

Business .....P. 3  
 Health .....P. 5  
 Arts .....P. 6  
 Community .....P. 7  
 Church .....P. 8  
 Classifieds .....P. 10-12

# The Carolinian

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## Leandro Case Decision On School Funding Is Overturned By Courts

By Kate Denning

Carolina Public Press

The NC Supreme Court ruled 4-3 last Thursday to reverse a previous court ruling in the Hoke County Board of Education v. State of North Carolina lawsuit, known by most as

the Leandro case, which required the state legislature to provide public schools with \$1.75 billion in funding.

The ruling came after more than two years of silence since the court heard arguments. Under the decision that the court reversed, the legislature would have had to fund a

plan designed in 2021 to significantly increase funding for public schools on account of the lawsuit's original claim that the state was not fulfilling its constitutional duty to provide a sound, basic education to all children.

Thursday's opinion addressed the

oral arguments heard by the NC Supreme Court in 2022, when it ruled in favor of Leandro and the other plaintiffs. The new ruling reverses the one in 2022 that ordered the legislature to partially fund the consultant agency WestEd's Comprehensive Remedial Plan.

Four days after the 2022 ruling, elections resulted in the court's partisan makeup shifting from a 4-3 Democratic majority to a 5-2 Republican majority. Deliberations on the transfer of funds continued through 2023 until the newly Republican-dominated court agreed to hear another round of oral arguments on the matter, which took place Feb. 22, 2024.

Thursday's 244-page opinion addresses the arguments by saying the courts are not the deciders of how the legislature distributes funds. A spokesperson for House Speaker Destin Hall, R-Caldwell, said the decision rightly recognizes the role of public school funding as belonging to the legislature, whereas the North Carolina Association of Educators called the court's decision "a moral failure."

"Today, thousands of North Carolina students walked into overcrowded classrooms and crumbling school buildings," the NCAE's statement read.

"And thousands of educators are committed to the young people of this state, in spite of the state's failure to adequately fund our schools, because we believe that every child deserves the best we can give them. Today, the majority of the North Carolina Supreme Court made it

(See LEANDRO P. 13)



## April Is Our National Fair Housing Month

National Fair Housing Month celebrates the passage of the Fair Housing Act in April, 1968, a national law that prohibits discrimination in the sale, rental and financing of housing based on race, color, national origin, religion, and gender. The Act was later amended to include protections for people with disabilities and families with children. In the State of California, there are additional protections for marital status, sexual orientation, ancestry, source of income and for arbitrary characteristics such as age or occupation.

Fair Housing Month reminds us that the principle of fair housing is not only state and national law, but a fundamental human concept and entitlement for all people. As a community we welcome all good neighbors, recognizing the contributions and richness tendered by a wide variety of people from diverse backgrounds, colors, ethnicities or religious traditions.

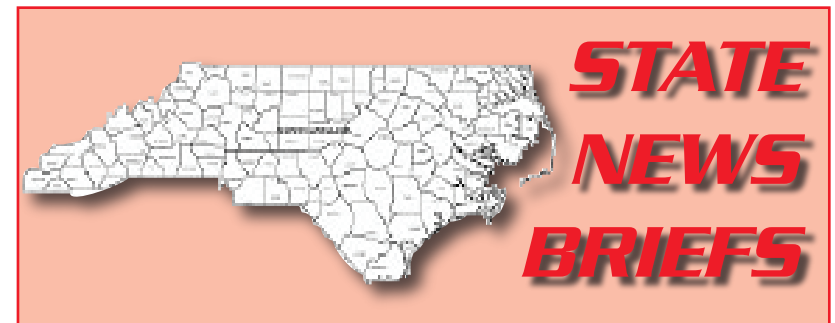
To ensure compliance with the law, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) enforces fair housing rules and fair housing regulations. HUD also provides fair housing guidelines to help housing providers, lenders, and others understand their responsibilities under the law.

National Fair Housing Month traces its roots back to the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on April 4, 1968. Just one week after this tragic event, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Fair Housing Act into law on April 11, 1968. Since then, the month of April has been dedicated to raising awareness about fair housing and promoting equal opportunity in the housing market.

Fair housing plays a crucial role in promoting social and economic equity, as well as creating diverse, inclusive communities. By ensuring equal access to housing, we provide opportunities for all people to live in neighborhoods with quality schools, safe streets, and access to essential services. Here are some key ways fair housing contributes to the overall well-being of individuals and communities:

By preventing housing discrimination, fair housing laws help to break down barriers that have historically led to racial and socioeconomic segregation. This allows for greater integration of neighborhoods, which fosters understanding, cooperation, and respect among people from different backgrounds.

Fair housing practices contribute to healthier communities by ensuring access to safe, stable, and affordable housing. Living in a stable, secure, and well-maintained home is essential for good physical and mental health. Moreover, access to housing in neighborhoods with clean air, green spaces, and recreational facilities can have a positive impact on the overall health and well-being of residents.



### State Officials Warn of Takeover After Rocky Mount Audit

By Jordan Meadows

Staff Writer

A state audit has found that years of mismanagement, weak oversight, and aggressive spending pushed the City of Rocky Mount to the brink of financial collapse, with officials warning that the city's fiscal trajectory had become "unsustainable" before recent corrective actions were taken.

In a performance audit completed March 9, the North Carolina Office of the State Auditor detailed what it described as "serious financial failures," including a staggering 78% drop in the city's cash and investment balances—from roughly \$100 million in August 2023 to just \$21.8 million by August 2025. State Auditor Dave Boliek said the findings point to systemic issues in leadership and decision-making.

"OSA's audit of Rocky Mount has uncovered serious financial failures," Boliek said. "From the lack of due diligence in hiring the former City Manager, to cycling through five Finance Department directors, it's clear that Rocky Mount has not been serious about resolving its financial issues."

The audit was launched after complaints from residents and public concerns raised during City Council meetings. According to Boliek, his office received more inquiries about Rocky Mount than any other government entity since he took office in 2025.

At the center of the report is the hiring of former City Manager Keith Rogers Jr., who auditors say was brought on in March 2023. The audit found no evidence that the City Council conducted independent reference checks before unanimously approving his appointment. Rogers had previously overseen a budget overspend in Dumfries, Virginia.

Auditors concluded that under Rogers' tenure, city spending surged dramatically while revenues declined. Between fiscal years 2023 and 2025, employee compensation increased by 27%, including a 47% jump in police salaries and a 22% increase for firefighters. At the same time, capital spending ballooned, with a 153% increase in fiscal year 2024 alone. Major expenditures included \$17.2 million for land tied to a proposed casino and entertainment complex that has yet to materialize, \$11.2 million for the redevelopment of a fire station that far exceeded initial estimates, and millions more for fleet leasing and the purchase of heavy equipment.

The audit found that many of these expenditures were made without adequate financial analysis and, in some cases, without proper City Council approval. Investigators cited evidence that Rogers attempted to bypass council oversight by structuring contracts to fall below approval thresholds. In a separate investigative report, auditors also found that Rogers authorized a \$795,500 consulting contract without a formal request for proposals or council involvement; more than \$385,000 had already been paid before the contract was terminated.

(See STATE BRIEFS P. 2)



## NC's Electoral Future May Hinge On Rural Black Voters Who Feel Ignored

(AP) - Ricky Brinkley has lived in rural North Carolina nearly all of his 65 years, and he likes it "out in the county," past the street lights and bustle of the small towns that carpet the landscape.

But the former truck driver can feel left out when elections roll around in this battleground state.

"People don't come out like they should and ask you how you feel about things," Brinkley said while he manned the counter at his daughter's beauty supply store down the street from the Nashville courthouse. "You want somebody to vote, but you don't want to do nothing to get the vote. No, it don't work that way."

Brinkley is among the rural Black residents who Democrats have often failed to mobilize as they try to dent Republican advantages here. It's an

urgent demographic puzzle for the party, which is normally strong with Black voters but tends to fall short in rural areas.

Success could help former Gov. Roy Cooper win a hotly contested U.S. Senate race this year and tilt the balance of power in Washington. It could also reshape presidential elections, providing Democrats with a wider path to the White House.

"People want to look at the word 'rural' in North Carolina and equate it to the word 'white,'" said state party chair Anderson Clayton, a 28-year-old who won her job three years ago promising to expand the party beyond cities. "In my vision of a Democratic Party, when you talk about reaching out to rural voters, you are talking about rural Black voters."

The Rev. James Gailliard, a former state lawmaker who leads a large Black congregation in Rocky Mount, put it even more bluntly.

"You don't win this state in Durham," Gailliard said. "You win it in the east."

It's about more than Cooper's Senate bid.

North Carolina is known for the university-heavy Research Triangle that includes Durham, Raleigh and Chapel Hill, along with Charlotte's banking hub. But it also includes large swaths of small towns and rural areas where Democrats have lost ground in recent decades.

That's not just because of white voters realigning with Republicans. It's also because Black voters who lean Democratic don't vote as often as their urban counterparts. Those

rural Black voters are concentrated east of the triangle, extending along winding state highways through small towns, flatlands and farmland toward the Atlantic coastline.

Cooper, 68, won two terms as governor and four terms as state attorney general. However, Republicans control the state courts and the legislature, and they've redrawn the congressional map to expand their advantage in the U.S. House. Donald Trump carried the state for Republicans all three times he ran for the White House.

A native of rural Nash County, Cooper already in recent months held roundtable sessions with Black farmers, business owners and civic leaders in eastern North Carolina,

(See BLACK VOTERS P. 13)

## Artemis II Makes A Historic Journey

NASA—The first flyby images of the Moon captured by NASA's Artemis II astronauts during their historic test flight reveal some regions no human has seen, including a rare in-space solar eclipse. Released Tuesday, astronauts captured the images April 6 during the mission's seven-hour flyby of the lunar far side, showing humanity's return to the Moon's vicinity and opening a trove of scientific data.

NASA astronauts Reid Wiseman, Victor Glover, Christina Koch, and CSA (Canadian Space Agency) astronaut Jeremy Hansen, have used a fleet of cameras to take thousands of photos. The agency released several images, with more expected in the coming days as the crew members are more than halfway through their journey and now headed home toward Earth.

"Our four Artemis II astronauts — Reid, Victor, Christina, and Jeremy — took humanity on an incredible journey around the Moon and brought back images so exquisite and brimming with science, they will inspire generations to come," said Dr. Nicky Fox, associate administrator, Science Mission Directorate, NASA Headquarters in Washington.

During the lunar flyby, the crew documented impact craters, ancient lava flows, and surface fractures that will help scientists study the Moon's geologic evolution. They monitored color, brightness, and texture differences across the terrain, observed an earthset and earthrise, and captured solar-eclipse views of the Sun's corona. The crew also reported six meteoroid impact flashes on the darkened lunar surface.



## STATE BRIEF

Continued from page 1

Auditors found that council members approved budgets without sufficient financial data, missed statutory audit deadlines, and did not hold city management accountable for a lack of transparency. Meanwhile, the city's finance department experienced significant instability, cycling through five directors in recent years, some of whom lacked local government finance experience. At one point, the city failed to reconcile its checking account for 13 months. Warnings from the state's Local Government Commission had gone unheeded: the commission repeatedly designated Rocky Mount a "municipality in financial distress" for three consecutive years.

In response to the crisis, city leaders have taken a series of corrective steps, including cutting positions, scaling back spending, and raising revenues. The city eliminated dozens of full-time jobs—roughly 10% of its workforce—reduced part-time staffing, and implemented utility rate increases of about 15% across services such as electricity, water, and trash collection. For residents, that has translated into higher monthly costs.

"This mess is unfortunately costing local residents," Boliek said, noting widespread public concern.

At the same time, state leaders have sharply criticized the city's governance. State Treasurer Brad Briner called the situation "nothing short of financial malpractice," while Secretary of State Elaine Marshall, speaking as a member of the Local Government Commission, said, "I find the culture to be unworthy of the citizens of Rocky Mount."

Mayor Sandy Roberson acknowledged the severity of the situation, telling state officials, "We have certainly gotten the memo. We certainly understand the seriousness of this."

Newly appointed City Manager Elton Daniels and Finance Director Cheryl Spivey have emphasized a shift toward more disciplined financial practices, including conservative revenue projections and outside expertise from state and municipal partners.

The Local Government Commission has stopped short of taking over the city's finances but has imposed heightened oversight, requiring twice-monthly financial reports. A full state takeover remains a possibility if conditions do not improve—an outcome that would make Rocky Mount the largest municipality in North Carolina history to lose control of its finances.

# What If Duke Energy Shared Part Of The Burden Of Fuel Costs With Its Customers?

CANARY MEDIA – If the war in the Middle East has proved anything over the last month, it's that fossil fuel prices are extraordinarily unstable. But global conflict isn't the only catalyst that can send the cost of oil and natural gas reeling. Factors such as extreme weather, policy changes, and pipeline outages can also set off a price roller coaster.

In North Carolina, all this volatility is prompting calls for change. Advocates want the state to join the handful of others that require electric utilities to absorb a fraction of fossil fuel prices — rather than saddling customers with all of them, as the companies do now.

The point of the policy, called fuel-cost sharing, is twofold. It can bring utility bills down for average consumers, who are increasingly angry about ballooning expenses. And it can aid the clean energy transition: If the state's predominant utility, Duke Energy, knows that its shareholders will take a hit when fuel prices rise, the company may scale back its dependence on polluting gas plants and instead rely more on emissions-free, fuel-free forms of energy, like wind, solar, and batteries.

The notion of fuel-cost sharing is still very much in its nascence here, where Duke wields incredible power over the Republican-controlled legislature, and neither lawmakers nor regulators have pushed the company to invest in cheap, clean energy.

But proponents of the idea say the conversation is still worth having. "Fuel dependence creates vulner-

ability — whether it's gasoline for your car or natural gas for your power plants," said Josh Brooks, chief of policy strategy and innovation for the North Carolina Sustainable Energy Association. "Tying costs to volatile commodities means a lot of risk exposure for ratepayers. That's an issue both regulators and policymakers should take up."

Utility bills shock and frustrate North Carolina is far from unique. Most states with vertically integrated utilities allow them to pass 100% of fuel costs to their customers. Utility shareholders don't earn a return on those outlays in the same way they profit from building new power plants, but they're insulated from the wild price swings inherent in the global fossil fuel market. Consumers are not.

Ratepayers, for instance, bore the full brunt of spiking gas prices after Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022. Confusingly for customers, Duke doesn't specify these fuel charges on their bills; instead, the charges are incorporated into a nondescript line item, leaving consumers to ferret out on their own what they're paying for fossil fuels.

The lack of clarity around fuel costs adds to customers' outrage about rising bills. One example of the widespread frustration: A Change.org petition calling for Duke to submit to an independent audit and refund its customers for any improper charges has drawn more than 73,000 signatures so far.

"Unexpected and unexplainable increases in Duke Energy bills



have become a major concern for many families," the petition begins. "When bills rise without reasonable justification or transparency, it impacts our ability to plan and manage our household finances effectively."

The average household Duke Energy bill has risen by nearly 45% since 2020, according to an analysis from the Energy and Policy Institute, because of a confluence of factors. The cost of natural gas is a major one.

Research from the Environmental Defense Fund shows that fuel costs accounted for 67% of rate increases from 2017 to 2024 in Duke's central North Carolina territory, and for 46% of the hikes in the rest of the state. While fuel costs did dip last year, they're still about double what they were in 2017.

"Fuel costs have stayed high since the 2021-22 price spike," Will Scott,

the environmental group's North Carolina policy director, said in a written response to Canary Media. "At the same time, Duke has become more natural gas reliant, with even more new gas plants on the way."

Editor's note: NC Newsline asked Duke Energy to respond to this story.

"The law is clear, customers must pay what we pay, no less and no more," said Duke Energy spokesman Bill Norton. "Carbon-free nuclear efficiently provides about half of our energy in the Carolinas, and North Carolina is among the top 5 the nation for solar, so fuel expenses have not impacted customer bills as drastically here as in other regions of the country."

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## Juvenile Crime Prevention Council's Impact

By Jheri Hardaway

Staff Writer

Are you familiar with the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council or JCPC? The Division of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention partners with Juvenile Crime Prevention Councils in each county to galvanize community leaders, locally and statewide, to reduce and prevent juvenile crime. JCPC board members are appointed by each county's board of commissioners and meet monthly or bimonthly in each county. The meetings are open to the public, and all business is considered public information. DJJDP allocates approximately \$28 million to these councils annually. Funding is used to subsidize local programs and services. The JCPC is a state-mandated board in North Carolina that serves as the local "think tank" for addressing youth delinquency. The North Carolina General Assembly established JCPCs to ensure that the solutions for at-risk youth are decided by the people who actually live in those communities, rather than just bureaucrats in Raleigh.

