grown significantly. By 1945, more than 3,500 Black Boy Scout troops and nearly 800 Cub Scout packs were operating across the United States. Still, many troops remained segregated for decades. Integration within scouting councils occurred gradually, particularly in the South. In North Carolina, the Old Hickory Council—one of the last segregated Boy Scout councils—did not fully integrate its troops until 1974.

Nearly 200 Local Girls Take the Court for Sports, Wellness & Confidence with Buffalo Wild Wings Foundation



Boys & Girls Clubs of America and the Buffalo Wild Wings Foundation hosted a high-energy sports and wellness event for nearly 200 girls from Boys & Girls Clubs of Wake and Johnston Counties this evening (March 5). The event featured rotating activities designed to build confidence, teamwork, and healthy lifestyles, including Zumba, yoga, basketball, flag football (weather permitting), volleyball and a Girls in Sports empowerment art project and photo booth. It was held at Raleigh Girls Club of Wake County, 701 N. Raleigh Blvd., Raleigh, N.C., 27610.



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Community

Durham's Historic Shepard House at NC Central Turns 100

By Jordan Meadows

Staff Writer

In 1925, a home rose on the corner of Fayetteville and Brant Streets in Durham, built for the founder of what would become one of the nation's most important historically Black universities. One hundred years later, the Dr. James E. Shepard House at North Carolina Central University still stands.

The home was constructed for university founder and first president James E. Shepard and his family after the original president's residence burned in 1923.

According to university archivist Andre Vann, the house itself was the result of a broad community effort. "This home, which celebrates its centennial this year, came as a result of a gift and support from Dr. Shepard's many friends," Vann said. "Over the next two years they raised funds in both the Black community and white community to have this wonderful house built that stands today as an anchor of what we call Centennial Square."

The residence, located at 1902 Fayetteville Street, is now the oldest



house in the university's property inventory and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The house contains more than 4,000 square feet and includes a main entryway, parlor, dining room, den, two sun porches, four upstairs bedrooms and a basement. Vann noted that the den was Shepard's favorite room, while the home's distinctive architecture includes many horizontal design

lines inspired by plans associated with famed designer Frank Lloyd Wright.

Beyond its architectural features, the Shepard House played a central role in campus life during the early decades of the university.

"The James Shepard House was a very important and focal point for life here on this campus," Vann said. "Not only as the home for Dr.

Shepard but also for many guests who would come to speak in the B.N. Duke Auditorium." Among the prominent figures hosted at the home were renowned intellectuals such as W. E. B. Du Bois and Benjamin E. Mays.

The home also served as a gathering place during an era defined by segregation in the South. Vann recalled a historic moment when Eleanor Roosevelt visited the campus and was entertained at the house by university leadership.

"While Jim Crow law was on the books, the university was able to offer opportunities for whites and Blacks to sit together and talk and communicate over food," Vann said. Shepard himself, in 1910, founded the National Religious Training School and Chautauqua for the Colored Race, the institution that eventually became North Carolina Central University—the first state-supported liberal arts college for Black students in the nation. An educator, pharmacist, businessman and civil servant, Shepard was also one of the first investors in North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company and helped incorporate Mechanics and Farmers

Bank, both key institutions of Durham's historic Black Wall Street.

The Shepard House remained a presidential residence for decades. After Shepard's death in 1947, the State of North Carolina purchased the home in 1949, and it continued to house university presidents and chancellors until 1974. Leaders including presidents Alfonso Elder and Albert N. Whiting lived there during their tenures. In later years, the building nearly disappeared.

"This house had almost faced demolition on three different occasions," Vann said. "Each and every time it was alums working with the leaders of the institution who talked about the importance and the need of preserving such a structure."

Preservation eventually gained momentum under Chancellor Julius L. Chambers and later Chancellor James Ammons. The restoration effort culminated in a major renovation completed in 2004, funded in part by more than \$340,000 from the National Park Service along with private donations and alumni support. The project also benefited from the work of renowned Durham architect Phil Freelon, who helped stabilize and preserve portions of the

house, including a breakfast nook that had nearly collapsed.

Today, the Shepard House serves as a museum and cultural site featuring exhibits on Shepard's life and the early history of the university. The interior has been recreated in a 1940s style based on photographs and interviews with Shepard's descendants and community members. Furnishings include Tiffany-style lamps, period furniture and a player baby grand piano, giving visitors a glimpse of the home as it would have appeared during the height of Shepard's leadership before his death in 1947.

The home now anchors the university's Centennial Square, alongside Centennial Gardens and Centennial Chapel, which was dedicated during the school's 2010 centennial celebration.

"This house serves as a very important anchor for the university, a look at our historical past but also a great opportunity to prospect going forward," Vann said. "It allows people to feel the spirit of Dr. Shepard and understand the important function of a house like this to the history of North Carolina Central University."

Honoring Her Honor, Judge Betty J. Williams: Champion of Justice and Proud Aggie Alumna

By Jheri Hardaway

Staff Writer

In honor of Women's History Month, The Carolinian is proud to celebrate North Carolina's own Judge Betty J. Williams, a distinguished alumna of North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University and a dedicated career social worker who rose to prominence in the New York State Unified Court System.

Judge Williams' impressive judicial career includes being elected to Civil Court in 2000 and re-elected in 2010. She was appointed an Acting Supreme Court Justice on March 31, 2009, before her election to the New York State Supreme Court in November 2013. A longtime Brooklyn resident, she has presided in various parts of Kings County Criminal Court. Justice Williams was assigned to Kings County Criminal Court where she presided in the Arraignment Parts, All Purpose Parts, Domestic Violence Parts, Trial Parts and Jury 1. Notably, Justice Williams was assigned to the Misdemeanor Brook-



lyn Treatment Court (MBTC) and Part 70 (felony), both of which follow the national drug court model. This model provides long-term substance abuse offenders with an opportunity to receive treatment instead of incarceration, reflecting her commitment to rehabilitation and restorative justice.

Justice Williams is an accom-

plished scholar, holding a Bachelor of Science from NC A&T State University (1966), a Master of Science from Columbia University (1973), and a Juris Doctor from New York Law School (1984). While at New York Law School, she became the first woman to receive the Abraham Markoff Scholarship Award from the New York State Bar Association, Worker's Compensation Division.

Beyond the bench, Judge Williams is a passionate advocate for community involvement, public service, and a loyal mentor to countless young leaders. She has demonstrated her leadership with the National Association of Women Justices (NAWJ), NAWJ Women in Prison Committee, and Chairperson Emeritus of the New York Chapter's Women in Prison Committee. She has organized and participated in numerous workshops for incarcerated women across New York State on vital topics such as Parole Issues, Re-Entry, and the Collateral Consequences of Criminal Convictions.

Her dedication to education and career development is evident in

her instrumental role in opening the Kings County Criminal Court Career and Education Center in 2009 and the Brooklyn Youth General Equivalency Diploma Program in 2010, which has helped over 20 students receive their GED. Judge Williams is the recipient of numerous awards for her public and community service, including the NAACP Legal Leadership Award (2012), the Justice Vaino Spencer Leadership Award from The National Association of Women Justices (2009), and the National Sojourner Truth Meritorious Service Award (2007).

Affectionately known by her mentees around the world as Judge Betty, not only does our retired judge guide and influence future leaders she also dedicates time and her own resources to connecting the past and the future. Judge Betty ensured the actions of the NC A&T Four were commemorated forever by contributing towards the famous A&T Four statue on campus. With her name enshrined forever on the side of the statue her dedication to our history is undeniable.



The Raleigh Women's Market

By Jordan Meadows

Staff Writer

The Raleigh Women's Market returned to downtown Raleigh this month, transforming Moore Square into a place for women-owned businesses, artists and performers from across the Triangle. Held last Sunday afternoon, the event coincided with International Women's Day and was part of the broader celebrations of Women's History Month.

The market featured a curated selection of women-owned and women-led small businesses. Visitors browsed handcrafted goods, artwork and other unique products created by female entrepreneurs while enjoying an atmosphere designed to celebrate women supporting women. In addition to shopping, the event included live performances by female musicians, giving the afternoon a soundtrack of local talent.

Food was also part of the draw, with women-owned food trucks serving a range of dishes to marketgoers throughout the day. Among them were Shawerma Bowl, a Jordanian Mediterranean food truck that serves chicken shawerma, lamb gyro and vegan falafel bowls. Other spots offered fresh halal shawarma and gyros, and Queen Quisines, and fried hotdogs, chicken sandwiches, chicken bites, wings, fries and loaded fries.

The 2nd Annual Raleigh Women's Market was founded by Bethany Carpenter four years ago in Wilmington, North Carolina. Since moving to the capital city in 2024, it has quickly grown—reflecting the increasing demand for spaces that promote local creators while allowing them to connect directly with their communities.

Attendees also had the opportunity to learn about other programs taking place across the Triangle during Women's History Month, linking the market to a broader network of events recognizing women's achievements and contributions, such as the children's event on rocket science at the Southeast Raleigh library and the 2nd Annual International Women's Day Expo in Cary.



Durham Omega's Talent Hunt

On Saturday February 07, 2026, The Durham Chapter of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity held its annual Talent Hunt Program. The event was held at St. Joseph AME Church in Durham, N.C. The Talent Hunt Program is one of the Fraternity's International mandated programs. Established in 1946 to provide youth with opportunities to showcase their artistic and creative talents. This year's participants are sitting in the front row. L-R: Jaden Jampayas-1st place, Ashten Jampayas-4th place, Siena Geddes-3rd place & Raphael Mouawad-2nd place. The other 2 participants are Hallett Ray & Caroline Hobbs.

