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Dedicated to the Spirit
and Service of God



HAPPY
MEMORIAL
DAY
REMEMBER AND HONOR

What Black Americans Fought For vs. What They Received

By Ed Gaskin

Greater Grove Hall Main Streets

From the colonial period to the present, Black Americans have borne arms for a society that denied them full membership. Black military service has never been naïve or passive; it has been strategic, aspirational, and moral. Long before the United States existed, Black men — enslaved and free — served in colonial militias, guarded settlements, and defended local communities. From the beginning, that service carried expectations: protection, belonging, freedom, and recognition.

The enduring tragedy of American history is not that Black Americans believed in these promises. It is that the nation repeatedly accepted their sacrifice while refusing to honor their claims.

In the colonial period, militias formed the backbone of public safety. They were not symbolic forces but mandatory institutions. Able-bodied men were legally required to serve, train, and respond to alarms, with fines or punishment for non-compliance. In New England, where manpower shortages made exclusion impractical, Black men served in militias from the 1600s onward.

When Black men were enrolled or permitted to serve, they were folded into the colony's definition of obligation without being admitted into its definition of citizenship. Colonies that denied Black people political rights nevertheless armed and depended on them. Armed Black men were relied upon in moments of danger, then denied pensions, land, or political standing once the danger passed.

This distinction matters because militia service was one of the earliest ways Americans linked armed defense to political standing. White militia service became a pathway to status, land claims, and civic legitimacy. Black militia service created duty without reward — risk without



Lt. Gen. Lucian K. Truscott, Jr., commanding general of the Fifth Army in Italy, talks to African American troops of the 92nd Infantry Division after they threw back a German attack in the hills north of Viareggio, Italy in 1944 during World War II. (AP Photo)

recognition.

When the Revolutionary War erupted, Black Americans chose sides strategically. Lord Dunmore's 1775 proclamation offering freedom to enslaved people who joined British forces was immediate and credible. Tens of thousands responded.

Others aligned with the Patriots, pragmatically. George Washington initially barred Black enlistment, reversing course when manpower shortages mounted. In parts of

the North, Black men served with promises of manumission, unevenly honored. Black Americans fought for liberty; the new nation codified their exclusion.

The War of 1812 repeated the pattern. Black sailors and soldiers defended the nation, expecting recognition and security. Instead, the postwar period brought new restrictions on Black mobility and the foundations of Black Codes. Service was accepted. Rights were withheld.

The Civil War offered the clearest promise and the deepest betrayal. Nearly 200,000 Black men served the Union, expecting freedom, land, citizenship, and protection. What followed was emancipation without resources and citizenship without enforcement. Freedom without land locked formerly enslaved people into dependency, debt, and vulnerability. Emancipation without economic repair shaped racial inequality for generations, as constitutional rights were undone by white terror and the collapse of Reconstruction.

The cost of this betrayal was not only economic. It reshaped trust itself. Each broken promise taught a brutal lesson: patriotism did not guarantee protection, and sacrifice did not secure safety. Yet service continued — not because of illusion, but because participation remained one of the few available claims on the nation's conscience. What appeared as loyalty was often constrained hope: the belief that discipline, visibility, and contribution might someday force recognition.

From westward expansion through World War II and beyond, Black Americans fought for a nation that segregated them in uniform and excluded them at home. World War I returned Black veterans to lynching and racial terror. World War II asked them to defeat fascism abroad while preserving Jim Crow at home. Formal integration after the war changed the military's structure, not its outcomes. Disproportionate risk, unequal benefits, and layered trauma persisted.

In American history, military service has often been followed by settlement — except for Black Americans. White veterans received land after the Revolutionary War and wealth-building benefits after World War II through the GI Bill. These were material settlements: public investments that converted sacrifice into lasting security.

Black veterans were excluded in practice through segregated col-

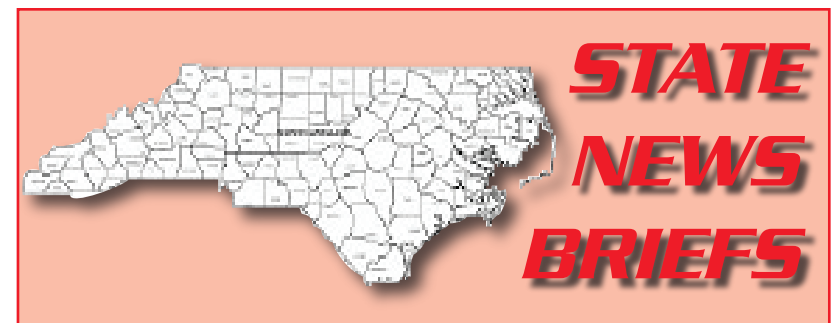
leges, discriminatory banks, redlined housing, and local administration that preserved racial hierarchy. Benefits existed on paper while doors remained closed. The issue was never whether Black Americans served enough. It was whether the nation would convert Black service into Black security. White veterans were met with policy. Black veterans were met with patience.