The primary goal is to provide community-based alternatives to youth development centers (juvenile detention). The council's job is

to make sure kids who are at risk or already in the system have access to resources that keep them on the right path and out of a cell. The council is designed to be a "multi-disciplinary" group. It typically includes: the Sheriff and Chief of Police, the District Attorney, and the School Superintendent, a Juvenile Court Counselor, and community members who represent from the business community, non-profits, and citizens-at-large who bring a fresh perspective.

Dr. Raymond E. Smith Jr. shared, "Our children are the future of the

community, and in our country, they cannot under any circumstances be cast aside, overlooked, or undervalued. Their presence, their well-being, their future is critical to the ongoing continuity of our communities and this country. I advocate for children because that's one thing all of us adults have in been; children, each of us has been a child at some point. None of us has made all the right decisions. And under no circumstances, can we abandon our children. They have value and they need to know their value and they need to hear that from us so the

juvenile crime prevention council, all of the programs that fall under the JCPC are critical and vital and I asked everyone in the community to join in and support these programs and support the youth in our community. No one can be thrown away."

Check with your local county to see how the JCPC funds are being allocated. Which local non profits are they collaborating with? Who is making the decisions for programs that empower at risk youth? Knowledge is power, now that you know more what can you do to help our youth?

Wake County Public School System is working to improve how we engage and empower students, families, and communities.

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**April 6 - May 15, 2026**

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*The possibilities for partnerships and engagement are endless!*

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- Subscribe to our Community Connections newsletter for community partners
- Put Yourself on the Map! to showcase your organization's free and low-cost goods and services
- Volunteer, Donate, or offer an Apprenticeship

Visit [bit.ly/FamilySurveyWCPSS](http://bit.ly/FamilySurveyWCPSS) to explore these and many more ways to engage with WCPSS.



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NCDOT HOSTING A PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE  
A PROPOSAL TO REPLACE THE BRIDGES ON FORESTVILLE  
ROAD OVER HARRIS CREEK AND  
OVER HODGES MILL CREEK IN RALEIGH

STIP Project No. BP5.R089/BP5.R120



RALEIGH - The N.C. Department of Transportation is hosting a public meeting to discuss the proposal to replace the bridges on Forestville Road over Harris Creek and over Hodges Mill Creek. The purpose of this meeting is to provide interested citizens with information on the project and gather public input on the proposed design.

Project details and maps can be found on NCDOT's project input website at [publicinput.com/forestvillerd-bridges](http://publicinput.com/forestvillerd-bridges). The information will be available at the meeting allowing for one-on-one discussions with NCDOT staff, but there will be no formal presentation.

The meeting will be held from 4 to 7 p.m. on April 21 at Wake Cross Baptist Church, 3328 Forestville Road, in Raleigh.

People may also submit comments by phone at 984-205-6615 project code 1863, email [forestvillerd-bridges@publicinput.com](mailto:forestvillerd-bridges@publicinput.com), or mail at the address shown below by May 5, 2026.

By Mail: Lisa Bullard-Gilchrist, EI  
NCDOT Highway Division 5 – Bridge Program Manager  
2612 N. Duke Street  
Durham, NC 27704

NCDOT will provide auxiliary aids and services under the Americans with Disabilities Act for disabled people who wish to participate in this meeting. Anyone requiring special services should contact Tony Gallagher, Environmental Analysis Unit, at 1598 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-1598, 919-707-6069 or [magallagher@ncdot.gov](mailto:magallagher@ncdot.gov) as early as possible so arrangements can be made.

Those who do not speak English, or have a limited ability to read, speak or understand English, may receive interpretive services upon request prior by calling 1-800-481-6494.

Aquellas personas no hablan inglés, o tienen limitaciones para leer, hablar o entender inglés, podrían recibir servicios de interpretación si los solicitan llamando al 1-800-481-6494.

# Business & Finance

## The Rich History of Black-owned Business in Winston-Salem

Naomi C. McClean; William S. Scales; Mary Burns.

While these are names many may not recognize, they should not be forgotten. These were business owners, community leaders, and advocates—people who played an integral part in Winston-Salem's Black history. Thanks to a local artist, many more will get to know their faces.

On Seventh Street in the northern district of the Innovation Quarter, you can find a mural. Captured in vibrant colors and black and white imagery, you can see faces, buses, buildings—a patchwork of images representing a vital part of the city's history.

Local artist Leo Rucker painted the mural, titled "Depot Street Renaissance," to represent the depth of Black history in and around the iQ. Rucker dug deep into local Black history, evoking a time when historic Black-owned businesses filled the streets around the R.J. Reynolds tobacco factories and the surrounding neighborhoods were home to many Black workers and their families.

The "Depot Street Renaissance" mural serves as an important reminder. Today, the iQ is a place where many people live, work, learn, and

play, but it's important to acknowledge and remember the people who lived and worked here before, to honor these pioneers who helped imbue this city with its entrepreneurial and innovative spirit. Take a look back at some of the businesses that made this part of town a blossoming Black business district.

The Winston-Salem Tobacco Historic District is considered by many to be the launching pad for the region's rich Black history. Tobacco was king, and seemingly overnight, an astounding 39 tobacco factories sprung up with R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company leading the way.<sup>1</sup> The production of tobacco products required a lot of manual labor, and laborers were scarce. Companies like R.J. Reynolds Tobacco recruited factory workers from far and wide, and many came to Winston-Salem from states like South Carolina, Georgia, Virginia to work in these factories.

The attraction of factory work largely accounts for Winston and Salem's Black population boom, which increased 216% between 1880 (1,482) and 1890 (4,687).<sup>1</sup> Once in Winston-Salem, segregation forced Black laborers to move into certain neighborhoods, with three areas developing on



the east side Winston near the R.J.R. buildings—Fourteenth Street, Columbia Heights, and Depot Street.<sup>1</sup>

These new community members—many who were once enslaved or a generation removed from slavery—were authoring a new legacy. They possessed a vital drive that was an important component of their lives and led others to start businesses, plying skills and trades learned or

passed down. Clothiers, meat wholesalers, grocers and other services planted roots and flourished here.

During that time, there were two hotspots for historic Black-owned businesses: the Krankies block and what is known today as Patterson Avenue.

Located between Third Street and Fourth Street, what is known as the Krankies Block (for Krankies Coffee



shop located there) was once home to many black-owned businesses.

From the 1900s through the 1960s, a diverse mix of commerce grew in Winston-Salem and can best be described as a business melting pot. Food, fashion, personal and professional services, and beyond, this incredible area played home to all of those and more. Although occupying a small physical area, this area held

a significant role in the commercial district that developed in and around this part of town.

Some of these historic black-owned businesses were important for what they provided socially, not just for what they sold. Establishments like barbershops, beauty shops, and salons were an important source of

(See WINSTON SALEM, P. 9)

## Harnett County Holds Legislative Luncheon To Discuss Challenges

By Jheri Hardaway

Staff Writer

Lillington, N.C. - In a recently held Annual Legislative Luncheon, Harnett County commissioners met with state and federal legislators to discuss a range of issues affecting the county, with a particular focus on budgetary constraints, education funding, and state versus local control. The meeting, which aimed to facilitate dialogue and seek support for county priorities, was marked by both collaborative intent and expressions of frustration over the limitations placed on local government by the state and federal entities.

One of the primary topics of discussion was the challenge of meeting the needs of a growing population with a limited revenue stream. Commissioners shared their desire for greater autonomy in making

decisions that impact their constituents, citing a deep understanding of local needs that they believe is sometimes overlooked by higher levels of government. The potential impact of state-mandated revenue-neutral property assessments was a key point of contention. While legislators emphasized the need for a balanced approach to taxation and the prevention of exorbitant tax hikes, commissioners voiced concerns about the limitations this might place on their ability to fund essential services, including schools and infrastructure development. A significant portion of the meeting was dedicated to school funding, particularly the need for new high schools and the challenges posed by the growing number of students connected to the military. Commissioners highlighted the financial strain associated with building and operating these schools, and legisla-

tors shared their efforts to secure federal impact aid.

The issue of impact fees was also raised, with commissioners expressing frustration over the state's restrictions on their ability to implement fees to offset the costs of growth. While legislators acknowledged the challenges faced by local governments, they also emphasized the legal and political complexities surrounding the implementation of such fees. There was a discussion about the possibility of introducing a local bill to allow Harnett County to exercise impact fees for education and infrastructure, with some legislators expressing support for the idea while acknowledging the potential for opposition from state leadership. There was a combine sense of frustration and insincerity in this feedback from the legislators as commissioners asserted that as previous county commissioners

"What would you do?" As a viewer the senator and representative assertion that the argument for impact fees would go no where was alarming and should be something that voters across the state pay attention to.

Another topic of discussion was the impact of inflation on infrastructure projects. Legislators noted that the influx of federal funds during the pandemic had inadvertently contributed to inflation, leading to higher costs for materials and labor. This has complicated efforts to complete essential infrastructure projects within budget. The meeting also touched upon other issues, including the cost of healthcare, the need for increased workforce development, and the challenges associated with providing services to a diverse population. Legislators shared their ongoing efforts to address these issues, including the introduction of

bills aimed at reducing healthcare costs and promoting lifelong learning.

Towards the end of the luncheon, a representative from the office of Congressman Ted Budd addressed the attendees, emphasizing the importance of collaboration between federal, state, and local governments. He highlighted the availability of various federal grants that could potentially help address some of the county's needs, including grants for school systems, rural development, and workforce development.

The meeting concluded with expressions of appreciation from both commissioners and legislators for the opportunity to engage in a dialogue although the event did not move the needle on any of the addressed topics. Commissioners reiterated their commitment to advocating for the best interests

of Harnett County residents and expressed hope that the legislators would continue to support their efforts to address the challenges facing the county. The legislators, in turn, reaffirmed their commitment to representing the county at the state and federal levels and emphasized the importance of receiving clear requests and resolutions from the county to effectively advocate on their behalf.

The luncheon, where no citizens were allowed to speak or eat lunch, provided a public setting for commissioners and legislators to connect and discuss issues of mutual concern. While differences of opinion emerged on certain topics, the overall tone of the meeting was collaborative, with a shared focus on finding solutions that benefit the citizens of Harnett County. There were no concrete next steps or plans, only the promise of more conversations.

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# Black-led Nonprofits Didn't See The Lasting Funding Boosts Promised After 2020's Racial Reckoning Promises

NEW YORK (AP) — The racial reckoning that followed George Floyd's murder in 2020 carried hopes of new support for disproportionately underfunded, Black-led nonprofits. American companies stepped up donations to historically Black colleges and universities. Major climate funders pledged to give more toward minority groups. Large donors sought to narrow the racial wealth gap.

But new research released Tuesday shows that such financial gains for many Black-led nonprofits were short-lived, if they happened at all. A subset of large, Black-led nonprofits saw only temporary funding increases between 2020 and 2022, according to the analysis by nonprofit research service Candid and Black philanthropy group ABFE. Smaller organizations saw no significant change.

The pattern of disinvestment put many community groups at a greater disadvantage when President Donald Trump's policies curtailed funding for diversity, equity and inclusion. The

nonprofit sector's struggles deepened as the administration threatened a range of social service programs, left future grants uncertain by cutting agency staff and chilled racial justice funding through anti-DEI executive orders.

Black Voters Matter co-founder Cliff Albright noted these community nonprofits are the same ones now tasked with helping more and more low-income families deal with spiking healthcare costs and rising food prices.

The dynamic rang true for a South Side Chicago group serving a predominantly Black neighborhood among the city's most impoverished. Asiaha Butler, the CEO of the Resident Association of Greater Englewood, cofounded the nonprofit more than 15 years ago to empower her neighbors to combat their area's negative narratives.

That mission had a handful of consistent backers. But summer 2020 brought more than two dozen new

fundors.

"All of a sudden, we were desirable for people to fund," recalled Butler, adding the "spurt" became a "curse" as the quick infusion of capital tapered off.

"We started seeing this revenue and thinking we're gaining really great relationships with funders," she said. "And, really, those priorities shifted quickly."

Lacking relationships

Foundations lacked relationships with Black organizations of any scale prior to 2020, according to ABFE CEO Susan Taylor Batten.

Black philanthropy professionals say that distance created a scramble when protestors demanded businesses and philanthropies address systemic racism.

Kia Croom, whose fundraising firm works with nonprofits in Black communities, said her clients received more funding than ever from corporations. Some hired additional development staff to meet the demand

— and then underwent layoffs when funds disappeared.

"It was just a very transactional gift at best," she said.

Positive Results Center CEO Kande Lewis oversees a Los Angeles nonprofit assisting survivors of domestic violence and other harms. It was wonderful, she said, to receive checks from new supporters. But oftentimes, the support turned out to be a one-time donation rather than the beginning of a relationship.

Lewis felt the funding came only because her group was Black-led — not because funders understood its work.

"They were so busy trying to figure out who was who that they didn't really take time to get to know people," she said.

Limited networks

Jaleesa Hall knows philanthropy is a relationship game.

She heads Raising A Village Foundation, which aims to advance educational equity through tutoring pro-

grams. She didn't have many high net worth members in her network when she founded the Washington, D.C. nonprofit more than six years ago.

That circle made it difficult to catch the attention of foundations, which she said "haven't really cracked" how to find potential grantees outside of their existing web of connections.

"Small, Black-led nonprofits simply aren't in those rooms to begin with," Hall said.

Most of their foundation grant dollars came from first-time funders, according to the report.

Cathleen Clerkin, the associate vice president of research at Candid, said the nonprofits' work is made even more challenging by the "song and dance" necessary to secure long-term investment every year.

"They're just constantly going on first dates with new funders and hoping that somebody will invest in them and understand them," she said.

Small nonprofit leaders are so

focused on day-to-day upkeep and financial viability that they don't have time to attend networking opportunities or money to fly out for national convenings.

T'Pring Westbrook, a nonresident fellow at the Urban Institute's Center on Nonprofits and Philanthropy, co-founded a consulting group that works with small nonprofits. The problem isn't that foundations don't want to support marginalized communities, she said, but that they do so through "trend funding."

"Maybe during Black History Month there will be a funding campaign," she said. "But the thing about a campaign is a campaign doesn't build sustainability."

Restrictive practices

Small nonprofits say they face additional barriers, regardless of race, including grant eligibility requirements. And limited staff may prevent

(See **BLACK NONPROFITS**, P. 6)



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# Health and Wellness

## Doula Program Supports Moms Across Rural Eastern N.C.

By Quiana Shepard

NCCU

In parts of rural North Carolina, an expectant mother may drive more than an hour to reach a hospital that delivers babies. For families living in small towns in the eastern region of the state, access to maternity care often means navigating long distances, limited services and a shrinking number of hospitals.

But pregnancy does not pause for geography.

That reality is driving a new initiative from North Carolina Central University's (NCCU) Rural Health Hub, where leaders are training a new generation of community-based birth doulas to support mothers before, during and after childbirth.

For Undi Hoffer, Ph.D., CD (DONA), director of the Community-Based Doula Program, the mission of the program begins with a simple truth.

"Birth is sacred," she said. "It's beautiful. It's a miracle. Families deserve to experience that moment with dignity, support and confidence."

When Access Is Miles Away Across the United States, maternal mortality rates remain among the highest in developed nations. Although rates have declined since the pandemic, significant disparities persist. Black women experience mortality rates three to four times higher than white and Hispanic women, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The numbers are also concerning in rural communities. Approximately 21% of rural counties are classified as maternity care deserts, according to the National Center for Health Statistics. In addition, 13.4% of women in rural areas have no birthing hospital within 30 minutes, compared with 9.7% nationwide.

"It's an access issue in eastern North Carolina," Hoffer explains. "People are traveling hours just to receive care."

Hospitals in Halifax and Nash counties frequently serve patients from surrounding counties like Northampton, Edgecombe, Bertie, Warren, Franklin and Martin, communities where maternity services may be limited.

But even when medical care is available, families often lack consistent support throughout pregnancy and postpartum recovery, which typi-

cally lasts from 6 to 8 weeks. That gap is where doulas make a difference.

Building Care From the Community Up

Launched in December 2025, the Community-Based Birth Doula Training Program is part of the university's broader Rural Health Hub initiative, a nonprofit organization focused on improving health outcomes in underserved communities.

Based in Enfield, North Carolina, the hub serves as a center for community engagement and workforce development. Rather than recruiting professionals from outside the region, the hub focuses on training individuals who already live in the communities they will serve.

"It's important that our doulas come from these communities," Hoffer says. "They're building relationships with families they know. That's how you build trust."

The first cohort included 12 doulas, each supported with scholarships covering training, certification and materials. Participants completed coursework through DONA (Doula of North America) International, one of the leading doula certification organizations, along with CPR training, childbirth education and professional development workshops. To become certified, each trainee must attend three qualified births within their first year, with the Rural Health Hub helping connect them to opportunities through healthcare partnerships, including BlueCross BlueShield through the Doula Exchange.