State Workers, Free Surgery — CONT. FROM PAGE 5

on traditional insurance networks to manage their workers' health care. But double-digit cost and premium increases in recent years have prompted more experimentation with new strategies, said Shawn Gremminger, president and CEO of the National Alliance of Healthcare Purchaser Coalitions.

In the coalition's 2025 survey, 65 percent of employers with more than 50,000 workers said they were using "centers of excellence" programs that steer patients to selected providers for certain procedures. Nearly half said they were redirecting patients to lower-cost sites of care, and 44 percent reported contracting directly with high-value hospitals.

"The promise is that you will be getting better prices and better quality," Gremminger said. "The reason these models are taking off is that they potentially help achieve both of those aims."

Andrew Ryan, a health policy researcher at Brown University, said Lantern and other third-party platforms have an advantage because they operate outside the traditional insurance system, where consolidated hospital systems hold significant leverage.

When insurers have made similar efforts to steer patients to lower-cost providers, he said, hospitals have always pushed back, threatening to pull their facilities out of the insurer's network.

Lantern bypasses that problem by allowing employers to contract directly with selected providers, said Ryan, who directs the Center for Advancing Health Policy through Research at Brown University.



ORTHOCAROLINA'S HUNTERSVILLE OFFICE WITH PLANS TO OFFER SELECT ORTHOPEDIC SURGERIES FREE FOR STATE HEALTH PLAN MEMBERS.

"It's completely plausible that this can save money," he said, adding that the biggest opponents to the program will likely be hospitals and insurance networks "that have jacked up prices through their anti-competitive practices."

"They hate having patients steered away from them," he said.

Surgeons embrace the model Leo Spector, chief executive officer of OrthoCarolina, said the practice signed on because the program makes it easy for patients to get surgeries without worrying about co-pays and deductibles — out-of-pocket costs that can often be a disincentive to getting the procedure done.

The program also gives OrthoCarolina access to a greater pool of patients. And by bundling surgeries

into a single payment, it streamlines billing and insurance approvals, he said.

Spector said such arrangements are gaining traction as employers look for alternatives to traditional insurance networks.

"It's a disruptor in the market," he said. "And I think disruptors are good because they create competition. It's going to force the traditional payers to get better at what they do and help us ultimately lower that cost of care."

Novant Health declined to make anyone available for an interview, but during a March 4 news conference, Novant Chief Medical Officer Pam Oliver said, "We've seen firsthand how these models can deliver the caliber of care patients deserve,

while alleviating financial concerns. In fact, we have similar approaches for our team members."

How it works for state employees Since Lantern's soft launch last fall with the two orthopedic practices, about 378 State Health Plan members have used the program, Lantern said. Hundreds more are scheduled for surgery over the next few months.

When State Health Plan members need one of the covered procedures, they're directed to contact Lantern, which assigns them a navigator to help coordinate their care, Waterfield said.

The navigator gathers their medical records, identifies surgeons in Lantern's network who specialize in the procedure and schedules appointments. Patients are typically given the names of several providers and can choose the one they prefer.

If the nearest participating surgeon is far away, the plan covers travel costs for the patient and a companion. Depending on the distance, the benefit can include mileage reimbursement, hotel stays and other expenses.

Suzanne Beasley, director of government relations for the State Employees Association of North Carolina, said the group has been spreading the word about the program to its members, though it's too soon to know how it's working.

"It certainly sounds great," she said. "If folks can get good, well-vetted care at no cost, that certainly could help offset some of the rising costs. Health care is broken, period. We have to start thinking outside the box."



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Bernard LaFayette, A Civil Rights Leader, Dies At Age 85

THE GUARDIAN - Bernard LaFayette, the advance man who did the risky groundwork for the voter registration campaign in Selma, Alabama, that culminated in the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, has died.

Bernard LaFayette III said his father died Thursday morning of a heart attack. He was 85.

On 7 March 1965, the beating of future congressman John Lewis and voting rights marchers on Selma's Edmund Pettus Bridge led the evening news, shocking the nation's conscience and pushing Congress to act. But two years before "Bloody Sunday", it was LaFayette who quietly set the stage for Selma and the advances in voting rights that would follow.

LaFayette was one of a delegation of Nashville students who in 1960 helped found the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, which organized desegregation and voting rights campaigns across the south. SNCC crossed Selma off its map after some initial scouting determined "the white folks were too mean and the Black folks were too scared", LaFayette said.

But he insisted on trying anyway. Named director of the Alabama voter registration campaign

in 1963, LaFayette moved to the town and, with his former wife, Colia Liddell, gradually built the leadership capacity of the local people, convincing them change was possible and creating momentum that could not be stopped. He described this work in a 2013 memoir, *In Peace and Freedom: My Journey in Selma*.

The many dangers LaFayette faced included an assassination attempt on the same night Medgar Evers was murdered in Mississippi, in what the FBI said was a conspiracy to kill civil rights workers.

LaFayette was already working on a new project in Chicago by the time his work in Selma came to fruition in 1965. He had planned to join the Selma-to-Montgomery march on day two, so he missed Bloody Sunday when the march was stopped by teargas and club-wielding state troopers before it even got out of Selma.

He shifted quickly, rounding up people in Chicago and arranging transport to Alabama for a second attempt. They set off two weeks later on what had become a victory march: President Lyndon Johnson had introduced the Voting Rights Act to Congress.

LaFayette grew up in Tampa,

Florida, where he recalled trying to board a trolley with his grandmother when he was seven years old. Black passengers had to pay at the front, then walk to the back to climb on. But the conductor began to pull away before they could board, and his grandmother fell. He was too little to help.

"I felt like a sword cut me in half, and I vowed I would do something about this problem one day," he wrote in his memoir.

It was his grandmother who decided he was destined to become a preacher. She arranged for him to attend Nashville's American Baptist Theological Seminary (now American Baptist College), where he roomed with Lewis, and both helped lead the nonviolent civil disobedience campaign that led to Nashville becoming the first major southern city to desegregate its downtown accommodations.

Freedom Rides of 1961

In 1961, LaFayette dropped out of college in the middle of final exams to join an official Freedom Ride, one of many that sought to force southern authorities to comply with the court's ruling. He was beaten in Montgomery, Alabama, and arrested in Jackson, Mississippi, becoming one of more than 300 freedom riders sent to Parchman prison.

LaFayette later trained Black youth to become leaders in the

Chicago freedom movement and helped organize tenant unions.

"The tenant protections we have today are really a direct outcome of that work in Chicago," said Mary Lou Finley, a professor emerita at Antioch University Seattle who worked with LaFayette in Chicago in the 1960s.

LaFayette also worked alongside Andrew Young and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference to prepare for the Martin Luther King Jr.'s ill-fated northern campaign. Several of King's marches were attacked by white mobs, but LaFayette and Young challenged the notion that the Chicago movement was a failure.

By 1968, LaFayette was the national coordinator of King's

poor people's campaign and was with King at the Lorraine motel on the morning of his assassination. King's last words to him were about the need to institutionalize and internationalize the nonviolence movement. LaFayette made this his life's mission.

After King died, LaFayette returned to American Baptist to complete his bachelor's degree and then earned a master's and doctorate from Harvard University. He later served as director of peace and justice in Latin America as chair of the Consortium on Peace Research, Education and Development; director of the Center for Nonviolence and Peace Studies at the University of Rhode Island; distinguished senior scholar-in-

residence at the Candler School of Theology at Emory University; and minister of the Westminster Presbyterian church in Tuskegee, Alabama, among other positions.

"Bernard did work in Latin America. He did nonviolence workshops in South Africa with the African national congress. He went to Nigeria when the civil war was happening there," Young said. "Bernard literally went everywhere he was invited as sort of a global prophet of nonviolence."

In his memoir, LaFayette wrote that the ever-present threat of death during those early years of organizing taught him that the value of life "lies not in longevity, but in what people do to give it significance".

NC's Christian Nationalism Support Tops US Average But Trails Much Of Southeast

NC Newline - North Carolinians have more affinity for Christian nationalism than the national average, but less than residents of other Southeastern states, according to a new report.

In a survey released this week, the nonpartisan Public Religion Research Institute (PRRI) found a strong correlation between Christian nationalist ideology — the concept that the United States belongs to and exists for the benefit of Christians — and party affiliation and geographical location.

In the Southeast, North Carolina is tied with Tennessee for the second-lowest share of people who believe in or sympathize with Christian nationalism at 36%. Only Virginia (30%) is lower in the region. The national average is 32%.

The PRRI survey found the highest levels of support for Christian nationalism in red states, primarily in the south and central portion of the country, like Arkansas (54%), Mississippi (52%), West Virginia (51%),

Oklahoma (49%) and Wyoming (46%).

On the other hand, the states with the lowest shares of Christian nationalism adherents and sympathizers are blue and mostly coastal: California (22%), New Jersey (22%), New York (21%), Washington (18%) and Massachusetts (15%).

In North Carolina and most other swing states, roughly a third of residents say they're adherents or sympathizers: 34% in Pennsylvania, 33% in Michigan, 32% in Wisconsin, and 30% in Arizona. However, Georgia has the highest percentage of supporters of any swing state (42%), while Nevada has the lowest (25%).

Jason Bivins, a professor for U.S. religion and politics at North Carolina State University, said the survey serves as confirmation in a sense.

"It's a reflection of the way things have been going electorally," he said.