Settlement is how nations turn sacrifice into stability. Land, education, housing, and capital do more than reward service — they prevent future vulnerability. Without settlement, each generation must prove its worth again, starting from a deficit rather than a foundation. For Black Americans, the absence

of settlement meant that military service reset the moral ledger but never the economic one. Each war reopened the same question rather than resolving it. The nation moved forward. Black veterans were asked to wait.

From colonial militias to modern battlefields, Black Americans have defended a nation that repeatedly postponed its obligations to them. Sacrifice became a substitute for justice rather than a pathway to it.

The unresolved question remains: Will America finally honor what Black Americans have spent centuries fighting for — or will the cycle of misaligned expectations continue into another war, another generation, another century?



HISTORIC EDENTON PRESENTS FREE GENEALOGY SEMINAR MAY 23

EDENTON, N.C. — On Saturday, May 23, Historic Edenton State Historic Site will host an ancestry research seminar that tackles the challenges of researching African American genealogy and offers tips for specialty research and finding Revolutionary War ancestors.

The seminar, titled "We Were There Too: Searching for Ancestors" brings together genealogy experts to share proven strategies, specialized tools, and practical tips for tracing family roots. This event is hosted in partnership with the Edenton Tea Party Chapter, National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution (NSDAR). Historic Edenton is administered by N.C. Historic Sites, a division of the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources.

The day-long event will take place at the 1767 Chowan County Courthouse, located at 117 E. King St. The event is free to attend, but pre-registration is strongly encouraged. Reservations can be made by calling the Historic Edenton Visitor Center at (252) 632-5020 or online via the event page. Doors open at 9 a.m. and the first panel begins at 10 a.m.

The seminar features three expert speakers who will present separately and then offer a workshop session together at 2 p.m.:

Taryn Kennedy serves as the National Vice Chair of the America 250 Forgotten Patriots Committee and a Research Specialist with NSDAR Specialty Research. She is dedicated to documenting African American, American Indian, and Spanish or French patriots of the American Revolutionary War.

Shannon Combs Bennett is a professional genealogist specializing in genetic genealogy and related topics.

Dr. Mark Attucks, Sr. is a descendant of Crispus Attucks, who was the first of five people killed in the 1770 Boston Massacre. He holds advanced degrees in law, sociology, and business, along with credentials in security and financial management. An Air Force retiree and a native of Winston-Salem, N.C., he now lives in Maryland with his family.

Raleigh's Latest Violent Crime Report Shows Mixed Trends

By Jordan Meadows

Staff Writer

Raleigh and the surrounding Triangle region are seeing a complex shift in violent crime trends, as recent incidents have tested public confidence and prompted a visible response from local law enforcement.

Newly released first-quarter data from 2025 show that homicides in Raleigh rose modestly year-over-year, from 9 incidents in Q1 2024 to 11 in Q1 2025. Nine of the eleven cases have already been closed, and one was ruled justifiable. A majority of those homicides—six—occurred in January, suggesting a concentrated spike rather than a sustained upward trend.

Aggravated assaults declined 12% overall, with firearm-related assaults dropping 17%. Robberies remained essentially flat, rising just 1% compared to the same period last year.

Non-fatal shootings ticked up slightly, from 18 to 19 incidents. Meanwhile, property crime showed more significant improvement, with motor vehicle thefts falling 19%, aided in part by the recovery of more than 400 stolen vehicles and ongoing efforts by the city's Auto Theft Task Force.

Buying Power. Do Duke Energy's NC Campaign Donations Fuel Influence?

CAROLINA PUBLIC PRESS - As North Carolina's primary electric public utility, the shadow of Duke Energy looms large over the state and in the halls of government.

Many lawmakers, both Democratic and Republican, have a relationship with the energy behemoth. Duke Energy spends a lot of money each election cycle to help its preferred candidates win, and, once they're in office, uses lobbying to influence them to support preferential policies.