For Rose Lewis, a member of the first cohort, the program builds upon years of community-based work. A Nash County resident, nonprofit founder and community health worker, Lewis has long helped families access essential services, from transportation to healthcare. "Access to information and education, that's what inspired me," Lewis said. "Especially for our Black and brown communities. Many expectant mothers don't know what a doula is; they're confusing it with a midwife. So just bringing awareness can make a difference in their outcomes."

Through her nonprofit, Equipping the Community Organization Inc., Lewis has supported families across the lifespan, from navigating Medicare and Medicaid services, medical appointments, and other supportive services. In that work, she noticed a



gap in support during pregnancy.

"I kept seeing resources for after the baby gets here," she said. "But what about the support leading up to birth?"

Her motivation became personal after a woman connected to her extended family died during childbirth and her own daughter experienced a high-risk pregnancy.

"Everything turned out okay with my daughter," she said. "But I saw how stressful it was. Not every woman has someone there to support and encourage them."

Now, Lewis focuses on helping mothers understand their options and advocate for themselves.

"When you're informed, you can advocate for yourself," she said.

"That's what I want for the families I serve."

Why Doulas Matter

A doula provides emotional, physical and informational support during pregnancy, labor and the weeks following birth. Unlike doctors or midwives, doulas do not provide medical care, but they help families understand their options and navigate the childbirth experience.

Research shows that doula support can significantly improve maternal outcomes.

According to a 2025 study in the American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology, births attended by doulas are associated with lower cesarean rates, fewer medical interventions and improved newborn health indicators. Mothers also report higher satisfaction and confidence in their birth experiences.

But Hoffer emphasizes that the impact extends beyond delivery day.

"A lot of maternal mortality happens after birth," she said. "We want moms to understand when something isn't right and feel empowered to seek help."

Doulas often stay connected with families during the postpartum period, helping mothers process their birth experiences, adjust to new par-

enthood and recognize warning signs that require medical attention.

That consistent support can be especially valuable in rural areas where healthcare access may be limited.

"Information is power," Hoffer said. "When moms understand their bodies and their options, they can advocate for themselves."

Restoring a Longstanding Tradition

Doulas are gaining renewed attention in healthcare, with the North American industry projected to grow at an annual rate of 8.41% and reach \$25.36 billion by 2033, according to a 2026 Market Research Intellect report, but the practice has deep historical roots.

Long before childbirth became primarily hospital-based in the 1930s, community birth workers played a central role in guiding families through pregnancy and delivery.

Over time, the medicalization of childbirth pushed many traditional birth workers aside. Today, research and advocacy are helping bring their role back.

"The research shows that having a doula improves outcomes for moms and babies," Hoffer said. "But it's also about restoring the kind of support families once had in their communities."

## N.C. Faces Cannabis "Policy Gap," New State Report Finds



By Jordan Meadows

Staff Writer

A state advisory council convened by Governor Josh Stein is warning that North Carolina's rapidly expanding market for hemp-derived THC products is operating in a regulatory vacuum, describing the current system as a "wild west" that poses risks to consumers and calling on lawmakers to establish a comprehensive legal framework.

In a newly released interim report on Friday, the North Carolina Advisory Council on Cannabis found that intoxicating cannabis products, including gummies, drinks, and other edibles derived from hemp, are being sold across the state without consistent standards for testing, labeling, potency, or age restrictions. Because state law does not currently impose age limits on these products, the council noted that minors can legally purchase them.

"Intoxicating hemp-derived cannabinoid products...are being sold in an environment without any uniform standards for manufacturing, testing, labeling, packaging, or age verification," the report states, adding that the absence of oversight has created a landscape with "significant and widespread concerns regarding consumer safety, youth access, and public health."

The 27-member council, comprising public health officials, law enforcement, lawmakers, and industry stakeholders, was established in June 2025 at the direction of Stein to recommend policies that would "create a safe, legal market for adults that protects kids." After meeting for months and reviewing approaches in other states, the group concluded that North Carolina's current system leaves a "dangerous policy gap," with no meaningful enforcement authority or regulatory guardrails governing a market estimated at roughly \$3.2 billion in annual sales.

Council co-chairs Dr. Lawrence Greenblatt, the state's health director and chief medical officer, and Robeson County District Attorney Matthew Scott, are recommending that lawmakers move toward a regulated adult-use cannabis framework that includes protections for medical users. A central component of that recommendation is regulating cannabis products based on total THC content, regardless of whether it is derived from hemp or marijuana. "It provides a way for the state to oversee and regulate the existing but unregulated market in North Carolina," the report explains.

The council's findings come as North Carolina remains one of a shrinking number of states without a legal medical cannabis program, despite strong public support for legalization. Previous legislative efforts to regulate hemp-derived THC products or establish a broader cannabis framework have stalled due to disagreements within the Republican-controlled General Assembly. "Last year, I charged this group with developing a comprehensive solution to the unregulated sale of cannabis that is grounded in public health and public safety, with a special focus on keeping young people safe," Stein said. "Let's get this right."

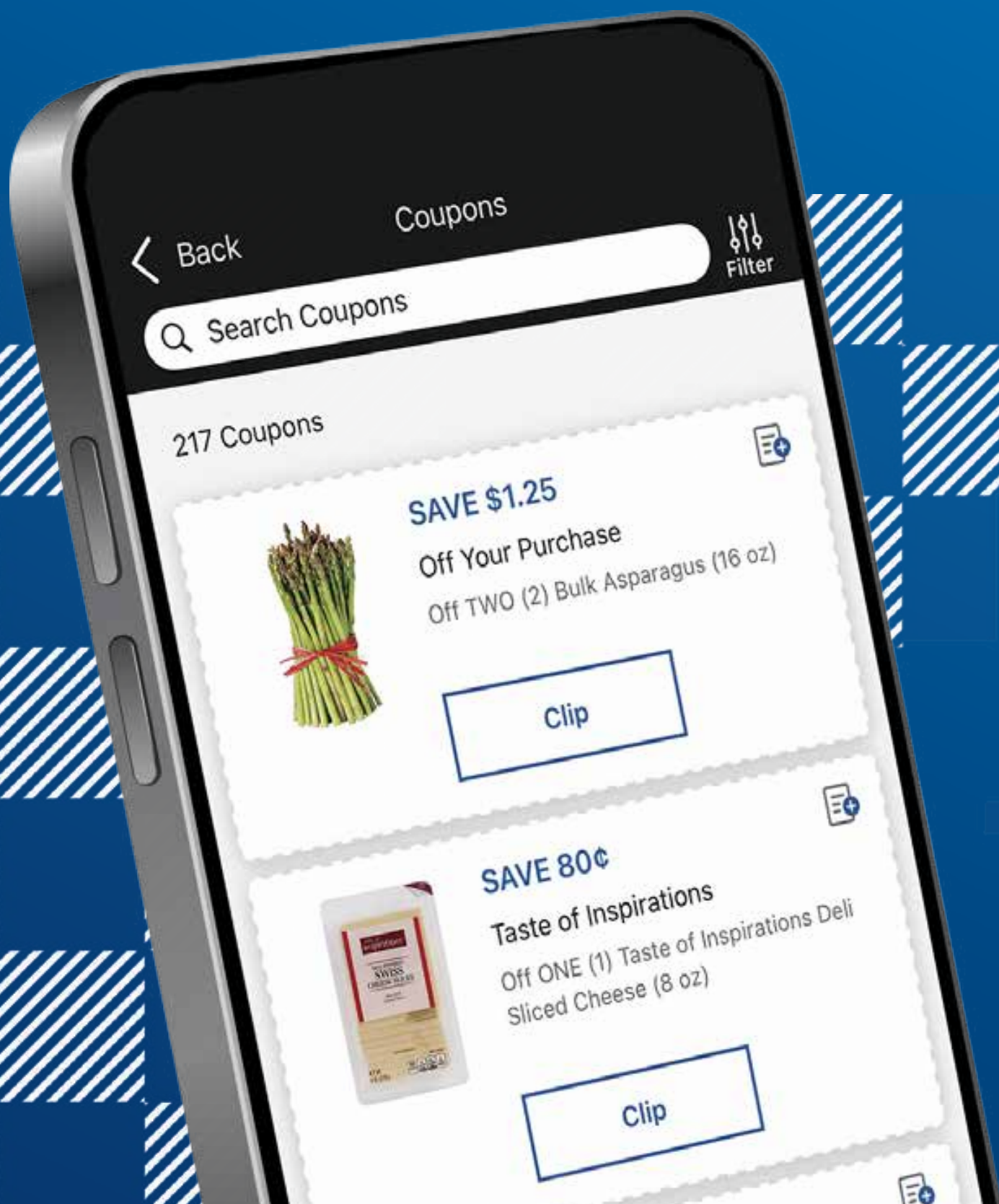
The policy debate is unfolding alongside shifting federal rules. The 2018 Farm Bill legalized hemp production nationwide, enabling the rise of hemp-derived THC products, while more recent federal actions have sought to limit THC concentrations and revisit regulatory gaps. A recent executive order from Donald Trump has also signaled a potential easing of restrictions on marijuana research and broader reconsideration of federal cannabis policy.

Lawmakers are expected to take up cannabis-related proposals when the General Assembly reconvenes later in April, including bills addressing medical marijuana, adult-use legalization, and research programs.

The advisory council will continue its work in the coming months, with a final report due in December 2026.

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# Arts & Culture

## 75 Years After She Helped End School Segregation, Barbara Rose Johns Now Stands In The United States Capitol Bldg.

**THE CONVERSATION** - The 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence isn't the only important anniversary in 2026. This year also marks the 75th anniversary of an extraordinary case of student activism that helped lead to the Supreme Court's decision outlawing segregated schools.

In April 1951, 16-year-old Barbara Rose Johns organized a student strike to protest the shabby conditions and inadequate education at her segregated Black high school in Prince Edward County, Virginia.

Prince Edward County is located about 65 miles southwest of Richmond and around 30 miles east of Appomattox, or 48 kilometers, in a part of Virginia known as Southside. African Americans constituted almost half the population, but they were largely prevented from voting before passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965 and could not eat in local restaurants before passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The public schools were segregated, and for decades there was no Black high school at all.

In 1939, following years of pressure by Black residents, the white authorities opened a high school for African Americans. That segregated institution was named for Robert Roosa Moton, who had been raised in Prince Edward County and served as an administrator at Hampton Institute in Virginia before being appointed as the second head of Tuskegee Insti-

tute following the death of Booker T. Washington.

The new building became severely overcrowded almost immediately. Although it was designed for a maximum enrollment of 180, attendance reached 219 the year after it opened and 377 in 1947.

The following year, the school board put up three temporary out-buildings to accommodate the overflow. Many Black residents scorned these buildings as "tar paper shacks" because of their covering and dilapidated condition. They had inefficient wood stoves that provided limited heating, and their thin walls often leaked when rain fell.

The shabbiness of these interim structures became a source of continuing tension, as negotiations between the Black community and white authorities for a more permanent facility dragged on inconclusively into early 1951.

Johns makes her move

As an 11th grader at Moton High School, Johns began talking with some of her fellow students about taking action to protest the shacks and improve their education.

On April 23, 1951, someone lured Moton's principal, Boyd Jones, out of the building on the pretext that two students were in trouble elsewhere in town. After Jones left, Johns summoned the student body to the auditorium, where she exhorted her peers to walk out to protest the deplorable



condition of their school.

Johns also sent a letter to Oliver W. Hill and Spottswood W. Robinson III, two Richmond civil rights lawyers who worked closely with the NAACP, asking for their legal assistance.

The strike went on for two weeks. During that time, Hill and Robinson met twice with hundreds of students and parents. The meetings grew out of the lawyers' initial skepticism about litigating over school conditions in rural Prince Edward County, where they feared that plaintiffs would be subject to severe physical



and economic retaliation.

Those meetings persuaded Hill and Robinson that the Black community broadly supported an effort to obtain desegregation rather than mere improvements in the separate Black schools. The lawyers therefore filed their lawsuit in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia on behalf of scores of Black students and parents, alleging that segregated schools violated the 14th Amendment.

Victory – and messy history  
Johns' initiative had both short-

and long-term consequences.

In the immediate aftermath of the strike, the all-white school board fired Jones, whom they regarded as having put the students up to their activism despite his – and the students' – insistence that the whole affair was a student initiative.

The lawsuit – and other similar suits filed in South Carolina, Delaware and Kansas – failed in the lower

court. The plaintiffs appealed to the Supreme Court, which reversed those judgments and ruled in the consolidated case called *Brown v. Board of Education* that segregated public schools were unconstitutional.

Meanwhile, in the wake of the student strike at Moton, Johns' family feared that she would be in physical danger if she remained in Prince Edward County for her senior year. They sent her to live with her uncle Vernon Johns, a minister and outspoken civil rights advocate, in Montgomery, Alabama.

Johns graduated from Drexel University and worked for many years as a public school librarian in Philadelphia before her death in 1991.

The post-Brown history of Prince Edward County is very complicated. White authorities closed the public schools for five years to avoid desegregation. For a long time afterward, virtually all the white children went to a private academy that opened when the public schools closed.

But that messy history cannot detract from the courage and impact of Barbara Johns.

In December 2025, her statue replaced that of Robert E. Lee as one of the two Virginians displayed in the U.S. Capitol. Johns is there – along with George Washington.

### BLACK NON PROFITS

*Continued from page 4*

qualifying organizations from keeping up with foundations' required weekly or monthly reports on the status of projects they've funded.

"It ends up feeling like a burden," Hall explained. "The juice isn't worth the squeeze."

Philanthropy has seen a sector-wide shift towards trust-based models that offer general operating support and multi-year grants, acknowledging nonprofits' expertise on how to best fulfill their missions. But Batten, the ABFE leader, said Black-led nonprofits generally have not reaped the benefits of those best practices.

The report showed Black-led nonprofits had significantly fewer continuing funders than their non-Black counterparts. Only one-third received general operating support, compared to just over half of other nonprofits.

"We are still seeing remnants of bad practice when it comes to investing in Black communities," Batten said. "There's just no way for a foundation to move its mission for communities in this country, let alone Black nonprofits to move theirs, if we do not evolve this sector."

'Pulling teeth' in Chicago

Butler, the Chicago neighborhood association leader, hears excuses now from supporters who gave at the height of the 2020 racial justice movement: "Priorities have shifted," they tell her, or there are "new strategic goals."

"Little buzz words that just say perhaps this nonprofit – grassroots, Black-led, very focused on the Black population -- is probably just not in peoples' cards to continue to support," she said.

That downturn delayed a nearly \$7 million capital project building off their economic justice work after the post-George Floyd civil unrest. An 8,800-square-foot (817 square-meter) building would include a dine-in restaurant and another Black-owned business. One tenant would provide workforce development trainings. Her goal is to strengthen Englewood's economic and social fabric through a thriving Black business district.

By 2023, she had secured a \$1 million grant – her nonprofit's largest – to start the project. But she compared her search for additional funding to "pulling teeth." Past philanthropic partners withheld support. Their prospects weren't good.

She's turning to public funding. The City of Chicago provided a \$2.5 million grant and Butler said another \$1.5 million state award is pending.

"Things shifted and so we didn't want to start soliciting for a capital campaign," she said. "The timing was off."

## Santana Shines At Harrah's Cherokee Casino

By Jheri Hardaway

*Staff Writer*

The atmosphere was electric at the Harrah's Cherokee Casino Resort Event Center as guitar and music legend Carlos Santana took the stage for what can only be described as a truly timeless concert. The 10-time Grammy-winning guitarist, known for his masterful fusion of rock, blues, and Latin rhythms, delivered an outstanding performance that once again displayed his artistic brilliance. But beyond the soaring guitar solos and the infectious grooves, it was Santana's heartfelt political message that left a lasting impression on the audience.

In a powerful moment captured on video during the performance, Santana paused the music to address the packed arena. Standing before a large screen broadcasting his image to the crowd, he spoke directly about the current state of the world, specifically touching on issues of immigration and human dignity, "Coming together to make visible that we want to be treated with respect and even with grace," Santana told the cheering crowd. He then directed a specific message toward immigration enforcement: "And so we say to people who have the uniform of ICE, be nice. Don't be so brutal. Be kind."

Santana's words were measured but firm, emphasizing a desire for cooperation without sacrificing ba-

sic human rights. "We want to comply, obey, and be respectful to everything. But treat us with respect. That's all we ask. Treat us with respect."

The 78-year-old musician, who immigrated to the United States from Mexico in his youth, has long been an advocate for immigrant rights and global harmony. He concluded his speech with a universal call to action: "Compassion, kindness, mercy, forgiveness. Those are the ingredients so we can have world peace. You want world peace? Start with your mind. Peace in your mind."

The audience responded with overwhelming enthusiasm, their glowing smartphone screens illuminating the arena as they recorded the poignant moment.