While the report analyzed the state level, there wasn't a distinction between urban and rural areas.

Large urban centers are what sets

North Carolina apart from some of the other states in the Southeast, Bivins said, with cities like Charlotte, Greensboro and the Research Triangle area.

"That's where we see a lot of the weaker emphasis on Christian nationalism, as compared to states like Arkansas and Mississippi," he explained.

Looking at party affiliation, a majority of Republicans qualify as either Christian nationalism adherents (21%) or sympathizers (35%), compared with a fourth of independents (7% adherents and 18% sympathizers) and less than a fifth of Democrats (5% adherents and 12% sympathizers), according to the poll.

The report found a high correlation between favorable views of President Donald Trump and Christian nationalism at the state level. States like Arkansas and Mississippi have 53% and 50% support for Trump respectively, while in Massachusetts

(See *NC CHRISTIAN NAT.*, P. 12)



Practical Biblical Principles

Contend For The Faith
Read: Jude 1:1-7

By: John L. Caldwell, Pastor

New Jerusalem Baptist Cathedral
The word "contend" means to dispute or struggle or fight in opposition or combat."

Jude the brother of James and the half brother of Jesus did not become saved until after Jesus's resurrection. Once Jude signed on as a believer, he was committed. The short epistle he wrote to us in the Book of Jude was all inspired by the Holy Spirit just like the rest of the gospel. We can know this because Jude quotes twice from the non-canonical books. The first quote is from the "Assumption of Moses" (Jude 1:9) and the second quote is from the "Apocalypse of First Enoch" (Jude 1:14-15). Jude was born some 2320 years after Enoch and some 1500 years after Moses. Only the Holy Spirit can produce inspired revelation from the past such as this. Jude used these revelations in his ministry against false teachers.

The previous inspired revelations from the non-canonical books were used by Jude to support His ministry of letting all know that defending the word and works of God are not new. "But I want to remind you, though you once knew this, that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe" (Jude 1:5). Jude continues, "And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgement of the great day" (Jude 1:6).

What Jude is telling his audience and our churches today is study God's word well enough so that you will not be fooled by false teachers

of the bible. Not only that but be able to defend the word of God from those who teach it wrong. Also, the churches are to protect the weaker ones among them who do not know the gospel well enough from these false teachers. Jude is very adamant about such spiritual defense and biblical protection in the church.

Not only is false teaching biblically incorrect, but it also leads to incorrect living. Jude had identified the major points in the false teaching in his day. It was the incorrect teaching about God's grace. Such false teachings advocated that out of God's grace one can indulge in the fleshly and sexually activity and still be saved. In such teaching one can see how strong the urge for fleshly indulgence is over the word of God. We can see this today when we read or hear about somebody getting killed over the love of a woman. Or a husband killing his long-time-wife to be with his new girlfriend. It is the strong, lustful, sexual drive that's behind such behavior and not agape love. This kind of sex/murder behavior is very prevalent today. False teachers are saying such behavior is okay with God. They themselves think that it is okay and that is why they do it. All of this is satanically driven. This is a part of Revelation 12:15 where the devil is spewing out a flood of evil at God's people hoping they will get caught up in such evil tides and do evil against God.

The attempt to erase the words of God from the minds of God's children is also a part of that evil flood the devil is constantly spewing in the pathway of God's children.

Jude defines these false teachers as dreamers defiling the flesh, rejecting authority, and speaking evil of dignitaries (heavenly) (Jude

1:8). Jude also sees the false teachers as being apostate, depraved, and doomed. "These are spots in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear, serving only themselves. They are clouds without water, carried about by the winds; late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame; wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever" (Jude 1:12-13).

These are grumblers, complainers, walking according to their own lust; and they mouth great swelling words, flattering people to gain advantage (Jude 1:16).

Jude then encourages God's people and the church today to remember the words spoken before by the apostles of our Lord, Jesus Christ. "Building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" (Jude 1:20). But others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, but be careful not to be pulled along with their sins (Jude 1:22-23).

Jude ends his letter with one of the greatest benedictions of the Bible: Such benedictions are given as blessing to cover all who strives to do God's will and commandments.

"Now to Him Who is able to keep you from stumbling, And to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. To God our Savior, Who alone is wise, Be glory and majesty, Dominion and power, Both now and forever." Amen.

Church for these reasons above and others, we must defend our faith and beliefs so as not to fall prey to false teachers.

SERMON of the WEEK



LPHC: SUNDAY,
MARCH 1, 2026

The Senior Choir of Lincoln Park Holiness Church celebrated their 86th anniversary on Sunday, March 1, 2026. The service was opened with prayer by Mother Belinda McKoy. Scripture was read by Minister Bertha Williams, followed by a hearty welcome by Sister Nina

Edwards. The dynamic History of the Choir was given by Sister Donna Murphy. Members were happy to have former choir president Sister Joanne Thomas in attendance. The congregation was blessed with musical selections by the Senior Choir which included "I Love the Lord," "Work it For Your Good," soloist Evangelist Selena Hunter and "He's a Wonder in My Soul," soloist Mother Belinda McKoy.

Pastor William "Billy" Eli Ratcliff delivered an encouraging message to the Senior Choir and all in attendance. Scriptures were taken from Psalm 96, Exodus 15 and Lamentations 3. Pastor Ratcliff, in his sermon spoke from the topic "Sing Sing Sing." He stated: sing a song, sing a new song to the Lord, all the earth is calling for a "global choir." When we sing unto the Lord, God moves in us. Sing a new song! All of us have been through trials and tribulations, singing a new song means God will do

something new and fresh in our lives.

Sing Sing Sing, "Jesus is on the Mainline" tell Him what you want, call Him up and tell Him what you want. When you tell Him what you want, He will give you a new song in your heart. Sing every day, sing for hope all day long. "This Joy I Have" the world didn't give it and the world can't take it away. Man can take away a lot of things, but he can't take Jesus nor our salvation away. "I Woke Up this Morning with My Mind Stayed on Jesus," this morning when I rose up I didn't have no doubt, as long as I've got King Jesus, everything's gonna be alright. The Lord God will move in when we call on Him in the midnight hour and whenever we call on Him.

Pastor Ratcliff is grateful for the dedicated and loyal service given to Lincoln Park Holiness Church by the Senior Choir during these past 86 years. May God continue to bless each one of you.



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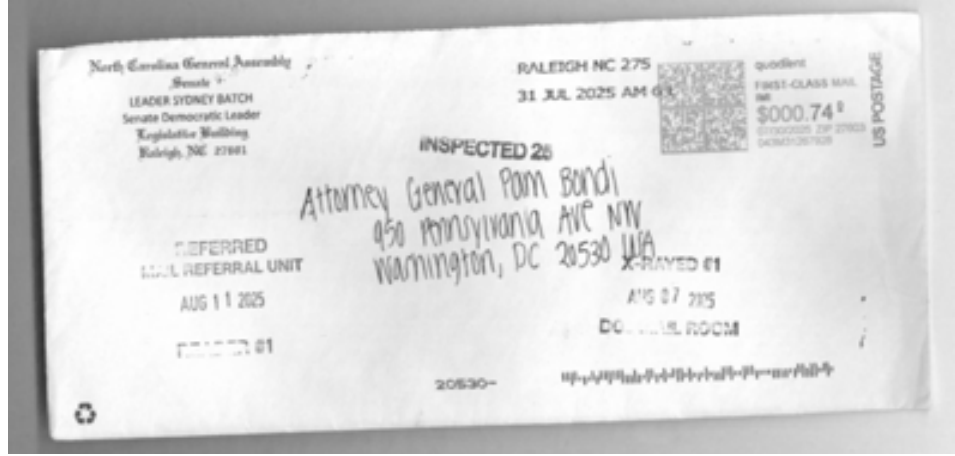


Editorials

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.

For All the Right Reasons, Sydney Batch and Senate Democrats are in the Epstein Files



By Jheri Hardaway

Staff Writer

RALEIGH - Sorry for the clickbait! However, it is important to note that Sydney Batch and several North Carolina State Senators are in the Epstein Files, appealing to our congress to investigate the perpetrators of these crimes against humanity. File EFTA0017248, shows the letter addressed, July 29, 2025, to The Honorable Pam Bondi, Attorney General of the United States, U.S. Department of Justice, from Members of the North Carolina Congressional Delegation, United States Congress, Washington, D.C., reads,

“To Attorney General Bondi and Members of the North Carolina Congressional Delegation: We write to you as members of the North Carolina Senate in support of the bipartisan subpoena of the Department of Justice for files related to Jeffrey Epstein. The subpoena calls for the Epstein files in the Justice Department’s possession to be provided to Congress, but the names of the victims to be redacted. This includes, most urgently, the names of those who participated in, facilitated, or helped conceal the abuse, trafficking, and exploitation of minors. North Carolina has taken a leading role in the fight against human trafficking. In recent years, our state has passed bipartisan legislation to crack down on child predators, increase penalties for traffickers, support survivors, and promote transparency in the justice system. We are proud of that record, and we believe this moment calls for that same clarity, unity, and resolve. The Epstein case is one of the most disturbing examples of organized exploitation in modern history. Survivors, many of them minors, were victimized over years, and across multiple jurisdictions. The failure to fully expose and prosecute those responsible represents a deep injustice, and one that continues to erode public trust in our institutions. The U.S. Department of Justice has confirmed what many Americans have long feared: that prominent names are among the sealed records related to Epstein’s crimes. If we are to restore confidence in the rule of law and dispel rampant conspiracy theories surrounding Jeffrey Epstein, those records must be released fully and without delay, provided they do not compromise the identity or safety of the victims. This is an urgent matter of public safety, justice, and transparency. No one should be above the law, and no survivor should be left wondering if the person who harmed them will ever be held accountable. We urge the Department of Justice to take immediate steps to unseal and release all relevant files pertaining to known perpetrators and co-conspirators in the Epstein case. We call on our state’s congressional delegation to actively support this effort, and to ensure that the interests of justice and public trust are upheld.”