Duke Energy has been successful in recent years. Last summer, legislators passed a bill that did the utility several favors, including allowing it to charge ratepayers for the cost of projects still under construction and giving it a temporary break on carbon-emission reduction goals. A recent reconfiguration of the Utilities Commission, which approves rate hikes, also may be friendlier to the power company's requests after a 2024 law change.

Lobbying and campaign contributions are normal levers of power in state politics and elections. But renewed concern about Duke Energy's power and influence have emerged as the utility requests an 18% rate hike over the next two years, citing a need to keep up with growing electricity demand and make sure the electric grid can handle future storms.

The request reflects current economic pressures and the investments required to handle an influx of people and businesses moving to North Carolina, Duke spokesperson Jeff Brooks

said. Data center energy demand isn't a major factor in the request, he added.

Meanwhile, Duke Energy reported \$1.58 billion in profit during the first quarter of 2026, and \$4.9 billion last year. Thanks to President Donald Trump's One Big Beautiful Bill Act, Duke Energy also didn't pay federal income tax in 2025, according to the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy.

Duke Energy reinvests part of those profits in the company, while giving the rest to investors who provide crucial up-front money for big projects without the need to borrow, Brooks said.

Still, for some, the math doesn't seem to add up.

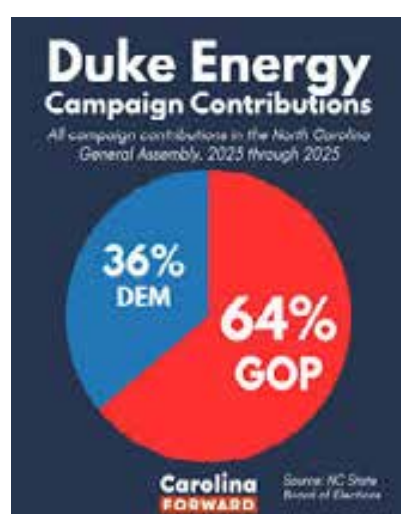
What Duke Energy gets from lawmakers

Former Republican NC Sen. Paul Newton spent the better part of his career working for Duke Energy, including as an executive.

After he retired, he was elected to serve in the legislature, where he eventually earned a coveted leadership position. Last year, he sponsored a bill to give electric public utilities, like his previous employer, a few breaks.

Newton told lawmakers the bill would save North Carolinians billions of dollars — \$13 billion, specifically. Eventually, the bill's language was pasted into another bill that became law, over the governor's veto.

First, the law removes a 2034



checkpoint for Duke Energy to reduce carbon emissions by 70% compared to 2005 levels. The interim goal was part of a 2021 bipartisan agreement for Duke Energy to reach carbon neutrality by 2050.

By treating the interim goal as "sacrosanct," the Utilities Commission was being "short-sighted" about what was best for consumers, Newton explained in a legislative committee.

"You could literally keep carbon steady today all the way out, no changes to 2049, turn on multiple nuclear units, and suddenly you're in compliance with the 2050 goal," he said.

Not everyone agreed on the merits of the idea. Detractors, including Buncombe County Democrat Julie

Mayfield, argued that it would be particularly difficult and risky to meet a long-term goal without benchmarks along the way.

Second, the law allows utilities to charge consumers higher rates to adjust for construction costs when they are building new facilities, before they begin operation.

If lawmakers were going to ask Duke Energy to take on the risk of building a large nuclear plant to get closer to that 2050 goal, Newton said the utility shouldn't have to wait until after the plant is completed and operational before it can get any of its investment back.

"If you allow incremental recovery, then customers will actually pay significantly less for the power plant," he said.

Bill opponents cited nightmare examples from other states, including South Carolina, where consumers took on higher rates for the construction costs of nuclear reactors that never became operational.

When fuel prices rise, power companies can pass that increased cost onto customers in the form of higher rates, if the Utilities Commission allows. A third part of the law, added later, removed any time limit on the ability. Under the new law, utilities could recover fuel costs from ratepayers years after they incurred the costs.

State Rep. Lindsey Prather, D-Buncombe, said that part of the bill

(See DUKE ENERGY'S P. 4)

(See RALEIGH CRIME REPORT, P. 2)

RALEIGH CRIME REPORT

Continued from page 1

Raleigh's recent numbers align with broader trends across the Triangle and the nation. After a sharp rise in violence during the COVID-19 pandemic, homicides have declined significantly from their peak. Raleigh recorded 28 homicides in 2025, only slightly above 27 in 2024, but far below the 49 recorded in 2022—a nearly 45% drop.