The Harrah's Cherokee Casino Resort proved to be an impressive host for the legendary performer. The 3,000-seat Event Center provided an intimate yet grand setting for the concert, boasting excellent acoustics. Beyond the concert hall, the resort itself is stunning, truly offering something for everyone. The amenities are top-notch, ranging from diverse and delicious food options to impeccably clean facilities even the bathrooms were notably impressive in their upkeep. The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians has cultivated a premier entertainment destination nestled in the beautiful North Caro-



lina mountains.

One note, the experience of arriving at this otherwise welcoming destination was marred by a jarring sight. As visitors approached the entrance to the reservation, a giant Confederate flag is prominently displayed. In the context of a trip to see an artist whose very message centers on unity, respect, and breaking down barriers, the flag felt entirely out of place and unnecessary. It stood in stark contrast to the inclusive and peaceful atmosphere that The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and



Carlos Santana cultivated inside the reservation and Event Center, serving as an unfortunate turn-off before the incredible evening had even begun.

Despite the unsettling introduction to the area, the night belonged to Carlos Santana, all the old hippies, and the enduring message of love and musical excellence. Santana's performance at the Cherokee Casino was a testament to his legacy not just as a guitar virtuoso, but as a deeply spiritual artist who uses his platform to advocate for a better world. It was a reminder that true artistic brilliance is about more than just playing the right notes—it's about touching the hearts and minds of the audience.

## Paige Defied Age And Segregation In Baseball

By Jordan Meadows

*Staff Writer*

Born Leroy Paige on July 7, 1906, in Mobile, baseball legend Satchel Paige rose from difficult beginnings to become one of the most iconic figures in the sport's history. His family altered the spelling of their last name to distance themselves from his father, and he earned the nickname "Satchel" as a child while working as a porter at a train station, where he devised a way to carry multiple bags at once. After a troubled youth that included time at a reform school, Paige discovered baseball—a turning point that would shape the rest of his life.

Paige turned professional in the late 1920s, launching a long and unconventional career in the Negro Leagues. For more than two decades, he pitched for teams across the United States and internationally, becoming known for his blazing fastball, pinpoint control, and unmistakable showmanship. His personality matched his talent; Paige often entertained crowds by calling his outfielders in before striking out opposing batters. His tenure with the Kansas City Monarchs in the late 1930s and early 1940s solidified his reputation, as he led the team to multiple league pennants and starred alongside players like Josh Gibson.

Despite his dominance, Paige's prime unfolded during an era of racial segregation that barred Black players from Major League Baseball. By the time integration began, he was already in his 40s. In 1948, owner Bill Veeck signed him to the Cleveland Guardians, making Paige one of the oldest rookies in league history. He quickly proved he still belonged, finishing the season with a 6-1 record and helping Cleveland capture a World Series title. He later earned All-Star selections in 1952 and 1953, further underscoring his enduring skill.

Over the course of his career, Paige overcame arm injuries and adapted his pitching style as he aged, relying more on control and strategy while remaining highly effective. His longevity and charisma made him a cultural icon, and his name became widely recognized across the country, even among those who had never seen him pitch.

On September 25, 1965, Paige added a remarkable final chapter to his career. Taking the mound for the Kansas City Athletics against the Boston Red Sox, the 59-year-old delivered three scoreless innings, allowing just one hit. The appearance made him the oldest player ever to appear in a Major League Baseball game. Before the game, he famously sat in a rocking chair in the bullpen while a nurse tended to his arm, but



once play began, he commanded the field with the same poise and precision that had defined his career.

In 1971, Paige became the first player inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame specifically for his Negro Leagues accomplishments.

He died in 1982, leaving behind a legacy as one of baseball's greatest pitchers. While many details of his career—such as his total number of wins—remain uncertain, his impact on the game and his place in its history are beyond dispute.



### Clayton Hosts Easter Egg Hunt for Young Families

CLAYTON, NC – Families kicked off Easter celebrations early at the Town of Clayton's Tiny Tots Easter Egg Hunt, hosted by Clayton Parks and Recreation. Held at Clayton Community Park, the event welcomed children ages four and under to gather hundreds of colorful eggs in a relaxed, family-friendly setting. Laughter filled the park as toddlers explored the field and collected treats at their own pace. The morning included lawn games and a visit from the Easter Bunny, giving families the chance to capture photos and enjoy time together before the hunt began at 10 a.m.

"This may be their first egg hunt, and we want it to be a joyful and memorable moment," said Lauren Lambert, Marketing and Special Events Coordinator for Clayton Parks and Recreation.



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# Community

## Raleigh Honors Legacy with Dr. Gwen Keith Newsome Foundation Launch



RALEIGH, N.C. — On Saturday, March 28, 2026, the Raleigh Graduate Chapter of SWING PHI SWING SFI officially launched the Dr. Gwen Keith Newsome Foundation for Mental Wellness at Christian Faith Baptist Church, located at 509 Hilltop Drive. The church, led by Pastor Reverend Keith A. Darlington, served as the gathering place for community leaders, healthcare professionals, and residents united in advancing mental health awareness.

Established in honor of the late Dr. Gwen Keith Newsome, the foundation is a bold regional initiative committed to prioritizing mental and emotional well-being, particularly within underserved communities. Through strategic partnerships with organizations such as Oasis Health

and Wellness Center International, The Village of C.A.R.E., Rusmed Consultants, and others, the initiative aims to expand access to care, promote education, and advocate for culturally competent services.

Dr. Newsome's distinguished career included service on the North Carolina Board of Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselors, where she held the role of Ethics Chair and ethics consultant. Her professional impact extended across multiple roles, including her private practice, Believe in Therapy; her work as an outpatient therapist at Key Behavioral Essentials in Raleigh; her leadership as Clinical Director at New Outlook Second Chance Mental Health Company in Durham; and her role as CEO of Journey Production Life



Skills in Raleigh.

The newly launched foundation will begin its work across chapters in North Carolina, with plans to expand throughout the Southeast. Its mission is centered on normalizing conversations around mental health—particularly within African American communities—while creating safe spaces for dialogue, reducing stigma, and fostering collective healing.

During the event, Raleigh City Councilor Stormie Forte presented Kara Newsome, Dr. Newsome's daughter, with a formal proclamation recognizing the day as Dr. Gwen Keith Newsome Day, a tribute to her enduring legacy and contributions to the field.

The event also drew participation from leading organizations includ-

ing UNC Health, National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), Wake County Health and Human Services, WakeMed, Blue Cross Blue Shield, and AmeriHealth Caritas, among many other healthcare providers. Willie Rowe, Sheriff of Wake County, was also in attendance, underscoring the importance of community-wide collaboration in addressing mental health.

With strong community support and a clear mission, the Dr. Gwen Keith Newsome Foundation for Mental Wellness is poised to become a driving force in improving access to care and transforming the conversation around mental health for generations to come. Photos courtesy of John McCann Copywriting + Audiovisual Services



AreaIV TLOD, Inc. 44th Leadership Conference

Wendell Top Ladies & 15 Top Teens traveled to Murfreesboro, Tennessee to attend the 44th AreaIV Leadership Conference; "The Soundtrack of Service in The Music City", hosted by the Nashville Capital City Chapter's Top Ladies of Distinction, Inc. The Conference included approximately 900 in attendance from the 7 Southern States & Nassau, Bahamas, who were able to network & compete for various awards & scholarships. One Wendell Top Teens won 1st place in the Musical, one teen won 2nd place in the essay competition & the teens also won 2nd place in attendance & Lady Iva was awarded Top Leading Lady from the Chapter. 4 Wendell Top ladies studied over the past year & graduated from The AreaIV Inaugural Enhancement Institute. The Conference offered plenary sessions to update & share the outstanding work of various chapter's community services; community partnerships, services to enhance the status of women & senior citizens, along with service projects such as March of Dimes, St. Jude, Sickle Cell, NAACP, Literacy, NCNW & an onsite visit to 2 of the HBCUs Fisk University & Tennessee State. Boxes of Love were also donated to the Burn Survivors in the community. The Wendell Chapter proudly includes the National elected Top Teen President & National 1st Vice President. It was a very productive, interactive & informative trip for all who attended." The main Thrust of the organization is Mentoring The Top Teens of America.



Celebrating 90 Years of Dorothy Morrison

Dorothy Morrison celebrated her 90th birthday on March 26. A beloved matriarch, she is the mother of six daughters, with 16 grandchildren, 28 great-grandchildren, and two great-great-grandchildren.

Her family thanks God for her life and all who helped make the day special. "Mommy, I love you. You are very special to me," said her daughter, Claudette McKenzie.

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." — Hebrews 11:1

## Former Miss NC, Carrie Everett Dies at 22

RALEIGH - Carrie Everett, a former Miss North Carolina known for her poise, advocacy, and vibrant spirit, has passed away at the age of 22 following a year-long battle with cancer.

Everett, who earned the title of Miss North Carolina as a teen competitor, quickly became admired not only for her presence on stage but for her commitment to uplifting others. Throughout her time in the pageant community, she used her platform to promote confidence, education, and community involvement among young women across the state.

After being diagnosed with cancer, Everett faced her illness with remarkable strength and transparency. Over the past year, she shared parts of her journey with supporters, often using her voice to encourage others facing similar battles. Her resilience and optimism left a lasting impression on those who followed her story.

Family, friends, and members of the North Carolina pageant community have expressed an outpouring of grief and remembrance, describing Everett as compassionate, driven, and deeply inspiring. Many have also highlighted the grace with which she

carried herself, both in competition and in the face of adversity.

Though her life was brief, Everett's impact reached far beyond the stage. Her legacy lives on through the lives she touched, the young women she inspired, and the example she set of courage in the face of hardship.

Funeral arrangements and memorial details have not yet been publicly announced.

Everett is remembered not only as a titleholder, but as a daughter, friend, and role model whose light continues to shine through the community she leaves behind.

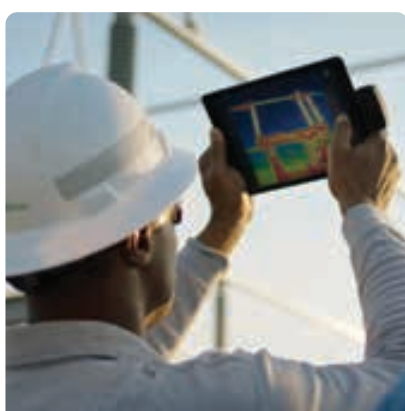
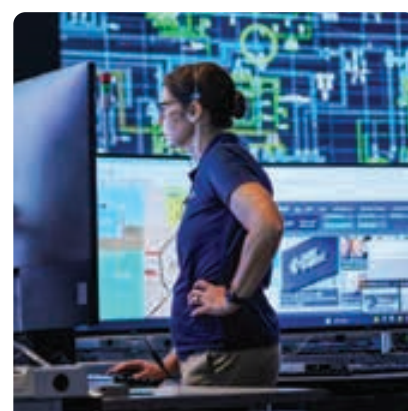


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# Church

## Practical Biblical Principles

### THE PASSOVER

Read: Exodus 12: 12-20

By John L. Caldwell, Pastor  
New Jerusalem Baptist Cathedral

The night of the first Passover was the night of the tenth plague. On that faithful night, God told the Israelites to sacrifice a spotless lamb and mark their doorposts and lintels with its blood (Exodus 12:21-22). Then when the Lord passed through the nation, He would "Passover" the households that showed the blood. In a very real way, the blood of the lamb saved the Israelites from death, as it kept the destroyer from entering their homes. The Israelites were saved from the plague, and their firstborn children stayed alive. From then on, every firstborn son of the Israelites belongs to the Lord and had to be redeemed with a sacrifice (Exodus 13:1-2, 12; Luke 2:22-24).

This Passover also brought death to the firstborn children in Egypt. All the Egyptian children died at midnight. This was the last plague, and Pharaoh let the children of Israel go free.

It was some 1420 years later that the full meaning and purpose of the Passover was played out on an old rugged cross. Jesus was the Passover twice. In Egypt and in Jerusalem. It was Jesus Who passed over those blood painted doorposts on that fateful night in Egypt. And it was Jesus Whose blood painted over the doorpost of all men's soul in the world and abolished sin completely from the world.

To abolish men's sins, Jesus did not do it as an all-powerful God moving over blood marked doorposts in Egypt some 5,786 ago. He did it as a God-man in human flesh; taking the place of an innocent, unblemished lamb some 1,446 years later in Jerusalem hanging on Cal-

vary's cross. At Calvary, He took on death and defeated it setting men free from the "Grim

Reaper" just as He did in Egypt. Today Jesus is still in the role of being the sacrificial Passover lamb for all who seek to follow Him as Lord and Savior.

The act of Passover included letting the blood of an innocent lamb until it dies. In Egypt, it was the lamb's blood which protected the faithful ones from death. In a sense, the dead lamb's blood had life in it. Also, it set the Hebrew slaves free by bringing death to the hard-hearted Egyptian king and his people.

In a sense, the Lamb's blood stood in the place of death, so death would not harm any of God's obedient people. Now we know that without the shedding of Jesus' blood there can be no forgiveness of sin (Hebrew 9:22). This our Lord did on the cross for all and not just for a few (John 3:16).

Jesus agreed to be the Passover lamb at His Father's request (Hebrew 10:5,10). For years, the temple priest in Jerusalem sacrificed innocent lambs twice a day not realizing this act was pointing to the coming Messiah Who will take away the sins of the world. The Messiah will be the final sacrificial (Passover) lamb God would accept to appease His wrath resulting from the sins of men. The sacrificed lambs would also point the way, in a spiritual sense, to God's saving grace which is in Christ.

Jesus was preparing Himself to be the Passover Lamb as He was praying in the Garden, sweating blood, and requesting of the Father to take away the "bitter cup" (death on the cross). Yet, Jesus finally agreed to be the pascal lamb for the final Passover— "Not my will, Lord but thine be done."

When a pascal lamb was slain it

was never beaten until bloody, never scorned nor cursed, nor spit upon. Nor did it have to carry a heavy cross to be crucified. Jesus, our pascal lamb, was subject to the above violence and was then made to carry His heavy cross a third of a mile, uphill to be crucified.

There He suffered and died having been hanging on the cross for no more than nine hours. The Roman soldiers were expecting Him to suffer and die some two days later. They wanted to see Him really suffer. The Romans designed their crucifixion so that the one being crucified will linger in pain for at least two days and die. If they were not dead in two days the soldiers would then break their legs causing the blood to rush to the lower part of the body, putting much pumping stress on the heart causing it to fail, and the victim dies, How cruel!

Our Lord's death on the cross caused God, the Father, to Passover our sins wiping them all away and in dying Jesus paid the penalty for our sins with His death. Jesus' shed blood coming from the whippings, thorn of crowns pressed upon His head and the three nails in His hands and feet wiped away all sin. His physical body dying then paid the penalty for our sinful souls. The soul that sins shall die (Ezekiel 18:4).

The Passover is not just an event, it is a man imitating an innocent lamb, dying like a sacrificial lamb, shedding His precious blood, making the cross He hung on a fountain where all sinners can plunge in and be covered by his blood and be free from sin and become one of the sons/daughters of God. Come to that fountain so rich and so sweet. Cast thou poor soul at the Savior's feet. Plunge in today and be made complete. Glory to His name.

## A Sanford Pastor Reflects On Leadership, Loss & Resilience

By Jheri Hardaway

Staff Writer

Sanford, N.C. - For Dr. Shawn E. Williams, the vision behind MINA Charter School of Lee County was never just about education—it was personal. The school was founded in honor of his mother, who passed away in 2016. "MINA" was the name she was affectionately called, and it became the inspiration behind the school's meaning: More Is Now Achievable.

"What we built was rooted in purpose," Williams shared. "It took years of work—securing land, funding, building a facility, and assembling a team committed to students and families."

Serving initially as Chairman of the Board, Williams helped guide the school through its early development. In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, after an unexpected leadership vacancy and an extensive search process, the board asked him to step into the role of Lead Administrator.

"After much prayer and counsel, I made the decision to step away from my previous employment and take on that responsibility."

From 2020 through May 2023, Williams led the school during one of the most challenging periods in modern education. Under his leadership, the school maintained strong enrollment, secured grant funding, and positioned itself for continued growth. Following a change in board leadership, however, Williams' tenure came to an end in a transition he described as unexpected. The departure led to a civil dispute, which was ultimately resolved through mediation and dismissed with prejudice. During that same period, criminal charges related to his prior employment were brought against him. Williams voluntarily presented himself to law enforcement and was arrested. A \$600,000 secured bond was imposed, resulting in ten days of incarceration before he was able to secure his release. "That experience was one of the most difficult seasons of my life," he said.



The charges were ultimately dismissed in March 2026, with the District Attorney citing insufficient admissible evidence and lack of cooperation from the complaining party.

While the legal matter has concluded, Williams says the impact extended far beyond the courtroom. "In theory, we say a person is innocent until proven guilty," he said. "But in practice, once you are charged, people begin to treat you as if you are already guilty."

He described how the charges affected his ability to work, his standing in the community, and even his access to certain privileges. "When doors begin to close, it creates pressure in every area of life," he expressed. "If a person cannot work, they cannot provide. That reality contributes to a cycle many people struggle to escape."