Alongside Minority Leader Batch are the signatures of Senator Gale Adcock, Senator Val Applewhite, Senator Woodson Bradley, Senator Jay J. Chaudhuri, Senator Sophia Chitlik, Senator Terence Everitt, Senator Micahel Garrett, Senator Lisa Grafstein, Senator Julie Mayfield, Senator Mujtaba A. Mohammed, Senator Natalie Murdock, Senator DeAndrea Salvador, Senator Kandie D. Smith, Senator Caleb Theodros, and Senator Joyce Waddell. Zero North Carolina Senator Republicans supported this effort. As get ready to vote in November 2026, lets keep in mind who signed on to support transparency and justice for victims.



leadership.

This is not about one seat. It is about collective stewardship.

Rocky Mount has strong bones. Our historic downtown reflects significant Black ownership, but ownership without access to capital. Buildings filled with deferred maintenance, yet full of potential. With intentional investment, disciplined leadership, and community unity, these same blocks can become a national model for Black-led revitalization.

This moment is bigger than one city.

We cannot rely on symbolism. We cannot assume that representation alone guarantees transformation. If we want change, we must organize it. If we want ownership, we must build it. If we want wealth, we must circulate it intentionally. We can become a shining models others can duplicate.

When everything feels like it has hit rock bottom, that is often the foundation for something stronger. Rock bottom is not the end. It is bedrock.

This is the moment to rebuild block by block. To demand accountability. To support Black enterprise. To create systems that outlive personalities.

To rebuild the people.
To rebuild the city.
To rebuild economic dignity.
If you have vision, discipline, skill, or heart, join us.
Legacy is not inherited. It is built.
Let’s make it POP.
People Over Profit.
CharlesVerbRoberson@gmail.



JESSE WAS A POLITICIAN

Last week was a good week for me. I was moved by the services honoring Jesse Jackson. They were inspiring and felt like a long walk down memory lane. It was a good walk. Those memories reminded me of times that were meaningful, even if they were not perfect.

If someone had told me back then that we would face the kinds of challenges we see today, I do not think I would have been surprised. Those earlier years were not perfect either. I remember writing after Jesse did not win the 1988 presidential election and asking myself when someone would run for president who believed as I did.

It took time, but eventually someone came close. Barack Obama did not share every view I held, but he came closer than anyone else before him. To be clear, he supported charter schools, and I did not. I believed then, and still believe now, that there were deeper intentions behind some of those policies. Still, he won, and I was thrilled.

Jesse Jackson was clearly part of the divine plan for presidential politics. His campaigns changed the landscape forever. The Raleigh Jackson crowd certainly stirred up some trouble at the time. Some people worried that we were too intellectual or that we might disrupt the Democratic Party’s plans. But we did not care. We were enthusiastic and willing to try what others said was impossible.

Even though Jesse did not win the presidency in 1984 or 1988, it still felt like victory. The enthusiasm, the hope, and the sense that something new was possible mattered just as much. Watching the services last week reminded me of that spirit.

I remember recognizing, even then, that when Jesse spoke, it often felt as though something greater than him was speaking through him. Just as Barack Obama seemed uniquely prepared for the moment when he appeared, Jesse Jackson also seemed shaped for his purpose.

One day I hope every child born, regardless of circumstance, will understand that they are here for a reason and that their place in this world matters as much as anyone else’s. Whether someone’s role is in a home, a neighborhood, a church, an AA meeting, a workplace, or a community, each life carries meaning. We are all somebody.

As I scrolled through Facebook during and after the services, it was interesting to see the reactions from people watching them. Some were offended by moments of laughter. Others criticized remarks from Kamala Harris, saying that her comment, “If I were one to say I told you so, I would say I told you so,” was too political for a funeral. Some even called parts of the service a comedy hour.

My response was simple. Many of our funerals last four or five hours, and they are celebrations of life. In those celebrations there is sadness, but there is also humor, storytelling, and joy.

Interestingly, few people noted that no Republican president attended. Few mentioned that a planned Wednesday service in Washington, D.C. was canceled. Few complained that Jesse Jackson, who influenced people across the world, did not receive the honor of having flags lowered or lying in state in the Capitol rotunda, honors that have been granted to others whose contributions were far smaller.

That contrast speaks to the divide our country is living through right now. Still, at least people watched.

I was proud of Jesse Jackson’s six children and his grandsons who participated in the funeral. I loved hearing them describe how, despite being a busy man trying to change the world, their father still made time for them. Each spoke about the quality time he gave them. Not every child of a famous and busy parent can say that.

I was surprised to hear Jesse Jackson Jr. criticize some of the speeches, saying they were political and that the speakers did not really know his father. I suspect there is something deeper behind that reaction. He has experienced a great deal of loss and hardship in recent years. Grief can sometimes come out as anger, and that anger can be misdirected.

I only wish his words had not provided ammunition for those who never admired Jesse Jackson in the first place. The truth is that many of the people who spoke did know him. They had worked alongside him for decades.

I met Jesse Jackson once myself. We rode together into town for about an hour, and he did not say a word the entire time. Yet even in that quiet moment I felt I understood something about him. Later I spoke on a national television program and was asked whether I had always supported Jesse Jackson. My answer was simple: yes, always.

One of his sons mentioned that Jesse was an introvert, and that did not surprise me at all. I recognized that quietness. When he stepped onto a stage or into a convention hall, he could turn on like a light bulb. I understand that because I am the same way. Some introverts conserve their energy through quiet reflection, reading, or meditation, and then speak powerfully when the moment calls for it.

I do not know exactly what Jesse Jr. is going through right now, but I hope he finds peace. He has endured many losses, and healing takes time.

As for the criticism that the services were political, of course they were. Jesse Jackson’s life was political. Anyone who works to change government policy or expand rights for others inevitably speaks in political terms.

Political is not a dirty word. It is simply the language of public life and social change. If Jesse had spoken at his own funeral, he would have spoken politically too. He would have talked about justice, equality, faith, and the responsibility to lift others up. Those themes are spiritual, but they are also political when they challenge the structures of power in our society.



Over the weekend I celebrated my 73rd birthday. Seventy-three! When I say it, I’m amazed. So much of this aging process takes me by surprise. I remember when my mother was 73. It was right around this age when I began to acknowledge her aging. In the next three years, we would be dealing with the onslaught of Alzheimer’s disease and the realization that she could no longer live alone. The next seven years would be tough. Repeated cardiac incidents, caregiver issues, and the heartbreaking reality of hopelessness and impending loss.

Now I’m 73. I’m still working, still living independently, looking pretty good. At a gathering of friends this weekend at a lovely restaurant in North Hills, there were several tables of African American seniors, enjoying family over lunch. It made me smile. We looked good! Aging isn’t what is used to be. What we think of as middle age seemingly extends longer than ever. Seventy really is the new sixty. This is particularly true of Black women.

We are taking better care of ourselves than our male counterparts. Many couples who married as young people now make you wonder if Pops got himself a younger woman. We’re dressing more stylishly, keeping our hair and nails done. I believe we are determined to remain in the game: vibrant, relevant, aware. Men, not so much.

You don’t have to wait until they’re officially seniors to see the decline. I’m not sure what happens. At some time, that good-looking young man you met in school turns into an old person, right before your eyes. It should not be a surprise. Men are infamous for failing to seek preventative healthcare. They wait until some body part is about to fall off before they finally go to the doctor. Even as Baby Boomers, most of us have had access to decent healthcare most of our lives. There really is no excuse.

Statistically, the overall age of mortality for Black people is 74. Black men keep that number lower at 71-72 year being their average. Black women average out at around 76-77. That is not unique to African Americans. Men across racial lines live shorter lives than women.

According to the CDC, heart disease is the number 1 cause of death for Black adults. This is strongly linked to high blood pressure which affects 56.8% of Black men. What we know now is that early treatment, regular monitoring, and life-style changes can make this manageable if not preventable. The number 2 cause of death is cancer. The CDC has determined that higher mortality in Black men is due to later diagnosis and early screening. Brothers, go to the doctor, often and early. If not, you’ll be looking down from Heaven (let’s keep a good thought) at your wife on Senior dating sites looking for a spry 55-year-old who uses his health insurance and gym membership.

We all have an obligation to do the best we can do to remain healthy and viable. Life is challenging. There are factors that contribute to the mortality numbers that are outside our control like unintentional injuries, homicides, and genetic predisposition to strokes and diabetes. While we can’t foresee the future to prevent accidents, and we can’t change our family history, we can do our best to utilize the preventative measures available such as early screenings, establishing a pattern of consistent primary care, taking the medication/treatment prescribed how and when intended, and applying common-sense in your everyday life.