Durham has followed a similar trajectory, with homicides falling from 40 to 38 over the past year, alongside double-digit declines in several other major crime categories.

A report from the Major Cities Chiefs Association, which tracks crime across dozens of large police departments, found that homicides dropped nearly 18% in early 2026 compared to the previous year, with declines across every major violent crime category. Raleigh, notably, was among the cities posting some of the largest early-year reductions.

Still, recent incidents have underscored the fragility of that progress.

In April, Raleigh Police Chief Rico Boyce addressed what he described as a "cluster of violence" that had unfolded over a matter of days, including multiple shootings, stabbings, and large public altercations—many in high-traffic areas such as downtown and the Glenwood South nightlife district.

"This recent cluster of violence threatens the perception of safety of our residents, our visitors, and our overall sense of security within our community," Boyce said during a press conference. "Over the past 10 days, we've had multiple violent incidents that were publicized in the news."

The incidents included two large fights involving weapons that spilled into public spaces. In response, Boyce outlined a series of targeted measures, including increasing patrols around bars, clubs, transportation hubs, and other nightlife areas. The department is also strengthening coordination with regional partners, including the Wake County ABC Board Law Enforcement Division, as part of a broader effort to manage alcohol-related and late-night disturbances.

In the first quarter of 2026 alone, officers confiscated 360 firearms and conducted more than 5,700 self-initiated security checks—a nearly 50% increase from the same period last year.

Programs like "Cops on the Block" and expanded community referrals are aimed at preventing violence before it occurs, particularly among younger populations. Juveniles, for instance, were charged in five firearm-related aggravated assault cases this year.

Despite recent flare-ups, the overall trajectory suggests Raleigh continues to stabilize after a period of disruption. Crime trends can shift quickly, especially heading into the summer months when violence historically rises.

Supreme Court Decision Forces End to NC Black Voters' Redistricting Challenge

By Jordan Meadows

Staff Writer

North Carolina Democrats have abandoned a high-profile federal lawsuit challenging the state's Republican-drawn Senate map. State Rep. Rodney Pierce of Halifax County and co-plaintiff Moses Matthews, a voting rights advocate, filed a stipulation of dismissal last Monday with the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, formally ending their appeal of a lower court ruling that upheld the contested districts.

The lawsuit, originally filed in 2023, alleged that North Carolina's Senate map unlawfully diluted the voting power of Black residents in the northeastern part of the state by "cracking" the historically Black "Black Belt" region across multiple districts. According to the plaintiffs, the map split this contiguous community into Senate Districts 1 and 2, leaving each with only about 30% Black voting-age population and limiting the ability of Black voters to elect candidates of their choice.

However, Pierce said the recent Supreme Court decision in Louisiana v. Causis effectively foreclosed any path forward. The 6-3 ruling by the Court's conservative majority placed new limits on how Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act can be used in redistricting cases, emphasizing the need to prove intentional discrimination rather than disparate impact.

"The Supreme Court effectively made the Voting Rights Act a meaningless law with no teeth," Pierce said in a statement announcing the dismissal. "Because of that decision, there is no longer a path open to us

to protect the voting rights of Black citizens in my part of the state, so we have dismissed the suit. It's a sad day for our democracy."

In a dissent, Justice Elena Kagan warned that the racial provision is now "all but a dead letter," raising concerns among voting rights advocates that minority representation could decline nationwide.

The dismissal in North Carolina comes "with prejudice," meaning the case cannot be refiled. As part of the agreement, Pierce and Matthews will pay an agreed-upon portion of legal costs to Republican legislative leaders, though the State Board of Elections will not seek fees. The move leaves Senate Districts 1 and 2 intact with no remaining federal legal challenges; both districts were already used in the 2024 elections and will continue to be used in upcoming contests.

In September, U.S. District Judge James Dever rejected the plaintiffs' claims after a five-day trial, concluding they had failed to prove a violation of Section 2. In a lengthy opinion, Dever wrote that courts should not require lawmakers to engage in "the odious practice of sorting voters based on race" to create majority-Black districts. He also found that Black voters in the region had demonstrated an ability to elect candidates of their choice without constituting a majority in a single district.

Republican legislative leaders defended the map throughout the case, arguing that courts have consistently rejected similar claims in northeastern North Carolina. In court filings, their attorneys said that creating



majority-Black districts in the region would conflict with the state constitution's county-grouping rules and trigger strict constitutional scrutiny.