Williams said that although he had additional sources of income, the financial strain became overwhelming over time, ultimately leading him to file for bankruptcy. He also reflected on the broader questions raised by his experience with the bond process. "My understanding is that bond is intended to ensure a person returns to court, in my case, I voluntarily presented myself, yet I was given a \$600,000 secured bond."

Williams shared that his experience, particularly the bond determination, led him to reflect on how similar legal circumstances can result in very different outcomes. "When you go through something like this, you

become more aware of how much discretion exists in the system and how profoundly those decisions can shape a person's life. These are the kinds of things that make you reflect," he said. "Not just about what happened to me, but about how the system operates more broadly."

Williams also reflected on how his experience connects to broader conversations within Black and faith-based communities. "As a Black man and a pastor, I am very aware of how quickly circumstances can change, there is an added weight that comes with knowing how easily your life, your work, and your reputation can be disrupted. For many people on the margins, stability can be fragile, and when pressure comes, it doesn't just affect one person—it affects families, churches, and entire communities." During the ordeal, Williams faced significant emotional and mental strain. "There were moments when the weight of everything became overwhelming, but my faith in God, the support of my family, and the strength of my church family carried me through."

Dr. Williams also expressed deep gratitude for those who stood beside him during one of the most difficult periods of his life. "There were a few people—both within the church and outside of it—who stood with me every step of the way, from fellow clergy to close friends, their support meant more than words can express." While the circle was small, Williams said their presence was significant. "You learn a lot about relationships in difficult seasons, and I am thankful for those who chose to stand." Despite the challenges, he remains committed to his calling. "The faithful remained, and we are still standing," he said. "This experience did not define me—it refined me."

Today, Williams continues his work as a pastor and community leader, focused on moving forward while reflecting on the lessons of the journey. "There is still purpose ahead," he said. "And I believe that even in difficult seasons, God is still at work."

## SERMON of the WEEK



### A MINORITY FORCED TO DO A MAJOR ASSIGNMENT

By Bishop Elect William Eli Ratcliff  
Matthew 27:27-32 (CEV): The soldiers mocked Jesus, beat Him, and led Him to be crucified. On the way, they found a man named Simon of Cyrene and forced him to carry the cross.

In 1961, a late-great President said, "Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country." However, I ask, "What can YOU DO for JESUS? GOD has led me to place my SERMONIC EMPHASIS on verse 32 about the black man that I believe was a minority in the crowd and was forced to do something."

The word minority has several meanings, but I want to focus on it as a small group, often discriminated against in communities and even in this nation. Isn't it a shame and very un-Christian-like when people are treated differently because of their skin color or background? Now more than ever, I believe that people still deserve "minority rights."

These rights ensure protection and equality, preventing the "tyranny of the majority." In the text, the soldiers pretended to worship Jesus—and from the Church House, School House, all the way to the White House, there's still a lot of pretending; and ironically, some who should help you are the same ones forcing you to carry a cross.

However, I want to remind you that this particular EASTER Sermon is not just about what Jesus did for us, but what somebody did for Jesus!

Yes, they found Simon, a man in the crowd, and forced him to do something; he didn't sign up for, volunteer,

or raise his hand. I don't know how they called him, but if they said "hey you," that meant they didn't know his name—or probably even care where he came from; they just made him do what they wanted.

Remember when Oprah Winfrey tried to buy a bag at a store in Switzerland and was told she couldn't afford it? The clerk didn't know who she was or where Oprah was from. The retail store didn't know she was a Billionaire and could have bought it and the whole block it was on if it were for sale and she wanted it. But I believe that happened only because she was looked upon as a MINORITY.

But look at this Scripture in this text: God gave a MINORITY a major assignment; God took a man from the crowd and made him part of the greatest story ever told!

If you were in that crowd then or any crowd now, let me inform you that, you don't have to be in society's upper class to be mighty and full of purpose—AND HAVE a God-given assignment!

FIRST: SOMETIMES YOUR ASSIGNMENT IS FORCED: Simon didn't plan it—life picked him! Have you ever had a day that wasn't on your calendar, with family burdens, financial pressure, or unexpected trials? But what you thought was punishment was purpose!

Tell yourself: "It didn't come to break me—it came to use me!" YES, Simon carried the cross—but Jesus carried the world. But don't get me wrong: some folks don't want to help anybody—but when they need help, they call everybody. Furthermore, some won't carry your cross—but want you to carry their couch! Nevertheless, Simon helped Jesus to Golgotha, and scholars say this moment marked a change in his life.

SECONDLY: YOUR ASSIGNMENT CAN CHANGE YOUR LIFE  
Simon started in the crowd—but God pulled him out. The Bible calls his name—and told us where he lived because when you do something for Jesus, it matters.

Some folks want recognition—but Simon didn't. This was his moment. Today can be your moment! Remember, he didn't say "Why me; he didn't

complain. He used his strength to help the KING of Kings!

So, don't get discouraged—it gets harder the higher you go. Golgotha looked like death, Jesus was beaten, mocked, nailed to the cross—and people watched Him suffer.

And just like Jesus—people will watch you struggle, talk about you, pick at you, and try to add salt to your wounds—not knowing they've got a cross too...it just hasn't been delivered yet. But we still have to pray—because we all need prayer, especially for people like that.

I say to you today: Keep pressing through because your burdens will build strength, endurance, and confidence—if you don't give up. Keep going until you can say like Paul the Apostle, "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

I imagine, Simon might have heard the Roman Guards say, "Hey You!" Think about it, the Roman Soldiers had helmets covering their faces, as it is said for physical protection. And even in 2026, America has Ice Agents with masks covering their faces, which is said to be personal identification protection, but what do they have to hide if they are for law and order?

But Jesus tells us to put on the helmet of salvation—and when God forgives, He forgets, and we have nothing to hide in Him!

Simon carried the cross, but Jesus carried the SIN! Simon helped Him towards the place of His death—and for us, 3 days later, Jesus got up with ALL POWER!

And when He got up—aren't you glad He stopped death in its tracks, took the sting out of the grave, and turned a burning hell into a delightful Heaven for all believers! And now, because He got up, I pray that you can continue with your cross and carry it, survive it, and finish your Godly assignment! Yes, there's doubt, "HE GOT UP!" but you need to keep saying along your journey, "I'M GETTING UP TOO!" Only what you do for Christ will last!

Please visit our website at <https://www.lincolnparkchurch.com/> for sermons and other information regarding our ministry and community service.

## Henry Evans And The Birth Of Fayetteville's First Church

By Jordan Meadows

Staff Writer

In the late 18th century, Henry Evans, a free Black cobbler and Methodist preacher from Virginia, became one of the most influential religious figures in early Fayetteville.

Born around 1760 to free parents, Evans arrived in Fayetteville around 1780 while traveling to Charleston, South Carolina. Struck by the spiritual needs of the local Black community—many of whom were enslaved—he chose to remain in the town.

Evans' early ministry was met with resistance: town authorities attempted to suppress his preaching, forcing him to hold services in secret and in remote areas of the surrounding sand-hills to avoid harassment and violence. Despite these obstacles, his message gained a devoted following. Over time, even white residents began to take notice of what they saw as positive changes in those who attended his services.

As his influence grew, opposition softened, and Evans was eventually permitted to preach openly within the town. By the turn of the 19th century, a modest structure had been built to house his congregation, marking the establishment of what is widely considered the first church within Fayetteville's town limits. Black wor-



shippers filled the main space, while white attendees occupied designated seating areas—though these distinctions increasingly blurred as attendance surged. Additional sheds were later constructed to accommodate the growing number of worshippers, including prominent visitors who sought out Evans' sermons.

Methodist Bishop Francis Asbury, who visited the church several times, referred to it as the "African meeting house" in his journal, underscoring its significance.

Evans was described by contemporaries as deeply knowledgeable in scripture and committed to his ministry under difficult circumstanc-

es. According to later accounts, he risked his life multiple times to continue preaching, including dangerous crossings of the Cape Fear River.

Bishop William Capers, who encountered Evans near the end of his life, later called him "the father of the Methodist Church, white and Black, in Fayetteville, and the best preacher of his time in that quarter."

After declining health forced Evans to step back from active preaching around 1806, he remained closely tied to the church. He lived in a small room behind the pulpit, continuing to serve as a spiritual presence until his death in September 1810.

In his will, he ensured that the church would continue after him, while also providing for his widow, who was allowed to remain in their living quarters for the rest of her life.

In Evans' final appearance before his congregation, frail and near death, he delivered a farewell message emphasizing faith and perseverance by recalling the dangers he had faced in bringing the gospel to his community. His funeral drew one of the largest gatherings Fayetteville had seen at the time.

He was initially buried beneath the church. His remains were later moved to the grounds of Evans Metropolitan A.M.E. Zion Church, which now stands near the original site.





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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.

## Israeli police block Catholic figures from Palm Sunday Mass at Jerusalem's Holy Sepulchre

By Freddie Clayton and Matteo Moschella

Freelance Journalist

World leaders have voiced concern after Israeli police prevented Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa, the Latin patriarch of Jerusalem, from entering the Church of the Holy Sepulchre on Sunday.

Pizzaballa had attempted to travel to the church within Jerusalem's Old City with the Rev. Francesco Ielpo, the church's official guardian, to celebrate Palm Sunday Mass, according to the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

It said the two were stopped en route and compelled to turn back, marking "the first time in centuries" that Palm Sunday Mass could not be celebrated at the church, which is the holiest site in Christianity, built where many believe Jesus was crucified.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said in a statement that police had intervened to block Pizzaballa "out of special concern for his safety," claiming that "there was no malicious intent whatsoever."

The statement noted that all holy sites in the Old City, which is home to Christian, Muslim and Jewish sacred sites, were closed to worshippers when the war broke out with Iran in February.

"Iran has repeatedly targeted the holy sites of all three monotheistic religions in Jerusalem with ballistic missiles. In one strike, missile fragments crashed meters from the Church of the Holy Sepulchre," Netanyahu's office said.

After widespread backlash, Netanyahu promised "full and immediate access" in a post on X.

"Freedom of worship will continue to be upheld, subject to necessary restrictions," Israeli police said in a statement. Early Monday, police said they had approved a "limited prayer framework" for the church, in consultation with the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

The formal Palm Sunday procession, which usually draws thousands of Christians, was canceled last week in line with a ban on large gatherings imposed by Israel, with the Latin Patriarchate citing "restrictions imposed by the conflict."

The Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem said the two men were "proceeding privately and without any characteristics of a procession or ceremonial act."

It said the incident sets "a grave precedent" and disregards "the sensibilities of billions of people around the world who, during this week, look to Jerusalem."

U.S. Ambassador to Israel Mike Huckabee said Sunday on X, "For the Patriarch to be barred from entry to the Church on Palm Sunday for a private ceremony is difficult to understand or justify."

In a statement Sunday, Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni expressed "solidarity" with Pizzaballa, Ielpo and others "whom Israeli authorities prevented today from celebrating Palm Sunday Mass at the Holy Sepulchre."

"Denying entry to the Patriarch of Jerusalem and the Custos of the Holy Land, especially on a solemnity central to the faith such as Palm Sunday, constitutes an offense not only against believers but against every community that recognizes religious freedom," she added.

French President Emmanuel Macron condemned the decision of the Israeli police on X, which he said "joins a worrying series of violations of the status of the holy sites in Jerusalem."

Ahead of the incident, Pope Leo XIV had opened his Palm Sunday address at the Vatican by emphasizing that his prayers were "more than ever with the Christians of the Middle East." He reiterated the message in an X post after the incident, without addressing the event directly.

Italy's Deputy Prime Minister Matteo Salvini said the incident was "unacceptable and offensive," while the country's Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani said he would summon the ambassador of Israel to "obtain clarifications" on what occurred.

Steffen Seibert, Germany's ambassador to Israel, said on X that the incident was "painful to all Christians," while the vice president of the European Parliament, Pina Picierno, said the incident constituted "a grave, unprecedented, and unacceptable violation of religious freedom."

Following the outcry, Netanyahu's office said that authorities would put together "a plan to enable church leaders to worship at the holy site in the coming days" as the rest of Easter week is marked.

Palm Sunday commemorates Jesus Christ's entrance into Jerusalem, when his followers laid palm branches in his path.



### A LESSON ON RACE

I've lived long enough to know that some things we were taught growing up were never meant to help us understand the world — they were meant to help the world understand us, or rather, control us. And nothing proves that more than this thing we call "race."

Summer of 1992, I taught a film sociology class at Columbia College in Chicago entitled "Black Roles in American Film and Society." The class examined the way big and small screen images impacted the world's view of African Americans and the way we saw ourselves. It was a great class, if I say so myself.

The students' perceptions of race and culture were varied and often unexpected. Perhaps the most shocking was the fact that our youngest student, a 20-year-old African American female from Chicago's West Side held totally unrealistic beliefs about "white" people. When her belief that white people were less likely to steal or kill was challenged, she explained that they "had more money and lived better lives so they didn't need to." She also explained that she didn't see the Italians as "white-white people." Don't tell them that.

It's true, most of us grew up believing race was a natural thing — like trees or rivers or the seasons. You were Black, they were white, and that was that. But the truth is, race is a story. A story written by people who needed a way to justify the unjustifiable. A story that said some people were meant to rule and others were meant to serve. A story that traveled across oceans, across centuries, and right into our classrooms, our workplaces, and our mirrors.

And here's the part that still makes me shake my head: the whole idea of "Caucasian" — the word we still see on forms and government documents — came from a German man in the 1700s who decided that a skull from the Caucasus Mountains was the "most beautiful." That's it. That's the science. A man admired a skull and built a racial category around it. And the world ran with it like it was gospel.

Meanwhile, we were being measured against a standard that was never meant to include us.

When I think about how that shaped us as African Americans, especially those of us who remember life before the Civil Rights Movement, I feel a mix of sadness and admiration. Sadness because we were taught — directly and indirectly — that lighter was better, straighter was better, whiter was better. And admiration because despite all that, we still found ways to love ourselves, our families, our communities, and our culture.

But let's be honest: it took work. It took Sunday mornings in church, Saturday afternoons in beauty shops, and latenight conversations with friends who understood the weight we carried. It took learning to codeswitch before we even knew the word for it. It took being twice as good for half the credit. It took swallowing our anger to keep our job and swallowing our pride to keep our children safe.

And it took a toll.

But here's the part that gives me hope. When you step outside the United States, the whole racial script changes. The world doesn't see us the way America does. In many places, people see us as Americans first — imagine that. They see our culture, our creativity, our resilience. They see the music we created, the language we shaped, the style we invented. They see our strength, not our stereotype.

Now, I'm not saying racism disappears when you get on a plane. But I am saying the context changes. The assumptions change. The weight on your shoulders gets a little lighter. And you start to realize that the way America sees us is not the way the world sees us — and it's certainly not the way we have to see ourselves.

So what do we do with that truth?

We reclaim our story.

We stop letting categories created centuries ago define who we are today. We stop measuring ourselves against standards that were never meant for us. We stop carrying burdens that were handed to us by people who never had our best interests at heart.

Race may be a social invention, but identity — our identity — is something we build ourselves. And we've built it with courage, creativity, and a whole lot of grace.

We are not the story they wrote about us.

We are the story we continue to write for ourselves.



### WE INVITED THEM IN

On Easter Sunday morning, Donald Trump issued a threat to Iran. He stated that if they do not allow the passage of ships coming to access their oil, something that had been happening previously, he would bomb them out of existence. Experts have said that statements like this raise serious concerns under international law.

On Palm Sunday, he posted about Jesus entering Jerusalem, welcomed by crowds praising him as king. Then he added, "They call me king now. Can you believe it?" His supporters often use the phrase

"Trump derangement syndrome" to describe those who oppose him. But what we are witnessing is something else. Those who believe he is joking or that he does not mean what he says do so at their own risk. A leader who believes himself worthy of that level of praise, even worship, is deeply troubling. And anyone who places that kind of belief in any man is also in dangerous territory.

We are all important to God. We are all here with purpose. We are called to live out the message and example of Christ, the very one we just celebrated. That message is about how we treat one another.

Last week, Trump made several statements that deserve attention. He said, "We are fighting wars. It is not possible for us to have daycare, Medicaid, Medicare, all these things." At the same time, he asked Congress to approve 1.5 trillion dollars for the Pentagon. This raises an important question. That money does not belong to him. It comes from the labor of citizens and immigrants alike. It is taken from every paycheck and from every purchase we make. Rev. William Barber spoke in a way that resonated with me when discussing themes similar to those in the film Sinners. He compared the moment we are in to a situation where harm is allowed in because it was invited. How do we invite harm in? We do it when we deny others their right to live, to prosper, and to exist with dignity. We do it when we choose leadership that lacks moral grounding because we believe it will benefit us financially. We do it when we ignore clear patterns of behavior.