I don’t think of myself as trendy or easily influenced. Nor am I a hypochondriac, but over the past decade, I have found value in establishing a healthcare team. I need them working in tandem to keep me on my feet, looking good, and thinking clearly. So far, so good. At different times in my life, I have been drawn to less traditional approaches to health with various degrees of success and disappointment. In the eighties, I was all chanting and crystals. In the nineties, I was mixing herbs. I was also eating way too much really good, rich food. By 2013 when I moved to North Carolina to work for the State, I was headed toward 400 lbs. with limited mobility. God had made a way for me to have bariatric surgery, and it was life changing. I became serious about my health and my life-style choices. I still don’t exercise regularly but I do enjoy a good walk in beautiful weather. I still love fried catfish and creamy grits with lots of butter but not much and not often. I strive for good posture because I’m determined to not walk “old.” I love being 73, the “new” 73. It’s all about staying healthy and happy.

Other Viewpoints



By Charles “Verb” Roberson
City Councilmember, Ward 3
Rocky Mount, North Carolina

On December 8, 2025, I took my seat on the City Council in my hometown of Rocky Mount, North Carolina. I did not run for office because politics was trendy. I ran because I saw firsthand how power works, and who it works for.

Rocky Mount is a majority Black city of roughly 54,000 people. It carries deep historical weight. Martin Luther King Jr. delivered one of the earliest versions of his “I Have a Dream” speech here. We are minutes from Princeville, the first town chartered by formerly enslaved Africans. This is the birthplace of Thelonious Monk and Hall of Fame baseball legend Buck Leonard. We are rich in legacy. But legacy alone does not close wealth gaps.

Last year, our City Council approved a budget of more than \$280 million. Yet the historically black side remains one of the most economically distressed areas in North Carolina. Less than 5 percent of city spending with outside vendors goes to Black-owned businesses. Health disparities persist. Generational wealth remains fragile.

National research from the Institute for Policy Studies warns that if current trends continue, median Black household wealth could approach zero by 2053.

That is not a statistic. That is a warning.

Across America, we have seen Black representation rise to historic levels. We have seen Black leadership in city halls, state houses, Congress, and even the White House. But too often, our communities still struggle with the same economic outcomes. That forced me to wrestle with a hard question: Is representation enough?

I was not raised in politics. As a Jehovah’s Witness, civic participation was not part of my upbringing. But when I returned home and began redeveloping housing in my community, I saw how local government decisions directly shape economic destiny.

A council decides where capital flows. It influences who receives contracts. It determines whether landowners are paid fairly or pressured to sell cheap. It chooses which neighborhoods receive infrastructure, protection, and opportunity, and which are left exposed to crime, drugs, and neglect.

Power is local before it is national. So I made a decision. I did not leave the streets to enter City Hall. I carried the streets with me. My boots remain on the ground, and now they also sit behind the desks where budgets are passed and priorities are set.

I have no illusion that one council seat can erase decades of systemic economic imbalance. But I can ask uncomfortable questions. I can demand transparency. I can insist that public dollars serve the public.

I took office during multiple state audit investigations and a financial and utility billing crisis that placed real strain on working families. For years, our city spent millions more than it brought in. More than \$80 million in financial mismanagement forced a reckoning. We now face a reset or possible oversight from the Local Government Commission.

In my first months on the council, I have seen disunity and mistrust. I have seen how quickly politics can overshadow people.

But I also understand that progress requires collaboration. I look forward to working with the current council to realize the dream of a stronger Rocky Mount. I hope we can unify, restore trust, and bring our city back through shared responsibility and disciplined

Classifieds

DURHAM COUNTY

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

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

File No.: 25E001330-310

Having qualified as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of JOHN HENRY WALLER, JR., deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the Estate to present them to the undersigned, in writing, at the address shown below, on or before June 15, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to the decedent or the Estate are requested to make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This the 12th day of March, 2026.

Maxine Graham, Administrator
c/o Floyd B. McKissick, III, Esq.
McKissick & McKissick
835 N Mangum Street
Durham, NC 27701

3/12, 3/19, 3/26, and 4/2/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

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

File No.: 25E001469-310

Having qualified as ADMINISTRATORS of the Estate of RICHARD FERGUSON JR., deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the Estate to present them to the undersigned, in writing, at the address shown below, on or before June 15, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to the decedent or the Estate are requested to make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This the 12th day of March, 2026.

Allie Williams and Ramonica C. Cannon, Administrators
c/o Floyd B. McKissick, III, Esq.
McKissick & McKissick
835 N Mangum Street
Durham, NC 27701

3/12, 3/19, 3/26, and 4/2/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

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

File No.: 25E001562-310

Having qualified as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of MARVA LOUISE BURNETT, deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the Estate to present them to the undersigned, in writing, at the address shown below, on or before June 15, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to the decedent or the Estate are requested to make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This the 12th day of March, 2026.

Germaine Burnette, Administrator
5306 Rose Garden Lane
Durham, NC 27707

3/12, 3/19, 3/26, and 4/2/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

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

File No.: 25E001562-310

Having qualified as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of MARVA LOUISE BURNETT, deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the Estate to present them to the undersigned, in writing, at the address shown below, on or before June 15, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to the decedent or the Estate are requested to make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This the 12th day of March, 2026.

Germaine Burnette, Administrator
5306 Rose Garden Lane
Durham, NC 27707

3/12, 3/19, 3/26, and 4/2/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

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

File No.: 25E000229-310

All persons, firms, and corporations having claims against CHARLES ALVIN COOK, deceased, late of Durham County, NC, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 15th day of June, 2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment.

This the 12th day of March, 2026.

Jennifer S. Cook, Administrator
CTA
c/o Hemphill Gelder, PC
PO Box 97035

Raleigh, NC 27624-7035

3/12, 3/19, 3/26, and 4/2/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

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

File No.: 26E000136-310

Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of KATHERINE WILLIAMS AUSTIN, deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the Estate to present them to the undersigned, in writing, at the address shown below, on or

before June 15, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to the decedent or the Estate are requested to make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This the 12th day of March, 2026.

Mary Moorefield Gravitt, Executor
1110 Stallion Court
Summerfield, NC 27358

3/12, 3/19, 3/26, and 4/2/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

All persons, firms and corporations having claims against JOHNSIE DAVIS EGERTON, DECEASED, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before June 10, 2026, or this notice along with the appropriate general statute will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the deceased are asked to make immediate payment. This the 12 day of March, 2026. All correspondence should be to the Estate of Johnsie Davis Egerton, c/o Florence A. Bowens, Attorney, P.O. Box 51263, Durham, NC 27717.

3/12, 3/19, 3/26, and 4/2/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

Estate/Creditor Notices

ESTATE OF PANDORA FRAZIER

26E000261-310

All persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the Estate of Pandora Frazier, deceased, are hereby notified to present said claims to the undersigned Co-Executors of the estate on or before the date required by law, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to the estate are requested to make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This the 12 day of March, 2026.

Teresa Crumpler, Co-Executor
1423 Copper Creek Dr.
Durham, NC 27713

Diane Voss, Co-Executor
1825 Old Red Mountain Rd.
Rougemont, NC 27572

3/12, 3/19, 3/26, and 4/2/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE OF SERVICE OF

PROCESS BY PUBLICATION

In the General Court of Justice,
District Court Division

File # 26CV000431-310

[CHILD CUSTODY PROCEEDING]
WEATHERSPOON, Plaintiff v.

SEALS and ANTONIO, Defendants.

To Guillermo Martinez Antonio:

TAKE NOTICE that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above entitled action. The nature of the relief being sought is as follows: that legal custody of the minor child Abigail Grace Martinez Seals, born on 6/12/2010, be granted to Plaintiff.

You are required to make defense to such pleading no later than April 21, 2026, said date being forty (40) days from the first publication of this notice. Upon your failure to do so, the party seeking service against you will apply to the Court for the relief sought.

This, the 12th day of March 2026.

Chelsea Fuller of JusticeMatters, Inc., Attorney for Plaintiff
P.O. Box 199, Durham, NC, 27701
919/794-7511, Ext. 013.

3/12, 3/19, and 3/26/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

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

File No.: 26E000163-310

Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of MARY HERMAN COLE, deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the Estate to present them to the undersigned, in writing, at the address shown below, on or before June 8, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to the decedent or the Estate are requested to make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This the 5th day of March, 2026.

Charles Herman Surlles, Executor,
c/o Richard F. Prentis, Jr.
4 Consultant Pl.
Durham, NC 27707

3/5, 3/12, 3/19, and 3/26/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS FOR

NEWSPAPER

Estate of KIMBERLEE FLETCHER HANAN died on September 10, 2025, in Durham, NC. DONALD ROY HANAN qualified as her Executor with Durham County, NC Clerk of Superior Court file 25E001278-310. All persons, firms or corporations indebted to KIMBERLEE FLETCHER HANAN

will please make immediate payment. This is to notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against KIMBERLEE FLETCHER HANAN to present them before June 12, 2026, or this Notice may be pleaded to bar their claim. Claims and payments may be filed with

James M. Arges, Attorney, for the estate at Arges Law Firm, P.C., 3200 Croasdaile Drive, Suite 706, Durham, NC 27705. For Publication: 03/05/2026, 03/12/2026, 03/19/2026, and 03/26/2026.

DONALD ROY HANAN, Executor
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS AND

DEBTORS OF Florence Fowler Peacock

All persons, firms and corporations having claims against FLORENCE FOWLER PEACOCK, late of Durham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit them to Natalie Peacock Corral as Executor of the decedent's estate on or before June 7, 2026, c/o Janet B. Witchger, Attorney at Law, 1414 Raleigh Rd., Ste. 203, Chapel Hill, NC 27517, or be barred from their recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment to the above-named Executor.

This the 5th day of March 2026.