They also challenged the plaintiffs' evidence, asserting that racial bloc voting was not strong enough to justify race-based districting and that demographic data did not support an additional majority-Black district.

Plaintiffs, however, pointed to decades of precedent stemming from the Supreme Court's 1986 decision in Thornburg v. Gingles, which established the framework for evaluating racial vote dilution claims. Their attorneys argued that for nearly 40 years, Black voters in the region had successfully elected preferred candidates under maps that respected those principles, and that the 2023 redistricting plan marked a sharp

departure by dispersing those voters across multiple districts.

The 4th Circuit had already declined to block the districts before the 2024 election and denied an earlier request to have the full court hear the case, instead allowing a standard three-judge panel to handle the appeal. With the voluntary dismissal, that appeal will no longer proceed.

An analysis of federal court records shows at least 17 ongoing legal challenges to state and local voting maps that must now contend with the higher legal standard. Many of these cases are concentrated in the South, where voting patterns are often racially polarized, but similar disputes involving Latino and Native American voters have also emerged in states like Washington, Pennsylvania, and North Dakota.

We've Moved



After 86 years of serving the African American community in North Carolina, *The Carolinian* is still going and still growing! *The Carolinian* newspaper continues to evolve so that we can keep our communities connected, enlightened and prospering. Starting Monday May 4th, 2026, our office will be located at 1015 Cross Link Road in Raleigh. We are leaving our old building, but we are never leaving our community!

School Official Did Nothing After Being Told A 6-year-old Student Had A Gun

AP NEWS - An assistant principal at a Virginia elementary school shook off repeated warnings that a 6-year-old student had a gun that was later used to shoot his teacher, a prosecutor said Tuesday.

Opening statements were given in the trial of Ebony Parker, who is charged with eight counts of felony child neglect in the January 2023 shooting at Richneck Elementary School in Newport News, Virginia. The shooting wounded first grade teacher Abby Zwerner in her classroom.

Prior to the shooting, several school employees told Parker they believed the child had a gun in his backpack, only to be told by Parker that the child's mother would be arriving soon to pick him up for the day, special prosecutor Josh Jenkins said.

"Does she say 'search the child'? No," Jenkins told the jury. "Does she say 'call the police,' or does she call the police? No. Does she remove the child from the classroom and separate him? No.

"She didn't even get up from her desk. She didn't leave her office. Warning after warning after warning, she did nothing."

But Parker's attorney, Curtis Rogers, said teachers should have done something if they believed a gun was present, saying they should have at least separated the child from about 19 other students in the classroom.

"That did not occur," Rogers said. "Each one of those individuals had the authority to move those classmates."

Rogers said the prosecution must prove Parker's actions showed a reckless disregard for human life. Instead, Rogers placed the blame on Zwerner and others who had witnessed the child's movements long before the shooting.

"What about these other people who had direct contact with this child?" Rogers said.

School policy at the time required crisis situations to be reported to an administrator who is required to take action, Jenkins said. A school counselor even asked for permission to search the child but Parker denied the request because searches could only be conducted by an administrator or a security officer. The school's security officer was away at another school at the time.

That left Parker and the school's principal with the authority to act, but the principal knew nothing about the threat because Parker did not tell her about it, Jenkins said.

"There was only one person in the school that day that had both the authority to act and the knowledge of the ongoing crisis, and that person, you will see, was Dr. Parker," Jenkins said.

Zwerner was the first witness called to testify in the trial. She said the student had slammed her phone



to the ground a few days earlier and was in a "violent" mood the day of the shooting.

During recess on the school playground, the student wore an oversized jacket with both of his hands in his pockets the entire time. Zwerner said she sent a text message with that observation to a reading specialist who had been tipped off earlier by students about the gun and reported it to Parker.

After recess, the student continued to wear the jacket in the classroom, where Zwerner was shot at a reading table. Zwerner spent nearly two weeks in the hospital, required six surgeries and does not have the full use of her left hand. A bullet narrowly missed her heart and remains in her chest.

The eight counts Parker faces in-

clude one for each of the bullets in the gun brought into the classroom, prosecutors have said. Each count carries a maximum penalty of five years in prison upon conviction.

Criminal charges against school officials after a school shooting are quite rare, experts say. The shooting sent shock waves through this military shipbuilding community and the country at large, with many wondering how a child so young could gain access to a gun and shoot his teacher.