We heard the statements. We saw the actions. Mocking a reporter with a disability. Questioning the citizenship of others. Insulting people publicly. Saying he could shoot someone and face no consequences. Those signs were always there. Many simply chose not to see them. We also confuse patriotism with aggression. We ask God to bless America while acting in ways that contradict the very values we claim to hold. There is a consequence to this.

We are living in a moment shaped by the choices that have been made. It may feel overwhelming, but it is not beyond repair. The question we must ask ourselves is simple. Would we accept these words and actions if they were directed at us? If the answer is no, then we must respond. We must pray for clarity and healing. We must engage by calling our representatives. We must support those working toward justice. And most importantly, we must treat others every day, all year, the way we want to be treated. That is where real change begins.

## WINSTON-SALEM

Continued from page 3

news for the community, ensuring everyone knew who was hiring or whose baby had taken their first steps. Businesses like Delight Barber-shop, which served the community for three decades, were fixtures on the East Fourth Street side of the block. At a time when well-groomed, well-dressed appearances counted for a lot, those looking to get their clothes cleaned, pressed and repaired could join Black-owned Busy Bee Pressing Club.

No city block is complete without a good place to eat. When R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company was the primary employer, Harry's Café (opened in 1922) served as the lunch and dinner destination of choice for factory workers. Although it changed names several times throughout the early-1900s, the restaurant maintained a presence on East Fourth Street, eventually becoming the OK Lunch in the early 1950s.

Black-owned businesses in the area provided other services, as well. For example, if you needed something crated, packed, hauled, shipped or moved, you depended on the capable hands of the Black-owned Jackson Transfer Company. The company opened for business in 1934 on North Patterson Avenue and was running full-page advertisements in the city directory. Records indicate that Jackson Transfer Company appeared to remain in business until at least 1959.

The block also played a small role in the African American labor movement by housing the Tobacco Workers International Union, the Local 212 office, for a few years in the 1940s.

One of the central veins running through the area was Depot Street, known today as Patterson Avenue in the Innovation Quarter. Many of the employees who worked at the R.J. Reynolds Tobacco plant lived in the Depot Street Neighborhood. While factory workers were a central part of the neighborhood, several Black doctors, lawyers, and bankers also proudly called Depot Street their home.

The 1880 federal census reports that 79.6% of Winston's tobacco workers resided within a twenty-one block area bordered by Main, Seventh, Depot and Belews Creek streets. Many strategically leveraged the traffic of Fourth Street to make their small business dreams a reality, serving a community that did not have access to most public facilities and services due to segregation. The Depot Street neighborhood became the epicenter of the Black community.

In fact, in Winston-Salem, there were forty Black-owned businesses in Winston-Salem in 1895. Just 25 years later, there were 400 Black-owned businesses. Many of those historic Black-owned businesses called the Depot Street neighborhood home. Black-owned furniture stores, funeral homes, dry cleaners, pressing clubs, tailor shops, pharmacies, watch repair shops, florists, dentist practices, churches and even a school were established.

It wasn't all business—some of those businesses were built for entertainment purposes. Though public entertainment options were sparse for Black people in the 1900s, the Rex Theatre opened its doors in 1912 as a reprieve for many. It likely had a broad selection of films that no doubt rivaled any other theatre in the city; however, the live entertainment kept the crowds coming. The theatre attracted talents from all over the country, including stars like Cab Calloway, bringing a light-hearted joy and balance to the community.

The Depot Street Neighborhood was home to many more Black-owned or operated businesses, including:

A YMCA that opened in 1918 and held the first library open to the Black community.

A Black-owned beauty school that relocated from Oklahoma to Winston-Salem in 1937 called La Mae Beauty College.

Naomi McLean's Stenographic School, which was the community's first business school.

The Boy and Girl Scouts Negro Division.

# 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.: 26E000412-310

Having qualified as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of WILLIAM DOUGLAS HART, 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 July 10, 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 9th day of April, 2026.

Tabatha Hart Allen, Administrator

11 Mattie CT

Durham, NC 27704

4/9, 4/16, 4/23, and 4/30/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

DURHAM COUNTY

##### NOTICE TO CREDITORS

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

File No.: 26E000408-310

Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of ESTHER BARNETT, 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 July 10, 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 9th day of April, 2026.

Richard Lee Jones, Executor

307 Island Dr.

Beaufort, NC 28516

4/9, 4/16, 4/23, and 4/30/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

DURHAM COUNTY

##### NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION

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

File No.: 25SP001002-310

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF CHERI W. FULLER, DECEASED, TO DETERMINE OWNERSHIP OF SURPLUS FUNDS

TO: GRACE ANN FULLER

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: Petitioner has filed a Petition for Surplus Funds.

You are required to make defense to such pleading no later than May 19, 2026, which is forty (40) days from the first date of publication of this notice, and upon your failure to do so, the party seeking service against you will apply to the Court for the relief sought.

This the 9th day of April, 2026.

Robert E. Levin  
Public Administrator of the Estate of Cheri W. Fuller  
HAYWOOD, DENNY & MILLER, L.L.P.

Attorneys at Law

P.O. Box 51429

Durham, NC 27717

(919) 403-0000

4/9, 4/16, 4/23, and 4/30/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

DURHAM COUNTY

##### NOTICE TO CREDITORS

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

File No.: 18-E-1017

Having qualified as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of CHERI W. FULLER, 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 July 10, 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 9th day of April, 2026.

Roberts E. Levin, Administrator

Durham, NC 27717

4/9, 4/16, 4/23, and 4/30/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

DURHAM COUNTY

##### NOTICE TO CREDITORS

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

File No.: 26E000377-310

Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of PAMELA LOVATE BASNIGHT, 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 July 10, 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 9th day of April, 2026.

Thomas Lee Bennett III  
C/O The Monroe Law Firm  
1340 Environ Way  
Chapel Hill, NC 27517  
4/9, 4/16, 4/23, and 4/30/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

DURHAM COUNTY

##### NOTICE TO CREDITORS

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

File No.: 26E000377-310

Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of PAMELA LOVATE BASNIGHT, 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 July 10, 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 9th day of April, 2026.

Ashia Joell Basnight, Executor  
108 Geranium Street  
Durham, NC 27704  
4/9, 4/16, 4/23, and 4/30/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

DURHAM COUNTY

##### NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION

In the General Court Of Justice  
District Court Division  
CASE NO. 25CV007624-310

MARIA CERRITO CERRITO,  
PLAINTIFF VS. MARTIN ARRIAGA BELMAN, DEFENDANT.

TO: MARTIN ARRIAGA BELMAN, DEFENDANT.

TAKE NOTICE THAT A PLEADING SEEKING RELIEF AGAINST YOU HAS BEEN FILED IN THE ABOVE-ENTITLED CIVIL ACTION FOR THE PURPOSE OF OBTAINING THE MINOR CUSTODY OF CRISTOFER JOSUE ARRIAGA CERRITO.

YOU ARE REQUIRED TO FILE A WRITTEN RESPONSE WITH ANY DEFENSES WITH THE CLERK OF SUPERIOR COURT OF DURHAM COUNTY, 510 S Dillard St #2000, Durham, NC 27701, UNITED STATES.

YOU MUST ALSO SERVE A COPY UPON THE PLAINTIFF'S ATTORNEY (ADDRESS AT THE BOTTOM OF THIS NOTICE). YOUR RESPONSE MUST BE FILED WITHIN FORTY (40) DAYS FROM THE FIRST DATE OF PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE.

THIS PUBLICATION BEGINS ON THE 9TH DAY OF April, 2026.

SIGNED,  
VALERIA CESANELLI,  
ATTORNEY FOR PLAINTIFF  
5448 Apex Peakway Suite #117,  
Apex, NC 27502  
NC State Bar #45735  
-- END OF NOTICE --  
-- INICIO DEL ANUNCIO --  
ANUNCIO DE NOTIFICACIÓN POR PUBLICACIÓN ESTADO DE CAROLINA DEL NORTE, CONDADO DE DURHAM, EN EL TRIBUNAL GENERAL DE JUSTICIA, DIVISIÓN DEL TRIBUNAL DE DISTRITO N.º DE ASUNTO 25CV007624-310 MARÍA CERRITO CERRITO, DEMANDANTE, CONTRA MARTIN ARRIAGA BELMAN, DEMANDADO.

SE LE NOTIFICA QUE SE HA PRESENTADO UN ESCRITO SOLICITANDO UNA MEDIDA CAUTELAR EN SU CONTRA EN LA ACCIÓN CIVIL ANTERIORMENTE MENCIONADA CON EL FIN DE OBTENER LA CUSTODIA DEL MENOR CRISTOFER JOSUE ARRIAGA CERRITO. DEBE PRESENTAR UNA CONTESTACIÓN POR ESCRITO CON SUS ALEGACIONES DE DEFENSA ANTE LA SECRETARÍA DEL TRIBUNAL SUPERIOR DEL CONDADO DE DURHAM, 510 S Dillard St #2000, Durham, NC 27701, ESTADOS UNIDOS. TAMBIÉN DEBE ENTREGAR UNA COPIA AL ABOGADO DEL DEMANDANTE (DIRECCIÓN AL FINAL DE ESTE AVISO). SU RESPUESTA DEBE PRESENTARSE EN UN PLAZO DE CUARENTA (40) DÍAS A PARTIR DE LA PRIMERA FECHA DE PUBLICACIÓN DE ESTE AVISO.

ESTA PUBLICACIÓN COMIENZA EL 9TH DE ABRIL DE 2026.

FIRMADO,  
VALERIA CESANELLI, ABOGADA DEL DEMANDANTE  
5448 Apex Peakway, Suite n.º 117,  
Apex, NC 27502  
N.º de colegiada de Carolina del Norte: 45735  
-- FIN DEL AVISO --  
4/9, 4/16, and 4/23/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

DURHAM COUNTY

##### NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION

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

File No.: 26E000351-310

Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of Leticia Triana Corrales v. Jose Luis Reyes Romero To: Jose Luis Reyes Romero

Take Notice that a Complaint has been filed against you in the Civil Action described above, in the General Court of Justice, District Court Division, by the Plaintiff herein, the nature of which is as follows: The Complaint seeks an Order of Permanent Custody of your minor children, Janeth Reyes Triana, Luis Angel Reyes Triana, and Alexa Fernanda Reyes Triana. You are required to file an Answer including any defenses to this pleading within forty (40) days from the date of first publication of this Notice with the Clerk of Court of Durham County. If you fail to do so, you may not receive further notices, and the plaintiff will seek the relief sought herein.

Publication begins This is the 9th day of April 2026.

Yesenia L. Polanco-Galdamez,  
Attorney for Plaintiff  
411 Andrews Road, Suite 130  
Durham, NC 27705 (919) 294-8032  
Published April 09, April 16, and April 23, 2026.

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

DURHAM COUNTY

##### NOTICE TO CREDITORS

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

File No.: 26E000351-310

Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of SALLY ALENE FURR STAUNTON, Deceased, of Durham County, North Carolina, does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 3rd day of July 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 2nd day of April, 2026.

Shonnese Diane Stanback  
Executor of the Estate of Shirlyn Robinson Stanback aka Shirlyn R. Stanback aka Shirlyn Stanback  
1114 Vermillion Drive  
Durham, NC 27713  
Leigh Anne Kasias  
Wyatt Early Harris Wheeler LLP  
1114 Vermillion Drive  
Durham, NC 27713  
4/2, 4/9, 4/16, and 4/23/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

DURHAM COUNTY

##### NOTICE TO CREDITORS

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

File No.: 26E000336-310

Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of BETTYE EVELYN SMITH KELLY, 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 July 3, 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 2nd day of April, 2026.

Sharon Denise Smith-Knox  
Executor  
3000 Moss Stone Ln  
Marietta, GA 30064  
4/2, 4/9, 4/16, and 4/23/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

DURHAM COUNTY

##### NOTICE TO CREDITORS

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

File No.: 26E000351-310

Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of MARY CHAMPAGNE, 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 July 3, 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 2nd day of April, 2026.

Christopher Champagne, Executor  
1120 Governors Lane  
Morrisville NC, 27560  
4/2, 4/9, 4/16, and 4/23/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

DURHAM COUNTY

##### NOTICE TO CREDITORS

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

File No.: 26E000349-310

Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of PATRICIA ANN NELSON, 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 July 3, 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 2nd day of April, 2026.

Leann Nelson, Executor  
2404 Indian Trail  
Durham NC 27705  
4/2, 4/9, 4/16, and 4/23/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

DURHAM COUNTY

##### NOTICE TO CREDITORS

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

File No.: 26E000337-310

Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of JEWEL BRANCH RICH a/k/a JEWEL B. RICH, Deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned at the office of IDOL LAW, PLLC, PO Box 51759, Durham, North Carolina 27717, on or before the 5th day of July, 2026, or this Notice will be in bar of their recovery.

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

This is the 2nd day of April, 2026.

Jo Ann Rich McBride, Jeanine Rich Yates, Co-Executors  
Estate of Jewel Branch Rich a/k/a Jewel B. Rich, Deceased  
Robert A. Idol, Esquire  
IDOL LAW, PLLC  
Attorney at Law  
PO Box 51759  
Durham, NC 27717  
(919) 401.5151  
4/2, 4/9, 4/16, and 4/23/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

DURHAM COUNTY

##### NOTICE TO CREDITORS

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

File No.: 26E000337-310

Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of BETTYE EVELYN SMITH KELLY, 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 July 3, 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 2nd day of April, 2026.

Sharon Denise Smith-Knox  
Executor  
3000 Moss Stone Ln  
Marietta, GA 30064  
4/2, 4/9, 4/16, and 4/23/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

DURHAM COUNTY

##### NOTICE TO CREDITORS

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

File No.: 26E000351-310

Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of MARY CHAMPAGNE, 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 July 3, 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 2nd day of April, 2026.

Christopher Champagne, Executor  
1120 Governors Lane  
Morrisville NC, 27560  
4/2, 4/9, 4/16, and 4/23/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

DURHAM COUNTY

##### NOTICE TO CREDITORS

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

File No.: 26E000337-310

Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of PAMELA LOVATE BASNIGHT, 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 July 10, 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 9th day of April, 2026.

Ashia Joell Basnight, Executor  
108 Geranium Street  
Durham, NC 27704  
4/9, 4/16, 4/23, and 4/30/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

DURHAM COUNTY

##### NOTICE TO CREDITORS

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

File No.: 26E000377-310

Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of PAMELA LOVATE BASNIGHT, 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 July 10, 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 9th day of April, 2026.

Ashia Joell Basnight, Executor  
108 Geranium Street  
Durham, NC 27704  
4/9, 4/16, 4/23, and 4/30/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

DURHAM COUNTY

##### NOTICE TO CREDITORS

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

File No.: 26E000337-310

Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of PAMELA LOVATE BASNIGHT, 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 July 10, 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 9th day of April, 2026.

Ashia Joell Basnight, Executor  
108 Geranium Street  
Durham, NC 27704  
4/9, 4/16, 4/23, and 4/30/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

DURHAM COUNTY

##### NOTICE TO CREDITORS

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

File No.: 26E000337-310

Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of PAMELA LOVATE BASNIGHT, 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 July 10, 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.

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**DURHAM COUNTY**

To: John Doe  
Take Notice that a Complaint has been filed against you in the Civil Action described above, in the General Court of Justice, District Court Division, by the plaintiff herein, the nature of which is as follows: The Complaint seeks an ORDER OF PERMANENT CUSTODY of your minor child, Genesis Loani Rivas.

You are required to file an Answer including any defenses to this pleading within forty (40) days from the date of first publication of this Notice with the Clerk of Court of Durham County. If you fail to do so, you may not receive further notices, and the plaintiff will seek the relief sought herein.

This is the 2nd day of April 2026.

Yesenia L. Polanco-Galdamez, Attorney for Plaintiff  
411 Andrews Road, Suite 130  
Durham, NC 27705  
(919) 294-8032

3/26, 4/9, and 4/16/2026  
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DURHAM COUNTY

**NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION**  
FILE NO.: 26CV003377-310  
Meylin Naomi Perez Rivas v. John Doe

To: John Doe  
Take Notice that a Complaint has been filed against you in the Civil Action described above, in the General Court of Justice, District Court Division, by the plaintiff herein, the nature of which is as follows: The Complaint seeks an ORDER OF PERMANENT CUSTODY of your minor child, Genesis Loani Rivas.

You are required to file an Answer including any defenses to this pleading within forty (40) days from the date of first publication of this Notice with the Clerk of Court of Durham County. If you fail to do so, you may not receive further notices, and the plaintiff will seek the relief sought herein.

This is the 2nd day of April 2026.

Yesenia L. Polanco-Galdamez, Attorney for Plaintiff  
411 Andrews Road, Suite 130  
Durham, NC 27705  
(919) 294-8032

3/26, 4/9, and 4/16/2026  
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DURHAM COUNTY

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

File No.: 26E000339-310

Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of CARL DENNIS PARKER, 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 29, 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 is the 26th day of March, 2026.