Natalie Peacock Corral, Executor
c/o Janet B. Witchger, Atty.
Trust Counsel

1414 Raleigh Rd., Ste. 203
Chapel Hill, NC 27517

3/5, 3/12, 3/19, and 3/26/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

All persons, firms and corporations having claims against DEANN M. STONE, deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, are hereby notified to present them to Joseph A. Anthony, as Administrator of the decedent's estate, on or before June 5, 2026, in care of the undersigned's attorney, 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 above-named Administrator.

This is the 5th day of March, 2026.

Joseph A. Anthony, Administrator
of the Estate of DeAnn M. Stone
Steven W. Arrington, Esq.
The Arrington Firm, P.C.
P. O. Box 4753
Greensboro, NC 27404

3/5, 3/12, 3/19, and 3/26/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 26th day of February 2026, as Co-Executors of the ESTATE OF RUTH WATKINS BARBER, Deceased, of Durham County, North Carolina, do hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 6th day of June 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 5th day of March 2026.

MARGARET BARBER WOOD
MILTON A. BARBER, IV
CO-EXECUTORS

ESTATE OF RUTH WATKINS BARBER
c/o E. Jack Walker, Jr., Attorney
Walker Lambe, PLLC
Post Office Box 51549
Durham, North Carolina 27717

3/5, 3/12, 3/19, and 3/26/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 25th day of February 2026, as Co-Executors of the ESTATE OF MILTON A. BARBER, III, Deceased, of Durham County, North Carolina, do hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 6th day of June 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 5th day of March 2026.

MARGARET BARBER WOOD
MILTON A. BARBER, IV
CO-EXECUTORS

ESTATE OF MILTON A. BARBER, III
c/o E. Jack Walker, Jr., Attorney
Walker Lambe, PLLC
Post Office Box 51549
Durham, North Carolina 27717

3/5, 3/12, 3/19, and 3/26/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 25th day of February 2026, as Co-Executors of the ESTATE OF MILTON A. BARBER, III, Deceased, of Durham County, North Carolina, do hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 6th day of June 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 5th day of March 2026.

MARGARET BARBER WOOD
MILTON A. BARBER, IV
CO-EXECUTORS

ESTATE OF MILTON A. BARBER, III
c/o E. Jack Walker, Jr., Attorney
Walker Lambe, PLLC
Post Office Box 51549
Durham, North Carolina 27717

3/5, 3/12, 3/19, and 3/26/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified as Executor of the Estate of EDWIN LEE MORRIS, Deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the Estate to present them to the undersigned, in writing, at the address shown below, on or before May 27, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to the decedent or the Estate are requested to make immediate payment to the undersigned. This the 26th day of February, 2026.

Kevin Spencer
Administrator
5214 Penrith Drive Apt G,
Durham, NC 27713
File #26E000109-310

2/26, 3/5, 3/12, and 3/19/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

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

File No.: 25E000176-310

Having qualified as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of AUDREY JACKSON LUCAS, deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the Estate to present them to the undersigned, in writing, at the address shown below, on or before May 27, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to the decedent or the Estate are requested to make immediate payment to the undersigned. This the 26th day of February, 2026.

Torhi Klayette Jackson
Administrator
117 Holiday Court
Greenville, NC 27834

2/26, 3/5, 3/12, and 3/19/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

The undersigned, having qualified as Executor of the Estate of EDWIN LEE MORRIS, Deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the estate to exhibit them to the undersigned at the offices of Munson Law Firm PLLC, P.O. Box 1811, Pittsboro, NC 27312 on or before the 26th day of May, 2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to the estate will please make immediate payment.

This 26th day of February, 2026.

Juan Carlos Morales Barrios v.
Margarita Isabel Morales Barrios &
Miguel Benites de la Cruz

2/26, 3/5, 3/12, and 3/19/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

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

File No.: 26E000928-310

Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of BARBARA ANN MCKENZIE, deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the Estate to present them to the undersigned, in writing, at the address shown below, on or before May 27, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to the decedent or the Estate are requested to make immediate payment to the undersigned. This the 26th day of February, 2026.

Leah Friedman, Executor
8 Stillwater Park
Durham, NC 27707

2/26, 3/5, 3/12, and 3/19/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

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

File No.: 26E000187-310

Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of BARBARA ANN MCKENZIE, deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the Estate to present them to the undersigned, in writing, at the address shown below, on or before May 27, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to the decedent or the Estate are requested to make immediate payment to the undersigned. This the 26th day of February, 2026.

Leah Friedman, Executor
8 Stillwater Park
Durham, NC 27707

2/26, 3/5, 3/12, and 3/19/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

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

File No.: 26E000187-310

Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of BARBARA ANN MCKENZIE, deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the Estate to present them to the undersigned, in writing, at the address shown below, on or before May 27, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to the decedent or the Estate are requested to make immediate payment to the undersigned. This the 26th day of February, 2026.

Leah Friedman, Executor
8 Stillwater Park
Durham, NC 27707

2/26, 3/5, 3/12, and 3/19/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

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

File No.: 26E000187-310

Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of BARBARA ANN MCKENZIE, deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the Estate to present them to the undersigned, in writing, at the address shown below, on or before May 27, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to the decedent or the Estate are requested to make immediate payment to the undersigned. This the 26th day of February, 2026.

Leah Friedman, Executor
8 Stillwater Park
Durham, NC 27707

2/26, 3/5, 3/12, and 3/19/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

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

File No.: 26E000187-310

Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of BARBARA ANN MCKENZIE, deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the Estate to present them to the undersigned, in writing, at the address shown below, on or before May 27, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to the decedent or the Estate are requested to make immediate payment to the undersigned. This the 26th day of February, 2026.

Leah Friedman, Executor
8 Stillwater Park
Durham, NC 27707

2/26, 3/5, 3/12, and 3/19/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

DURHAM COUNTY

against the claim, judgement may be entered against you. This the 24th day of February 2026.
Chandlers Tire Auto & Towing LLC
1314 E Club Blvd
Durham NC 27704
919-220-5234
Chandlerstowing.dmv@gmail.com
Deborah Davis
2/26, 3/5, and 3/12/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

Hendrick Acura versus Nikki Keianna Stone, Carl Derrick Houze, Credit Acceptance Corp
NOTICE OF SALE
Take notice that a public sale will take place on March 16th, 2026 at 10:00 am to satisfy a lien against the following vehicle: 2008 Acura VIN# 2HNYD28388H519459. The location of the sale is Hendrick Acura Southpoint, 212 Kentington Sr, Durham, NC 27703.
2/26 & 3/5/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

BMW of Southpoint versus Jasmine Mashay Brodie, Deaveon Jackson, Stephanie Poe, Nakita Beatrice Russell, Ally Financial
NOTICE OF SALE
Take notice that a public sale will take place on March 16th, 2026 at 10:00 am to satisfy a lien against the following vehicles: 2012 BMW 5UXZV4C52CL767518, 2014 BMW WBA5A7C59ED613296, 2015 BMW 5UXKR0C59F0K61494. The location of the sale is BMW of Southpoint, 225 Kentington Dr, Durham, 27713.
2/26 & 3/5/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
ALL persons, creditors having claims against PATRICIA G. SIMPSON deceased, of Durham County, N.C., are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before (3 months, May 19, 2026), or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. 17 February 2026.
V-Gail Simpson, ADM
815 Wheat Mill Road
Durham, North Carolina 27704
Phone: 248 559-5718
F#: 25E001577-310
Feb 19, 26, Mar 5, 12, 2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In The General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File No.: 26E000112-310
Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of JUDITH LASCALLETTE, deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the Estate to present them to the undersigned, in writing, at the address shown below, on or before May 20, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to the decedent or the Estate are requested to make immediate payment to the undersigned.
This the 19th day of February, 2026.
Hillary Aaron, Executor
3803 Saint Lucy Dr.
Franklinton, NC 27525
2/19, 2/26, 3/5, and 3/12/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
File No.: 26E000161-310
The undersigned, having qualified as Executor of the Estate of KAREN DENISE BURNETTE, late of Durham County, North Carolina, does hereby notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against said Estate to present them to the undersigned on or before the 20th day of May, 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 to the undersigned. This the 18th day of February, 2026.
Davidia Burnette, Executor
1805 Mystic Drive
Durham, NC 27712
2/19, 2/26, 3/5, and 3/12/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In The General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File No.: 26E000158-310
Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of GERARD A. ESPOSITO, deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the Estate to present them to the undersigned, in writing, at the address shown below, on or before May 20, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their

recovery.

All persons indebted to the decedent or the Estate are requested to make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This the 19th day of February, 2026.
Kenneth J. Esposito, Executor
c/o Law Office of Anne Page Watson
3400 Croasdaile Drive, Suite 205
Durham, NC 27705
2/19, 2/26, 3/5, and 3/12/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
The undersigned, Richard Floyd Pickett and Lisa Ann Crawford, having duly qualified as Co-Administrators CTA of the Estate of SHIRLEY POPE PICKETT, 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, 2004 Elcombe Court, Chapel Hill, NC 27517, on or before May 20, 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 19th day of February, 2026.

Richard Floyd Pickett and Lisa Ann Crawford, Co-Administrators, CTA
c/o Ronald G. Coulter, Attorney
2004 Elcombe Court
Chapel Hill, NC 27517
1-919-246-5775

2/19, 2/26, 3/5, and 3/12/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In The General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File No.: 26E000016-310
Having qualified as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of DOROTHEA ROBINSON, deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the Estate to present them to the undersigned, in writing, at the address shown below, on or before May 20, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to the decedent or the Estate are requested to make immediate payment to the undersigned.
This the 19th day of February, 2026.