A jury awarded \$10 million to Zwerner in a civil trial last November in which Parker, who no longer works at the school, was the only defendant.

The student's mother was sentenced to nearly four years in prison for felony child neglect and federal weapons charges.

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Business & Finance

15 HBCUs Launch Research Coalition To Accelerate Innovation, Expand Impact

WASHINGTON, DC, (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) —Fifteen Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) today launched the Association of HBCU Research Institutions (AHRI), a national coalition designed to accelerate world-class research, expand institutional capacity, and elevate HBCU leadership in addressing society's most pressing challenges.

The organization will elevate the contributions of HBCUs in cutting-edge, interdisciplinary research, expand policy influence, and accelerate transformative discoveries at scale. AHRI will do so by increasing research capacity, strengthening institutional infrastructure, boosting funding opportunities, enhancing faculty recruitment, and expanding student access to research and career pathways.

Member institutions will also collaborate to increase the number of HBCUs achieving Research One (R1) Carnegie Classification, which is the highest designation for research activity. AHRI is supported by a strategic partnership with the Association of American Universities (AAU), where its offices will be co-located, and a three-year, \$1 million grant from the Harvard & the Legacy of Slavery (H&LS) Initiative. Harvard University's Office of the Vice Provost for Research will also provide technical assistance.

"Today is not just an announcement, but a declaration that HBCUs are not only contributors to research and innovation, but also leaders shaping a new era of discovery, reimagining both the solutions and the systems that drive research," said Wayne A. I. Frederick, M.D., MBA, Howard University interim president, president emeritus, and Charles R. Drew Professor of Surgery.



Frederick serves as AHRI interim president. David K. Wilson, Ed.D., president of Morgan State University, serves as board chair, and Tomikia P. LeGrande, Ed.D., president of Prairie View A&M University, serves as board vice chair.

AHRI's founding members include Howard University — an R1 institution and the only HBCU to have achieved that designation — and 13 partner institutions classified as R2: High Research Activity: Clark Atlanta University, Delaware State University, Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University, Hampton University, Jackson State University, Morgan State University, North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, Prairie View

Agricultural and Mechanical University, South Carolina State University, Southern University, Tennessee State University, Texas Southern University, and Virginia State University. The University of Maryland Eastern Shore is also a member.

Collectively, AHRI institutions account for 50% of competitively awarded federal research funding among HBCUs and drive solutions in health, science, education, justice reform, and economic development.

The launch coincides with AHRI's inaugural research symposium, "Expanding the Research Mission of HBCUs," convening higher education leaders, policymakers, and industry partners to explore strategies to strengthen research infrastructure

and expand collective impact.

"AHRI marks a powerful new chapter in the HBCU research landscape, bringing institutions that have too often worked in isolation into sustained collaboration with one another and with the country's leading research universities," said Ruth Simmons, Ph.D., senior adviser to the Harvard University president on engagement with HBCUs and a three-time college president.

"We are privileged to leverage our expertise in research infrastructure and capacity-building to help strengthen the foundation for HBCU research excellence and support more institutions on the path from R2 to R1 status," said Sara Naomi Bleich, Ph.D., vice provost for special projects at Harvard.

"The H&LS Initiative's growing portfolio of partnerships with HBCUs has shown how transformative these collaborations can be for students and faculty. This new partnership with AHRI will build on that success and further expand the opportunities and recognition for premier HBCU research institutions."

AHRI was established through collaboration among visionary leaders committed to elevating HBCU research capacity and influence. In addition to Frederick, Simmons, Wilson, and LeGrande, collaborators included Harold L. Martin Sr., Ph.D., chancellor emeritus of North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University. With administrative and legal support from Howard University, the organization was formally incorporated on June 14, 2023, and convened its inaugural board meeting on October 18, 2023.

AHRI leaders also issued a call to action for government, corporate, and philanthropic partners to invest in the future of HBCU research and innovation.

Classifieds

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SBA Doubles Cumulative 7(a) and 504 Loan Limit to \$10 Million, Up From 5M

Kelly Loeffler, Administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), announced a new rule that will allow eligible borrowers to combine their 7(a) and 504 loans for up to \$10 million in SBA-backed financing, increasing the cumulative loan limit from its current \$5 million and expanding the capital available to small businesses across all industries. Small manufacturers, who can currently secure an unlimited number of 504 loans as long as each loan is tied to a distinct project, will also be able to apply for \$5 million through the 7(a) loan program. Effective July 4, this rule will raise the SBA's maximum financing offering to small businesses to the highest level in agency history.