Annette P. Adkins, Executor  
2613 Fitzford Ct.  
Durham, NC 27712  
3/26, 4/2, 4/9, and 4/16/2026  
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DURHAM COUNTY

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

File No.: 26E000216-310

Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of DOVIE LEE GADDY, 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 29, 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 is the 26th day of March, 2026.

Valerie Gaddy Terrell, Executor  
3915 Wake Forest Hwy  
Durham NC 27703  
3/26, 4/2, 4/9, and 4/16/2026  
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DURHAM COUNTY

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

File No.: 26E000306-310

Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of BARBARA J. PIERCEY, 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 29, 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 is the 26th day of March, 2026.

Bruce Piercey, Executor  
728 S Lee St  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
3/26, 4/2, 4/9, and 4/16/2026  
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DURHAM COUNTY

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

File No.: 26E000305-310

Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of FLOYD HARRIS, 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 29, 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 is the 26th day of March, 2026.

Cornelia J. Harris, Executor  
1 Brightfield Ln.  
Durham, NC 27712  
3/26, 4/2, 4/9, and 4/16/2026  
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DURHAM COUNTY

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

File No.: 25E001210-310

Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of KATHLEEN ANN SMITH, 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 29, 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 is the 26th day of March, 2026.

Eric Tanuan, Executor  
c/o Monks Law Firm, Steve Monks, Attorney,  
Monks Law Firm  
6613 Speight Circle  
Raleigh, NC 27616

3/26, 4/2, 4/9, and 4/16/2026  
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
COUNTY OF DURHAM

**NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION**  
In the General Court of Justice  
Superior Court Division  
Before the Clerk

RESOLUTION CAPITAL GROUP VS. MARGARET D. YOUNG, ET AL.

To Celester Jackson:  
Take notice that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above entitled action. The nature of the relief being sought against you is as follows: Petition to Partition or Sell Property in Lieu of Partition.

You are required to make such defense to such pleading not later than May 5, 2026, and upon your failure to do so the party seeking service against you will apply to the court for the relief sought.

This is the 26th day of April, 2026.

Daron D. Satterfield  
Satterfield Law, PLLC  
307 Meadowlands Drive, Suite 101  
Hillsborough, NC 27278  
Published: 3/26, 4/2, and 4/9/2026  
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DURHAM COUNTY

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

File No.: 26E000085-310

Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of JEAN HOWELL REESE, 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 22, 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 is the 19th day of March, 2026.

Cheryl Messer, Executor  
3324 Belmont Mt. Herman Rd. Lot 8  
Burlington, NC 27215  
3/19, 3/26, 4/2, and 4/9/2026  
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DURHAM COUNTY

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

File No.: 25E000948-310

Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of FRANCES LOUISE HARRIS, 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 22, 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 is the 19th day of March, 2026.

Joyce Harris, Executor  
7508 Russell Rd.  
Durham, NC 27712  
3/19, 3/26, 4/2, and 4/9/2026  
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DURHAM COUNTY

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

File No.: 22E000620-310

Having qualified as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of JUDITH S. FORD AKA JUDITH SPENCER FORD, 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 22, 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 is the 19th day of March, 2026.

Connie K. Ford, Administrator  
c/o Law Offices of Kenneth J. Steinberg, P.A.  
3215 Guess Road, Suite 110  
Durham, NC 27705  
3/19, 3/26, 4/2, and 4/9/2026  
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DURHAM COUNTY

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

File No.: 25E000192-310

Having qualified as EXECUTRIX of the Estate of ANTHONY WARASH, 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 22, 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 is the 19th day of March, 2026.

Candance J. Warash, Executor  
Law Offices of Kenneth J. Steinberg, P.A.  
3215 Guess Road, Suite 110  
Durham, NC 27705  
3/19, 3/26, 4/2, and 4/9/2026  
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DURHAM COUNTY

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

File No.: 24E000229-310

Having qualified as EXECUTRIX of the Estate of ROBERT R. WILLIAMS, SR., 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 22, 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 is the 19th day of March, 2026.

Shirley D. Williams, Executrix  
Law Offices of Kenneth J. Steinberg, P.A.  
3215 Guess Road, Suite 110  
Durham, NC 27705  
3/19, 3/26, 4/2, and 4/9/2026  
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DURHAM COUNTY

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

File No.: 26E000332-310

Having qualified as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of MABEL OLIVIA ROYAL, 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 22, 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 is the 19th day of March, 2026.

Myra Lovelle Royal, Administrator  
305 Stirling Lane  
Durham, NC 27713  
3/19, 3/26, 4/2, and 4/9/2026  
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DURHAM COUNTY

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

File No.: 26E000290-310

Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of BABETTE GOODMAN BLAUG, 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 22, 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 is the 19th day of March, 2026.

Amy Oates, Executor  
259 Duck Pointe Dr.  
Roxboro, NC 27572  
3/19, 3/26, 4/2, and 4/9/2026  
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DURHAM COUNTY

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

File No.: 26E000282-310

Having qualified as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of ERIC RASHARD BANKS, 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 22, 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 is the 19th day of March, 2026.

Bonswa D. Banks, Administrator  
c/o Floyd B. McKissick, III, Esq.  
McKissick & McKissick  
835 N Mangum Street  
Durham, NC 27701  
3/19, 3/26, 4/2, and 4/9/2026  
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DURHAM COUNTY

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

File No.: 26E000263-310

Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of LINDA BARNETT, 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 22, 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 is the 19th day of March, 2026.

Vanessa Barnett-Loro, Executor  
4100 Thetford Rd.  
Durham, NC 27707  
3/19, 3/26, 4/2, and 4/9/2026  
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DURHAM COUNTY

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

File No.: 26E000262-310

Having qualified as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of ELIZABETH OLDHAM MESSER, 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 22, 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 is the 19th day of March, 2026.

William Robert Oldham, III, Executor  
c/o Ethan C. Timmins  
Patrick Law, PLLC  
3805 University Drive, Suite A  
Durham, NC 27707  
3/19, 3/26, 4/2, and 4/9/2026  
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DURHAM COUNTY

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**  
ESTATE OF WALTER JOSEPH PSOTER AKA WALTER J. PSOTER  
FILE NO. 26E000234-310

ALL PERSONS, firms, and corporations having claims against WALTER JOSEPH PSOTER aka WALTER J. PSOTER, deceased, of Durham County, N.C., are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before June 19, 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 of March, 2026. Jodi A. Psoter, Executor of the Estate of Walter Joseph Psoter aka Walter J. Psoter, c/o Amanda Honea, Attorney, 1255 Crescent Green, Suite 200, Cary, NC 27518.  
3/19, 3/26, 4/2, and 4/9/2026

**FORSYTH COUNTY**

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
FORSYTH COUNTY

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

File No.: 22 E 1060

Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of DEBORAH ANTOINETTE SMITH A/K/A DEBORAH A. SMITH, deceased, late of Forsyth 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 July 3, 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 is the 2nd day of April, 2026.

William W. Smith, Executor  
2227 Standing oak Lane  
Pffafftown, NC 27040  
3/26, 4/2, 4/9, and 4/16/2026

**ORANGE COUNTY**

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DURHAM COUNTY

**NOTICE OF ACTION FOR PUBLICATION**  
In the Circuit Court Of The Eighteenth Judicial Circuit  
In And For Brevard County, Florida  
In Re: Termination Of Parental Rights For The Proposed Adoption of The Minor Child: Milanee Mona Bell, Dob: 07/26/2008

CASE NO.: 05-2025-DR-037416-XXDR-BC, DIVISION: F  
GEORGE BELL, Petitioner  
TO: Gail Villanueva  
Address: 447 Ballantyne Common Circle, Apartment 103, Hendersonville, North Carolina 28792

YOU ARE NOTIFIED that an action for the proposed adoption, including a claim for termination of parental rights, has been filed against you. You are required to serve a copy of your written defenses, if any, to this action on Jessica D. Thomas, Attorney for Petitioner, GEORGE BELL, whose address is 253 N. Orlando Ave., Suite 204, Maitland, FL 32751, on or before March 11, 2026, and file the original with the Clerk of this Court at 425 N. Orange Avenue, Orlando, Florida 32801, either before service on Petitioner's attorney or immediately thereafter; otherwise, a default will be entered against you for the relief demanded in the Petition.

WARNING: Rule 12.285, Florida Family Law Rules of Procedure, requires certain automatic disclosure of documents and information. Failure to comply can result in sanctions, including dismissal or striking of pleadings.  
DATED this 20th day of February, 2026.

CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT  
By: Debbie Huff  
Deputy Clerk  
Published: 3/26, 4/2, 4/9, 4/16, 4/23, and 4/30/2026  
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
ORANGE COUNTY

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**  
FILE NO. 26E000076-670

The undersigned, having qualified as Executor of the Estate of LINDA ANN DESROSIERS, Deceased, late of Orange County, North Carolina, does hereby notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the estate to exhibit the same on or before 6/17/26, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment.

This is the 19th day of March, 2026.  
Julie Warwick, Executor  
c/o Attorney Heather Hazelwood  
PO Box 61182  
Durham NC 27715  
3/19, 3/26, 4/2, and 4/9/2026

**ONslow COUNTY**

**ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME**

Case No. 26STCP00773  
To All Interested Persons:  
Mauro Pasillas Macias, filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows:

PRESENT NAME  
Mauro Pasillas Macias  
PROPOSED NAME  
Mauro Pasillas

THE COURT ORDERS that all persons interested in this matter appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. Any person objecting to the name changes described above must file a written objection that includes the reasons for the objection at least two court days before the matter is scheduled to be heard and must appear to show cause why the petition should not be granted. If no written objection is timely filed, the court may grant the petition without a hearing.

Notice of Hearing  
Date: 06/26/2026 Time: 8:30 AM Dept.: 45; Room 529 The address of the court is 111 North Hill Street, Los Angeles, California 90012. \*To appear remotely, check in advance of the hearing for information about how to do so

on the court's website. To find your court's website, go to www.courts.ca.gov/find-my-court.htm. IMPORTANT NOTE: If you or your witnesses, do not have the ability to access the court's website above, or are unable to follow the instructions on the Court's website, or are otherwise unable to appear remotely, you MUST call the court room or call 213-633-0645, prior to the hearing, to request an alternate means to appear. Failure to do so may result in your case being dismissed, or a ruling issued against you. The address of the court is 111 North Hill Street, Los Angeles, California 90012. A copy of this Order to Show Cause shall be published at least once each week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation printed in the county which Mauro Pasillas Macias resides:  
Date: 02/24/2026  
Judge Virginia Keeny, Judge of the Superior Court  
4/9, 4/16, 4/23, and 4/30/2026

**WAKE COUNTY**

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
WAKE COUNTY

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**  
File No.: 26E000990-910

Having qualified as Executor of the Estate of MARY F. BAKER, deceased, late of Wake County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the estate of said deceased to exhibit them to the undersigned at 1969 Indianwood Court, Raleigh, NC 27604, on or before July 9, 2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to said estate will please make immediate payment.

This is the 9th day of April, 2026.

James Batts, Executor  
Estate of Mary F. Baker  
1969 Indianwood Court  
Raleigh, NC 27604  
4/9, 4/16, 4/23, and 4/30/2026  
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
WAKE COUNTY

**NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION**  
In the General Court Of Justice  
District Court Division  
File No.:25CV031964-910  
ANGELA BRANCH, Plaintiff v. JEFFREY ROY WHITLEY, SR., Defendant

TO: JEFFREY ROY WHITLEY, SR.  
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 an Absolute Divorce.

You are required to make defense to such pleading within 40 days after the first date of publication of this notice, or the Plaintiff will apply to the Court for the relief sought.

This is the 9th day of April, 2026.  
Angela Branch, Plaintiff  
100 Westover Drive  
Knightdale, NC 27545  
4/9, 4/16, and 4/23/2026  
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
WAKE COUNTY

**NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION**  
In the General Court Of Justice  
District Court Division  
File No.: 26CV007157-910  
CAPITAL MOTORS, Plaintiff  
v. UNKNOWN, Defendant

TO UNKNOWN OWNER OF A 2011 BMW X3, VIN: SUXWX5CX59BL712081:

TAKE NOTICE that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above-entitled action. The relief sought is enforcement of a motor vehicle lien pursuant to N.C.G.S. 44A.

You are required to make defense within 40 days after the first date of publication, or the Plaintiff will apply to the Court for the relief sought.

A hearing is scheduled for May 18, 2026 at 1:30 PM in Courtroom 3D, Wake County Courthouse, 316 Fayetteville Street, Raleigh, NC.

This is the 9th day of April, 2026.  
Capital Motors, Plaintiff  
2757 Capital Blvd

# Classifieds

## WAKE COUNTY

to such pleading within 40 days after the first date of publication, or the Plaintiff will apply to the Court for the relief sought.

A hearing is scheduled for May 5, 2026 at 1:30 PM in Courtroom 3D, Wake County Courthouse, 316 Fayetteville Street, Raleigh, NC.

This the 9th day of April, 2026.

Shaw & Son's Enterprises LLC  
1819 Poole Road  
Raleigh, NC 27610  
(919) 427-2755

4/9, 4/16, and 4/23/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

WAKE COUNTY

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

File No.: 26E000188-910

Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of EILEEN DALY HOWARD A/K/A EILEEN D. HOWARD, 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 July 3, 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 2nd day of April, 2026.

Dan Ross Howard Jr., Executor  
1008 Starita Court  
Apex, NC 27502

4/2, 4/9, 4/16, and 4/23/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

WAKE COUNTY

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

File No.: 25E004567-910

Having qualified as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of FLETCHER BURNETTE JR, 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 July 3, 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 2nd day of April, 2026.

Charlie Burnette, Executor  
c/o Monks Law Firm, Steve Monks, attorney  
Monks Law Firm

6613 Speight Circle

Raleigh, NC 27616

4/2, 4/9, 4/16, and 4/23/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

WAKE COUNTY

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

File No.: 26E000102-910

Having qualified as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of PETER JOHN BECK, JR., 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 July 3, 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 2nd day of April, 2026.

Janet Robinson, Administrator  
c/o Monks Law Firm, Steve Monks, attorney  
Monks Law Firm

6613 Speight Circle

Raleigh, NC 27616

4/2, 4/9, 4/16, and 4/23/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

WAKE COUNTY

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

File No.: 26E000869-910

Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of JOYCE WILSON HAWLEY, 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 July 3, 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 2nd day of April, 2026.

Christina Jane Pressley, Executor  
3209 Landing Falls Lane  
Raleigh, NC 27616

4/2, 4/9, 4/16, and 4/23/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

WAKE COUNTY

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

File No. 20CVD013438-910  
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 May 12, 2026. If you fail to respond, the party seeking service against you will apply to the court for the relief sought. This, the 2nd day of April, 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.

4/2, 4/9, and 4/16/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

WAKE COUNTY

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

FILE NO. 25CV045563-910 &  
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: Absolute Divorce & Child Custody.

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 2nd day of April, 2026.

Izabelle Marie Orozco Herwick  
Plaintiff  
714 Copperline Dr.  
Garner, NC 27529

4/2, 4/9, and 4/16/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

WAKE COUNTY

**NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION**  
In the General Court of Justice,  
Superior Court Division

Before the Clerk

File No: 25CV039346-910

To: DEBRA D. POOLE  
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 Absolute Divorce. You are required to make a defense to such pleading no later than May 12, 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, DEWEY O. HEDGEPEATH, will apply to the court for the relief sought.

This, the 2nd day of April, 2026.

Dewey O. Hedgepeth, Plaintiff  
530 June Lane  
Raleigh, NC 27610

4/2, 4/9, and 4/16/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

WAKE COUNTY

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

Before the Clerk

File No.: 25E004791-910

Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of JAMES MONROE, 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 29, 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 March, 2026.

Mary Ann Monroe Williams  
Executor  
1324 Wrentree Circle  
Raleigh, NC 27610

3/26, 4/2, 4/9, and 4/16/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

WAKE COUNTY

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

FILE NO.: 25CV023263-910

DESTINY DUPREE, Plaintiff v.

JOSHUA PELLOT, Defendant  
TO: JOSHUA PELLOT

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: child custody and child support, including temporary and permanent custody, visitation, and support obligations for a minor child.

You are required to make defense to such pleading no later than 40 days after the first publication of this notice, and upon your failure to do so, the Plaintiff will apply to the Court for the relief sought.

Further, take notice that this matter has been scheduled for hearing:

Date: April 29, 2026

Time: 9:00 AM

Location: Wake County

Courthouse, Courtroom 2B

This case has involved multiple attempts at service, including alias and pluries summons issued and returned unserved.

This, the 26th day of March, 2026.

Destiny Dupree

Plaintiff, Pro Se

3/26, 4/2, and 4/9/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

WAKE COUNTY

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

FILE NO.: 14-CVD-7000  
ANTHONY STEWART, Plaintiff v.  
CICELY CRUTCHFIELD, Defendant  
and ANTONIO TURNER, Defendant  
(Address Unknown)

TO: ANTONIO TURNER

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: a Motion to Intervene in a child custody matter, including the addition of Cicely Crutchfield as a party and issues related to the custody of a minor child.