Taylor Robinson, Administrator
931 Vintage Franklin Way, Apt 306
Raleigh, NC 27606

2/19, 2/26, 3/5, and 3/12/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In The General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File No.: 26E000137-310
Having qualified as ADMINISTRATOR CTA of the Estate of FRANCES A. MARCHBANK, deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the Estate to present them to the undersigned, in writing, at the address shown below, on or before May 20, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to the decedent or the Estate are requested to make immediate payment to the undersigned.
This the 19th day of February, 2026.
Elizabeth A. Brown, Administrator
CTA
c/o Law Office of Anne Page Watson
3400 Croasdaile Drive, Suite 205
Durham, NC 27705
2/19, 2/26, 3/5, and 3/12/2026

GRANVILLE COUNTY

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
GRANVILLE COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In The General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File No.: 26E000058-380
Having qualified as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of PHILLIP WARREN, III, deceased, late of Granville County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the Estate to present them to the undersigned, in writing, at the address shown below, on or before May 20, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to the decedent or the Estate are requested to make immediate payment to the undersigned. This the 19th day of February, 2026.
Marquitta A. Warren, Administrator
c/o John W. Perry, Attorneys at Law
PERRY, PERRY & PERRY, P.A.
601 Fayetteville Street, Suite 300
Durham, NC 27701
2/19, 2/26, 3/5, and 3/12/2026

ORANGE COUNTY

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
ORANGE COUNTY

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

File No.: 24E001765-670
Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of JAMES WC PENDERGRAFT, deceased, late of Orange County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the Estate to present them to the undersigned, in writing, at the address shown below, on or before June 8, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to the decedent or the Estate are requested to make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This the 5th day of March, 2026.
James Scott Pendergraft, Executor
103 Prince St.
Carrboro, NC 27510
3/5, 3/12, 3/19, and 3/26/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
ORANGE COUNTY

PUBLISHED NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Having qualified as Administrator of the Estate of WILLIAM K. HICKS, JR., late of Chapel Hill, Orange County, North Carolina, (26E000065-670) the undersigned does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the estate of said decedent to exhibit them to the undersigned c/o The Banks Law Firm P.A., Winchester Place, Suite 110, 4309 Emperor Boulevard, Durham, North Carolina, 27703, on or before the 22nd day of May, 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 19th day of February, 2026.

Carol Brown, Executor of the Estate of William K. Hicks Jr.
David Tarbet, Attorney
The Banks Law Firm PA
4309 Emperor Blvd. Ste: 110
Durham, NC 27703
2/19, 2/26, 3/5, and 3/12/2026

WAKE COUNTY

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY

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

File No.: 26E000411-910
Having qualified as ADMINISTRATOR CTA of the Estate of JOSANDRA MOUNT, deceased, late of Wake County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the Estate to present them to the undersigned, in writing, at the address shown below, on or before June 15, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to the decedent or the Estate are requested to make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This the 12th day of March, 2026.
Daryl Tracy Mount
Administrator CTA
c/o Marion Law Office, PLLC
2741 University Drive
Durham, NC 27707
3/12, 3/19, 3/26, and 4/2/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY

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

File No.: 25E004272-910
Having qualified as CO-ADMINISTRATORS of the Estate of HOPE YVETTE RILEY HOUSE, deceased, late of Wake County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the Estate to present them to the undersigned, in writing, at the address shown below, on or before June 15, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to the decedent or the Estate are requested to make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This the 12th day of March, 2026.
Geneva Mizelle, Co-Administrator
3200 Stream Side Road, Apt 33
Raleigh, NC 27613
Cornelius Railey, Co-Administrator
905 North Fayetteville Ave.
Dunn, NC 28334
3/12, 3/19, 3/26, and 4/2/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In The General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File No.: 25E004660-910
Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of CAROLYN DOLAN

SMITH, deceased, late of Wake County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the Estate to present them to the undersigned, in writing, at the address shown below, on or before June 15, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to the decedent or the Estate are requested to make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This the 12th day of March, 2026.
Leo Walter Smith, Executor
c/o Jeffers Law Firm
PO Box 761
Raleigh NC 27602

3/12, 3/19, 3/26, and 4/2/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
All persons, firms and corporations having claims against GWYNNETH GAYLE BROOKS STANBACK, DECEASED, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before June 10, 2026, or this notice along with the appropriate general statute will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the deceased are asked to make immediate payment. This the 12 day of March, 2026. All correspondence should be to the Estate of Gwynneth Stanback, c/o Florence A. Bowens, Attorney, P.O. Box 51263, Durham, NC 27717.
3/12, 3/19, 3/26, and 4/2/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY

NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION
In The General Court Of Justice
District Court Division
Small Claims

File No. 25CV046643-910
LENORA MITCHELL, Plaintiff v.
JEFF WILLIAMS, Defendant
TO: JEFF WILLIAMS

Take notice that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above-entitled action in the General Court of Justice, District Court Division, Wake County, North Carolina.

The nature of the relief being sought is as stated in the Complaint filed in this action.

You are required to appear before a magistrate in Wake County District Court, located at 316 Fayetteville Street, Raleigh, North Carolina, on April 6, 2026 at 9:30 a.m., and answer the complaint or otherwise respond. If you fail to appear and defend against the claim, judgment will be entered against you for the relief demanded in the complaint.

This the 12th day of March, 2026.
Lenora Mitchell, Plaintiff
1023 Tarford Place
Knightdale, NC 27545
3/12, 3/19, and 3/26/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY

NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION
In The District Court Division
File No. 25CV046587-910
MARCIAL V. TORRES

TO SILVANO DOMINGUEZ TORRES: 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 April 21, 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, LUCERO GOMEZ MARCIAL, will apply to the court for the relief sought.

This, the 12th day of March, 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
3/12, 3/19, and 3/26/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY

NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION
In The General Court of Justice, District Court Division
File No.: 20CV0013438-910
IN THE MATTER OF: WILLIAMS AND WILLIAMS v. WILLIAMS AND UNKNOWN FATHER

To: Unknown Father of M. M. W, a male child born of Morgan Brittany Williams on 09/23/2016 in Wake County, NC.

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 child custody. You are required to make defense to such pleading within 40 days of service on or before April 28, 2026. If you fail to respond, the party seeking service against you will apply to the court for the relief sought. This, the 19th day of March, 2026. You should provide a copy of any response to the attorney for the Plaintiffs at Melissa Stuckey, McNeil Law Firm, PLLC; 226 W. Millbrook Road, Raleigh, NC 27609, 919-803-6778.
3/19, 3/26, and 4/2/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY

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

File No.: 23E001810-910
Having qualified as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of LARRY STACY BROCK, deceased, late of Wake County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the Estate to present them to the undersigned, in writing, at the address shown below, on or before June 8, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to the decedent or the Estate are requested to make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This the 5th day of March, 2026.
Ruthie Goodson Brock
Administrator
5525 Woodpond Ct.
Raleigh, NC 27610
3/5, 3/12, 3/19, and 3/26/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY

ESTATE OF:
SHERRI JACKSON BOYKIN
FILE NO. 26-E-000264-910

All persons, firms, and corporations having claims against SHERRI JACKSON BOYKIN, deceased, of Wake County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before June 5, 2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons, firms, and corporations indebted to said estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This is the 5th day of March, 2026.

Michael A. Boykin, Executor of the Estate of Sherri Jackson Boykin
4108 Batiste Road
Raleigh, NC 27613
3/5, 3/12, 3/19, and 3/26/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY

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

File No.: 25E002872-910
Having qualified as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of CARLY JEAN GEISEL, deceased, late of Wake County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the Estate to present them to the undersigned, in writing, at the address shown below, on or before June 8, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to the decedent or the Estate are requested to make immediate payment to the undersigned.
This the 5th day of March, 2026.
John Raymond Geisel, Administrator
231 Kinvara Ct.
Wake Forest, NC 27587
3/5, 3/12, 3/19, and 3/26/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY

NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION
In The General Court of Justice
District Court Division
FILE NO. 25CV033406-910
LESTER COBBS, Plaintiff v.
DENISE DARNELLE COBBS,
Defendant

TO DENISE DARNELLE COBBS:
TAKE NOTICE that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above-entitled action. The nature of the relief being sought is as follows: Complaint for Absolute Divorce.

You are required to make defense to such pleading no later than forty (30) days after the first date of publication of this notice, exclusive of such date, and upon your failure to do so, the party seeking service against you will apply to the Court for the relief sought.

This, the 5th day of March, 2026.
Lester Cobbs, Plaintiff
11201 Tidewater Lane, Apt 112
Raleigh, NC 27614
3/5, 3/12, and 3/19/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY

NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION
In The General Court of Justice
District Court Division
FILE NO. 25CV019679-910
BRENDA EBERT, Plaintiff
VS JAMES EBERT, Defendant
TO JAMES EBERT:

TAKE NOTICE that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above-entitled action. The nature of the relief being sought is as follows: Complaint for Absolute Divorce.

You are required to make defense to such pleading no later than forty (30) days after the first date of publication of this notice, exclusive of such date, and upon your failure to do so, the party seeking service against you will apply to the Court for the relief sought.