"The Trump SBA is unleashing historic new capital to support the millions of small businesses that are currently in growth mode thanks to President Donald J. Trump and the America First economic agenda," said SBA Administrator Kelly Loeffler. "Amid record small business formation, job growth that continues to exceed expectations, and a surge in demand for Made in America, the agency is committed to supplying small businesses with the funding to hire, expand, and increase production. By doubling the combined loan limits of SBA's 7(a) and 504 loans, this Administration is empowering job creators, particularly manufacturers, to invest in American workers, rebuild our industrial strength, and grow the small business economy."

Under the new policy, qualified borrowers who secure a 7(a) loan first may access up to \$5 million through the 7(a) loan program and up to \$5 million through the 504 loan program, for a combined total of \$10 million in SBA-backed financing. By decoupling 7(a) loan balances from the 504 program, the SBA is giving capital-intensive small businesses — including those in construction, logistics, energy, food production, and related industries — greater flexibility to pair long-term financing for real estate and equipment with working capital to support operations and expansion. For manufacturers, the rule will provide even more capital to increase production, hire workers, and meet rising demand driven by President Trump's fair trade agenda.

These actions build on the Trump Administration's commitment to supporting growth across the small business economy, which is already in expansion mode thanks to the Working Family Tax Cuts, fair trade, and historic deregulation. Monthly small business formation has reached a record high under President Trump and job numbers have exceeded expectations for two consecutive months, propelled by trillions in new investments flooding into the country since the Liberation Day tariffs took effect. Job growth is particularly strong within the manufacturing sector; the first quarter of 2026 saw the first manufacturing job growth since 2023, with every major indicator now flashing strong expansion after years of decline during the Biden Administration.

Under the leadership of Administrator Loeffler, the SBA has introduced numerous programs and rule changes to deliver additional capital across key industries such as manufacturing, agriculture, housing, energy, and transportation. This year, the agency waived loan fees for manufacturing NAICS codes and established the first-ever loan program dedicated to American manufacturers. The agency also announced a new 90% Made in America Loan Guarantee for small manufacturers, as well as a 90% Grocery Guarantee for small businesses across the food supply chain. The agency continues to promote existing programs such as the asset-based 7(a) Working Capital Pilot (WCP) Program, which also has the ability to offer homebuilders project-based lines of credit up to \$5 million.

BBB, Inc. Reintroduces the Better Business Bureau to the World, Unveiling New Brand Platform and Visual Identity

RALEIGH, N.C. (May 13, 2026) – BBB, Inc. announced the first step in a global reintroduction of the Better Business Bureau, a defining initiative to modernize the organization and reaffirm its role as the standard setter of trust between businesses and consumers in the 21st century. This marks a pivotal moment in BBB's evolution as it expands partnerships and strengthens its foundation to meet the demands of a rapidly changing digital marketplace.

As fraud accelerates and artificial intelligence reshapes how businesses operate, trust is under pressure. In 2025 alone, more than 3 million consumers turned to BBB Scam Tracker to report scams or verify suspicious offers, helping prevent an estimated \$38 million in losses. But BBB is best defined by what we help build. Stronger businesses. More confident consumers. More resilient communities.

With this reintroduction, BBB unveils a refined visual identity and a modern framework for defining trust, brought to life through partnerships that reflect a shared commitment to accountability, transparency, and stronger communities. This work is supported by a modernized digital experience that makes it easier for consumers and businesses to access information and engage with BBB in real time.

"BBB was founded on a simple belief: the free market works best when businesses hold themselves accountable to the communities they serve," said Rebekah E. Dopp, Global Chief Executive Officer of BBB, Inc. "This reintroduction carries that belief forward with clarity and conviction. Trust is not an abstract idea. It is built, demonstrated, and sustained through action. And it is built together."

The updated visual identity preserves the strength and recognition of the BBB mark while refining it for clarity, consistency, and performance across modern platforms. This is a deliberate evolution, honoring more than a century of credibility while ensuring the brand remains accessible, relevant, and built to meet the expectations of a new generation. At its core is a simple truth: trust is built in communities over time. "Trust, Built Locally" is the operating principle behind how BBB shows up, connects, and delivers value every day.