The Plaintiff asserts that the minor child desires to reside with his mother and that circumstances regarding care and custody have changed.

You are required to make defense to such pleading no later than 40 days after the first publication of this notice, and upon your failure to do so, the Plaintiff will apply to the Court for the relief sought.

Further, take notice that a hearing on this matter has been scheduled as follows:

Date: May 18, 2026

Time: 9:00 AM

Location: Wake County

Courthouse, Courtroom 2C

316 Fayetteville Street,

Raleigh, North Carolina

This the 26th day of March, 2026.

Anthony Stewart

Plaintiff

3/26, 4/2, and 4/9/2026  
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
WAKE COUNTY

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

FILE NO.: 24CV035824-910

STEVEN J. ELLIOTT, Plaintiff v.

TIFFANY L. ELLIOTT, Defendant

TO: TIFFANY L. ELLIOTT

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: absolute divorce.

The Plaintiff alleges that you and the Plaintiff were married and thereafter separated and have lived continuously separate and apart for a period of at least one (1) year prior to the filing of this action.

You are required to make defense to such pleading no later than 40 days after the first publication of this notice, and upon your failure to do so, the Plaintiff will apply to the Court for the relief sought.

This, the 26th day of March, 2026.

Steven J. Elliott, Plaintiff

P.O. Box 323

Fuquay Varina, NC 27526

3/26, 4/2, and 4/9/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

WAKE COUNTY

**NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION**

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

File No: 25CV021563-910

TO: MARLA FERNANDA  
PARRAL-GOMEZ and UNKNOWN  
FATHER

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: custody of a minor child, including temporary and permanent custody.

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

Further, take notice that a Custody Mediation Orientation and Parenting Education session has been scheduled for:

Date: April 29, 2026

Time: 10:00 AM

Location: Via Zoom (Wake County

Custody Mediation)

Failure to comply with the Court's orders may result in sanctions, including contempt of court.

This, the 26th day of March, 2026.

Lucero Gomez

Plaintiff, Pro Se

3/26, 4/2, and 4/9/2026

**PAYING CASH AND BUYING  
OLD CASSETTE TAPES CALL  
MARVIN 919-268-7476 OR  
EMAIL ME AT  
WYCHEMARVIN4@GMAIL.COM**

**RESTAURANT PURCHASING MANAGER**  
WAKE COUNTY (Raleigh)

Negotiate and purchase all food and services efficiently and coordinate supply to all group restaurants. Budget control. Ensure inventory control systems are up to date. Provide quarterly inventory analysis. Estimate need of products. Control efficient operational costs. Requires at least 2 years of experience managing food procurement in the restaurant industry. Send resume to: heli@guasaca.com. Real Food Cary, LLC.

**NC Department of  
Adult Correction**

**ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS**

The North Carolina Department of Adult Correction has the following contract in Buncombe County out for bid: C- C11754 Tiantian Ma . The bid opening is scheduled for: Thursday, 12/19/2024 . To obtain the Notice to Bidders, any Pre-Bid Requirements, and any Addenda visit: <https://evp.nc.gov/solicitations/details/?id=59feb147-6585-ef11-ac20-001dd806f97d>

**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 Birch Lane Pump Station Improvements project for the Village of Alamance which bids on April 16, 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 \* Village of Alamance, Municipal Building; 2874 Rob Shepard Drive; Burlington, NC 27215 \* Alley, Williams, Carmen, & King, Inc.; 740 Chapel Hill Road; Burlington, NC 27216-1179.

Potential subcontracting opportunities include but are not limited to erosion control, seeding, linework/pipe installation, and bypass pumping. Please contact Ethan Grissom ([egrissom@pui-nc.com](mailto: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 Phase 1 Water Distribution Package 1 and 2 project for Grays Creek Water and Sewer District in Cumberland County which bids on April 14, 2026, at 10:00 AM. Plans and specifications for this project are available at the following locations: T. A. Loving Company; 400 Patetown Road; Goldsboro, NC 27530 \* Cumberland County's website vendor portal \* HDR Engineering, Inc. of the Carolinas; 555 Fayetteville Street, Suite 900; Raleigh, NC 27601.

Potential subcontracting opportunities include but are not limited to surveying, clearing and grubbing, hauling, asphalt paving, striping, traffic control, erosion control, seeding, sodding, landscaping, linework/pipe installation, jack & bore, and flatwork. Please contact Jeff Price ([jprice@taloving.com](mailto: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**

T. A. Loving Company (NC General Contractor License No. 325) is seeking certified DBE, MBE, and WBE subcontractors and suppliers for the Moyock Wastewater Treatment Plant Early Works Package No. 2 - Headworks Improvements project for Currituck County Water and Sewer Department which bids on April 24, 2026, at 4:00 PM. Plans and specifications for this project are available at the following locations: T. A. Loving Company; 400 Patetown Road; Goldsboro, NC 27530 \* Currituck County Water and Sewer Department; 444 Maple Road; Maple, NC 27956 \* Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc.; 532 Patterson Avenue, Suite 160; Mooresville, NC 28115.

Potential subcontracting opportunities include but are not limited to surveying, demolition, hauling, earthwork, erosion control, seeding, electrical, flatwork, CIPC, concrete forms, and concrete rebar. Please contact Lonnie Nolen ([lnolen@taloving.com](mailto:lnolen@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.

**Submit your bid, job and  
recruitment advertising to  
[ads@caro.news](mailto:ads@caro.news)**

# Classifieds

## D/M/WBE

### SUBCONTRACTORS/SUPPLIERS WANTED

T. A. Loving Company (NC General Contractor License No. 325) is seeking certified DBE, MBE, and WBE subcontractors and suppliers for the **Sweeney Water Treatment Plant 4MG Clearwell Rehabilitation** project for Cape Fear Public Utility Authority which bids on April 14, 2026, at 11:00 AM. Plans and specifications for this project are available at the following locations: T. A. Loving Company; 400 Pate-town Road; Goldsboro, NC 27530 \* Cape Fear Public Utility Authority; 235 Government Drive; Wilmington, NC 28403 \* Carolinas AGC Website \* Dodge Data and Analytics website \* ConstructConnect website \* Construction Journal website \* Hispanic Contractors Association of the Carolinas website \* North American Procurement Council website \* The Blue Book Building and Construction Network website \* H2bid, Inc. website (www.H2bid.com).

Potential subcontracting opportunities include but are not limited to surveying, demolition, flatwork, CIPC, concrete forms, and concrete rebar. 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 **Biltmore Area Water Main Replacement and Sanitary Sewer Rehabilitation** project for City of Raleigh Public Utilities Department which bids on April 14, 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 \* Highfill Infrastructure Engineering, P.C.; 2703 Jones Franklin Road, Suite 201; Cary, NC 27518 \* 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, hauling, asphalt paving, erosion control, seeding, linework/pipe installation, bypass pumping, CIPP, flatwork, manhole rehab, 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

T. A. Loving Company (NC General Contractor License No. 325) is seeking certified DBE, MBE, and WBE subcontractors and suppliers for the **Carolina Shores Wastewater Treatment Plant Clarifiers Splitter Box** project for Brunswick County Public Utilities which bids on April 16, 2026, at 3:00 PM. Plans and specifications for this project are available at the following locations: T. A. Loving Company; 400 Pate-town Road; Goldsboro, NC 27530 \* Brunswick County Public Utilities Operations Center; 250 Grey Water Road, NE; Supply, NC 28462 \* AECOM Technical Services of North Carolina, Inc.; 5338 Wade Park Boulevard, Suite 200; Raleigh, NC 27607 \* Carolinas AGC Website \* Dodge Data and Analytics website \* ConstructConnect website \* Construction Journal website \* Hispanic Contractors Association of the Carolinas website \* North American Procurement Council website \* The Blue Book Building and Construction Network 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, 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.

## Black Voters Who Feel Ignored —CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

along with students from North Carolina A&T University, a historically Black school that draws students from across the state. His campaign promises a statewide organizing effort before November.

Gailliard wants a more intentional effort

But Gailliard wants more. The founding pastor at Word Tabernacle Church, Gailliard was among the Black state lawmakers who lost seats after Republican-led redistricting. He said regaining ground will require neighborhood-level organizing and investment from national Democrats, something he struggled to get from Kamala Harris' 2024 presidential campaign

"I couldn't get any traction," Gaill-

liard recalled. "I begged them to bring her to Rocky Mount. I said, 'Listen, Rocky Mount is the gateway to the East. If we crack Rocky Mount, we've cracked the East.' Could not convince them to come. Two weeks later, guess who's in Rocky Mount? Donald Trump."

The Harris campaign sent former President Bill Clinton to the area instead.

Gailliard said Cooper needs people like him to get elected.

"Roy is a great friend, and I'm gonna run my butt off to help him in every way, but I'm not banking on his coattails," Gailliard said. "I'm going to do the opposite. I'm going to grow coattails for him."

The state party tries to fill gaps Clayton, the state party chair, said

the national party and its donors haven't prioritized North Carolina early enough in recent cycles.

She said she's relied mostly on local money to finance 25 full-time staffers, more than three times what the state party had heading into the 2022 midterms.

Bertie County Democratic chairwoman Camille Taylor, whose hometown of Powellsville has fewer than 200 residents, said she's felt the shift.

She speaks regularly with a field organizer in nearby Greenville, the city closest to the northeastern counties with large proportions of Black residents. But she said it's especially difficult to persuade rural voters to care about voting beyond the presidency, even though she

tells them "these are the races and the people that you're going to interact with more."

Democrats have recruited candidates in all 170 legislative districts — two are Democratic-aligned independents — and every U.S. House district. State Supreme Court Justice Anita Earls, a noted civil rights attorney and Black woman, is running statewide for reelection.

Gailliard said he's identified a few hundred nonprofits, neighborhood associations and other groups that can do issue-orientated work in his district as the election approaches. He wants to match each of them to specific precincts, routing money for them to reach voters and persuade them to vote

He wants volunteers to get train-

ing from Democratic and left-leaning organizations rather than have the outsiders themselves knocking on rural Black voters' doors.

"We can't have 21-year-old recent college graduates from Utah knocking doors at \$22 an hour in the hood," Gailliard said. "That just does not work. They're not a trusted messenger."

Marginal voting changes add up About 2 in 10 North Carolina voters in the 2024 and 2020 presidential elections were Black, according to AP VoteCast, as well as in the 2022 Senate election.

Roughly 4 in 10 Black voters in North Carolina's last presidential election said they live in small towns or rural communities, similar to the share who said they live in the suburbs. Only about one-quarter reported living in urban areas.

Small shifts in persuasion matter, particularly when races are close. In 2008, Barack Obama became the last Democratic presidential candidate to win North Carolina, by a margin of just 14,000 votes out of 4.3 million votes cast.

Voter turnout between the 2020 and 2024 elections declined more in North Carolina counties that have larger Black populations.

Counties where Black voters make up about 30% to 40% of the

electorate saw the biggest drop, with turnout falling by more than 3 percentage points. Counties with smaller Black populations saw more modest declines of about 1 percentage point. Overall, turnout remains higher in counties with fewer Black voters.

An old Cooper schoolmate just wants to be asked

Gailliard said Democrats cannot underestimate how much it means for someone to simply get asked for their vote.

"Black and rural voters are not transactional," he said. "They are relational."

Back in Nashville at the beauty supply store, Brinkley agreed.

"You get to be a big wheel, and you can forget where you came from," Brinkley said. "I ain't gonna say Roy forgot. He's a hometown guy, so to speak, but I don't expect to see him out here walking."

Brinkley made it clear that if he votes, it would be for Cooper and other Democrats — but only if he votes.

"I could. I could. I may vote," he said. "There's just so much going on."

\_\_\_ Sweedler reported from Washington. Associated Press journalist Linley Sanders in Washington contributed to this report.

## Over Half of NC Public School Grads Passed College-Level Courses While In High School

RALEIGH, NC—Historic percentages of North Carolina public school students are enrolling and succeeding in college-level courses while still in high school, according to new data presented to the State Board of Education today.

Data from the Class of 2025 shows that 54% of graduates successfully completed at least one college-level course/exam through Advanced Placement (AP), the Career and College Promise (CCP) program, International Baccalaureate or other college-level courses during high school. This percentage has never been higher for North Carolina's public schools.

The CCP program allows eligible NC public high school students to enroll in college classes at many North Carolina community colleges and four-year colleges and universities through their high school. Thirty-eight percent of all graduates enrolled in at least one college course in 2024-25 through the CCP program, marking an all-time high.

Nearly 87,000 students participated in the CCP program in 2024-25, an

increase of 10% from the previous year. Students may participate in one of three pathways, which range from college transfer to career and technical education while they are enrolled in their traditional high school.

These achievements reflect the work being done across North Carolina public schools and at the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI), in collaboration with its higher education partners, to prepare students for their next phase of life.

"Having 54% of North Carolina public high school graduates pass at least one college-level course/exam is outstanding and exemplifies our commitment to preparing each student for their next phase of life as outlined in our strategic plan, Achieving Educational Excellence," said North Carolina Superintendent of Public Instruction Maurice "Mo" Green. "We want to ensure that every student takes and passes a college-level course/exam and a career-connected course in high school so that they will be well-prepared for whatever future they imagine for

themselves. By expanding access to college-level courses, North Carolina's public schools are empowering every student to see themselves as college material, even if that is not ultimately where they go immediately after high school."

Another CCP pathway for students to access college credit is a Cooperative Innovative High School (CIHS). Providing a hybrid high school and college experience, North Carolina's 138 CIHSs are located on the campuses of North Carolina Community Colleges, University of North Carolina System and NC Independent Colleges and Universities.

In 2024-25, 6,560 students graduated from a CIHS, and 3,498 of them earned an associate degree in addition to their high school diploma. For all grade levels, CIHS students earned 7,259 industry-recognized credentials through Career and Technical Education courses in 2024-25.

Both of these metrics are an increase from previous years.

"Through high-quality instructional programming and close partnerships with institutions of higher education,

Cooperative Innovative High Schools provide a unique opportunity for students to participate in college-level work while receiving robust support," said Sneha Shah-Coltrane, senior director of Advanced Learning and Gifted Education at NCDPI. "This program is especially powerful for first-generation college students and has the ability to drive economic mobility for families across our state."

More than half of North Carolina public high school graduates are now completing college-level courses while still in high school — the highest percentage in state history and a milestone that places North Carolina at the forefront of expanding advanced learning opportunities nationwide.

These accomplishments are even more remarkable alongside North Carolina public schools' other historic achievements in 2024-25, including a record graduation rate, record AP participation and performance and a record number of industry-recognized credentials earned by Career and Technical Education students.

## Governor Stein Announces Global Industrial Gas Company Selects Northampton County

Governor Josh Stein announced Linde Inc., an industrial gases and engineering company, will create 20 new jobs in Northampton County. The jobs are part of an investment of more than \$75 million to build an air separation facility in Garysburg.

"I am pleased to welcome Linde to Northampton County," said Governor Josh Stein. "Not only is North Carolina centrally located on the East Coast with the strong transportation infrastructure that manufacturers and distributors need, but, more importantly, it's also home to the talented North Carolinians who helped secure our ranking as the top state for workforce development."

Linde manufactures and distributes

industrial gases for the health care, food and beverage, electronics, and chemical industries. Linde will produce argon, nitrogen, and oxygen for use in hospital services, semiconductor manufacturing, battery production, and food preservation. The plant will be constructed in the Northampton County Commerce Park and will send products directly to customers.

"Linde is committed to serving the needs of our customers and to grow in the U.S.," said Todd Lawson, Vice President, East Region. "We chose this location based on its proximity to customers and the support of Northampton County. This new air separation unit will strengthen Linde's presence in the state and ex-

tend our strong merchant gases supply network to increase our ability to reliably serve our customers' current and future needs."

"Linde's decision to build in Northampton County validates the community's resilience and strength," said N.C. Commerce Secretary Lee Lilley. "Companies like Linde grow the supply chain of our thriving life sciences ecosystem, and when they choose rural North Carolina, they affirm North Carolina's position as the best place for business in every corner of the state."

The new jobs could potentially create an annual payroll impact of more than \$1.75 million for the region.

A performance-based grant of

\$60,000 from the One North Carolina Fund will help Linde grow in North Carolina. The OneNC Fund provides financial assistance to local governments to help attract economic investment and to create jobs. Companies receive no money upfront and must meet job creation and capital investment targets to qualify for payment. All OneNC grants require matching participation from local governments, and any award is contingent upon that condition being met.

"We welcome Linde and its investments in our people and our community, and we stand ready to support the company as it executes its growth strategy," said N.C. Representative Rodney D. Pierce.

# IT'S *Fair Housing* MONTH



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