This, the 5th day of March, 2026.
Brenda Ebert, Plaintiff
2820 Sylvester St.
Raleigh, NC 27610

3/5, 3/12, and 3/19/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY

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

FILE NO. 25CV045564-910
IZABELLE M OROZCO HERWICK,
Plaintiff VS LUIS SUASTEGUI
GARCIA, Defendant
TO LUIS SUASTEGUI GARCIA:
TAKE NOTICE that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above-entitled action. The nature of the relief being sought is as follows: Complaint for Absolute Divorce.

You are required to make defense to such pleading no later than forty (30) days after the first date of publication of this notice, exclusive of such date, and upon your failure to do so, the party seeking service against you will apply to the Court for the relief sought.

This, the 5th day of March, 2026.
Izabelle Marie Orozco Herwick
Plaintiff
714 Copperline Dr.
Garner, NC 27529
3/5, 3/12, and 3/19/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY

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

FILE NO. 25CV039457-910
VERONICA LAUVRAY, Plaintiff v.
SOPHIE K. JOHNSON, Defendant
TO: SOPHIE K. JOHNSON
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: An Absolute Divorce.

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

This, the 26th day of February, 2026.
Veronica Lauvray, Plaintiff, Pro Se
860 Squire Court
Cary, NC 27511
2/26, 3/5, and 3/12/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY

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

File No.: 25E003185-910
Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of JOEL KELLY POWELL, deceased, late of Wake County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the Estate to present them to the undersigned, in writing, at the address shown below, on or before May 20, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to the decedent or the Estate are requested to make immediate payment to the undersigned.
This the 19th day of February, 2026.
Delisa Powell Gray Parilla, Executor
2836 Barrington Drive
Raleigh, NC 27610
2/19, 2/26, 3/5, and 3/12/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY

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

File No: 25E002629-910
Having qualified as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of FRANCES MORRIS, deceased, late of Wake County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the Estate to present them to the undersigned, in writing, at the address shown below, on or before May 20, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to the decedent or the Estate are requested to make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This the 19th day of February, 2026.
Felicia Cooper, Administrator
4234 Triland Way
Cary, NC 27518
2/19, 2/26, 3/5, and 3/12/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
ALL PERSONS, firms and corporations having claims against BARBARA ANN HINTON, deceased, of WAKE COUNTY, NC, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before March 12, 2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment.

This is the 19th day of February, 2026.
Sean C. Hinton, Administrator of the Estate,
c/o MONROE JENKINS, PA
Post Office Box 12534
Durham, North Carolina 27709
2/19, 2/26, 3/5, and 3/12/2026

Classifieds

ON SLOW COUNTY

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
ON SLOW COUNTY

SUMMONS

Rule 204(c)(3)(B). Summons –
Publication.

To: Gavin Phillip Chronister

You have been sued by Taylor Kollmann, the Petitioner, in the Sixth District Magistrate Court in and for Bannock County, Idaho, Case No. CV03-25-03001.

The nature of the claim against you is Petition for Divorce.

Any time after 21 days following the last publication of this summons, the court may enter a judgment against you without further notice, unless prior to that time you have filed a written response in the proper form, including the Case No., and paid any required filing fee to the Clerk of the Court 624 East Center, Pocatello, Idaho 83201 and (208) 236-7351 and served a copy of your response on the Petitioner's attorney Tiffany Johnson, 1505 Sierra Dr Pocatello ID 83201, at Tiffany@johnsonlawidaho.com Phone: (208)-269-8779

A copy of the Summons and Petition can be obtained by contacting either the Clerk of the Court or the attorney for Petitioner. If you wish legal assistance, you

should immediately retain an attorney to advise you in this matter. Dated: 2/6/2026
Bannock County Magistrate Court
By Gayla Syphus, Deputy Clerk
2/26, 3/5, 3/12, and 3/19/2026

GUILFORD COUNTY

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
GUILFORD COUNTY

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

File No.: 25E002482-400

Having qualified as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of JERRARD WHITTED, deceased, late of Guilford County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the Estate to present them to the undersigned, in writing, at the address shown below, on or before June 15, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to the decedent or the Estate are requested to make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This the 12th day of March, 2026.

Marnisha Drake, Administrator
83 Walker West Rd.

Fayetteville, NC 28312

3/12, 3/19, 3/26, and 4/2/2026

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 **FY-26 Water and Sewer Improvements project for the City of New Bern** which bids on **March 19, 2026, at 11:00 AM**. Plans and specifications for this project are available at the following locations: T. A. Loving Company; 400 Patetown Road; Goldsboro, NC 27530 * City of New Bern, Water Resources Administration Office; 527 NC Highway 55 West; New Bern, NC 28563.

Potential subcontracting opportunities include but are not limited to surveying, hauling, asphalt paving, traffic control, erosion control, seeding, bypass pumping, and flatwork. Please contact **Jeff Price (jprice@taloving.com)** if you are interested in submitting a proposal on any portion(s) of this project. Contact via phone 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.

D/M/WBE

SUBCONTRACTORS/SUPPLIERS WANTED

Pipeline Utilities, Inc. (NC General Contractor License No. 325) is seeking certified DBE, MBE, and WBE subcontractors and suppliers for the **2-Inch Water Line Replacement project for the City of Burlington** which bids on **March 18, 2026, at 1:00 PM**. Plans and specifications for this project are available at the following locations: Pipeline Utilities, Inc.; 2204-F Associate Drive; Raleigh, NC 27603 * City of Burlington, Engineering Department; 425 South Lexington Avenue; Burlington, NC 27215 * Bid Net Direct website.

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

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

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 **Pump Station No. 11 and Outfall Improvements – Market Street Sewer Replacement project for the Town of Smithfield** which bids on **March 19, 2026, at 2:00 PM**. Plans and specifications for this project are available at the following locations: T. A. Loving Company; 400 Patetown Road; Goldsboro, NC 27530 * Town of Smithfield; Public Utilities Operations Center; 230 Hospital Road; Smithfield, NC 27577 * Sykes Environmental Engineering, PLLC; 9504 Barker Road; New Hill, NC 27562 * Carolinas AGC Website * Dodge Data and Analytics website * ConstructConnect (formerly iSqFt) website.

Potential subcontracting opportunities include but are not limited to surveying, clearing and grubbing, hauling, asphalt paving, traffic control, erosion control, seeding, landscaping, jack & bore, bypass pumping, flatwork, and manhole lining. 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.

D/M/WBE

SUBCONTRACTORS/SUPPLIERS WANTED

Pipeline Utilities, Inc. (NC General Contractor License No. 325) is seeking certified DBE, MBE, and WBE subcontractors and suppliers for the **Airport Lift Station No. 29 Replacement project for the Fayetteville-Cumberland Economic Development Corporation** which bids on **March 19, 2026, at 2:00 PM**. Plans and specifications for this project are available at the following locations: Pipeline Utilities, Inc.; 2204-F Associate Drive; Raleigh, NC 27603 * Fayetteville Cumberland Economic Development Corporation; 201 Hay Street; Fayetteville, NC 28301.

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

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

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 **Walnut Creek Lift Station Bar Screen Replacement project for the City of Raleigh Public Utilities Department** which bids on **March 26, 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 * City of Raleigh Public Utilities Department; One Exchange Plaza, Suite 620; Raleigh, NC 27601 * Hazen and Sawyer; 4011 West Chase Boulevard, Suite 500; Raleigh, NC 27607 * Dodge Data and Analytics website * ConstructConnect website * Construction Journal website * NC Institute of Minority Economic Development (NCIMED) website.

Potential subcontracting opportunities include but are not limited to surveying, demolition, hauling, earthwork, erosion control, seeding, sodding, electrical, flatwork, CIPC, concrete forms, concrete rebar, painting, and fencing. Please contact **Tyler Sutton (tsutton@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.

NC CHRISTIAN NATIONALISM

Continued from page 8

and Washington, Trump has only around 30% support, according to the survey.

About 39% of North Carolinians show favorable views towards Trump, placing the state around the middle nationally.

The research also found correlations between Christian nationalism and Republican representation in state legislatures. In Arkansas and Oklahoma, which fall on the higher end of the Christian nationalism scale, Republicans hold 82% and 80% of their respective legislative seats, while Massachusetts, which has a low affinity for Christian nationalism, has Republicans representing only 15% of its state legislature.

In North Carolina, about 59% of the state legislature's seats are held by Republicans. That's about average compared to the rest of the country.

PRRI conducted the survey from Feb. 28 to Dec. 8, 2025 from a sample of 22,111 adults. There is a margin of error of plus-or-minus 0.87 percentage points.

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 **Replace Clarifier No. 3 Mechanism at the Rockfish Creek Water Reclamation Facility project for Fayetteville Public Works Commission** which bids on **April 2, 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 * NC Institute of Minority Economic Development (NCIMED) website.

Potential subcontracting opportunities include but are not limited to surveying, demolition, electrical, and painting. Please contact **Tyler Sutton (tsutton@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.

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 **South Erwin Sanitary Sewer 2025 project for Harnett County Regional Water** which bids on **March 20, 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 * Harnett Regional Water; 700 McKinney Parkway; Lillington, NC 27546 * Meyers Engineering, PLLC; 5708 Carriage Park Court; Fuquay-Varina, NC 27526 * Dodge Data and Analytics website.

Potential subcontracting opportunities include but are not limited to surveying, clearing and grubbing, hauling, asphalt paving, traffic control, erosion control, seeding, jack & bore, directional drilling, bypass pumping, and flatwork. Please contact **Jeff Price (jprice@taloving.com)** if you are interested in submitting a proposal on any portion(s) of this project. Contact via phone 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.



Opportunity Lives In The Pages Of
The Carolinian