Reintroducing Trust to a New Generation

Dopp described the reintroduction as both a moment of renewal and a reaffirmation of BBB's founding purpose. "As commerce becomes more digital, more complex, and increasingly shaped by artificial intelligence, consumers and businesses need a trusted standard they can rely on. BBB is built to provide it," Dopp said. The reintroduction will roll out throughout 2026 across BBB channels and marketplace touchpoints, bringing a unified brand, expanded partnerships, and a modernized digital experience to life. This is a sustained shift in how BBB shows up, operates, and delivers on its promise. Trust, Built Locally.

Public Opinion Favors School Vouchers

By Jordan Meadows

Staff Writer

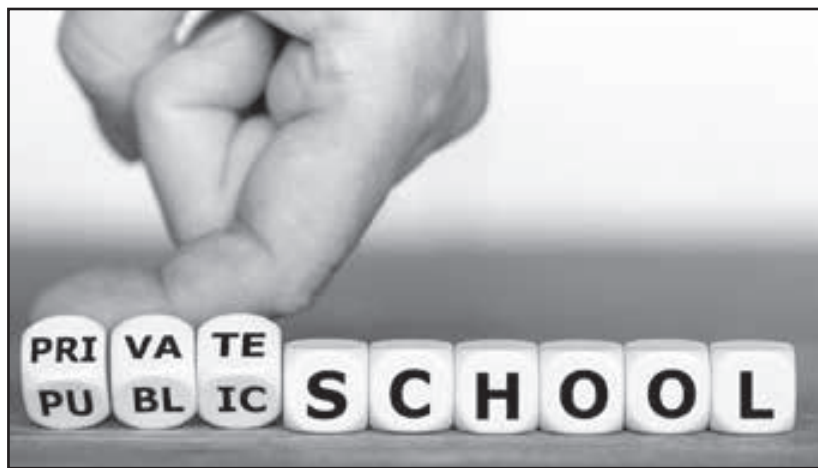
Democratic Gov. Josh Stein has proposed a sweeping change to one of North Carolina's largest and most debated education programs by recommending a phased wind-down of the state's Opportunity Scholarship voucher system.

Under Stein's proposed budget, unveiled in late-April, the state would halt new enrollments in the Opportunity Scholarship Program and impose a stricter income cap on current recipients. The plan sets eligibility at 150% of the federal reduced-price lunch threshold, roughly \$90,000 annually for a family of four. Families already receiving scholarships for the 2025–26 school year would only be allowed to renew if they fall below that income level.

Over 105,000 students are enrolled in the Opportunity Scholarship Program, according to the North Carolina State Education Assistance Authority (NCSEAA). Based on current income tiers, Stein's proposed cap could affect about 60,000 students statewide, though final figures depend on income data that has not yet been publicly released.

"This returns income limits to 2021 levels and ensures that public funds are targeted to students in need and otherwise support public school students and teachers," Stein's budget states. The governor has framed the proposal as a way to gradually "let the program wind down," while redirecting resources toward public education.

To prepare for a potential influx of returning students, the proposed



budget includes a \$12.5 million allocation to the state's ADM Contingency Reserve for the 2026–27 school year. The funds are intended to support public schools absorbing students who may leave private institutions if their vouchers are no longer available.

Mike Long, president of Parents for Educational Freedom in North Carolina, criticized the plan as harmful to middle-income families.

"Governor Stein's recommended budget is a direct attack on North Carolina families who rely on the Opportunity Scholarship Program," Long said in a statement.

Supporters of the governor's approach, like State Rep. Brandon Lofton, a Democrat from Mecklenburg County, frame the issue as a budgetary trade-off during a legislative press conference.

"We came to Raleigh and we passed a budget that put more money into private school vouchers than it did into teacher raises," Lofton

said. "Every year since then, we've lost teachers in our classrooms."

Robert Luebke of the John Locke Foundation pushed back on claims that vouchers drain public school funding, arguing instead that they expand parental choice and flexibility. Meanwhile, Stein and other critics point to projections that the program could divert as much as \$7.5 billion from public education over the next decade if left unchanged.

A 2025 report from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction found that when public school students transfer to private schools using vouchers, the state can save money because voucher amounts are often lower than per-pupil public school spending. However, those savings are offset by the program's expansion to tens of thousands of students who were not previously enrolled in public schools, resulting in a net increase in overall education spending.

Since lawmakers expanded the

Dunn Chamber's EmpowerHer Inaugural Event

By Jheri Hardaway

Staff Writer

Smithfield, NC - Former Governor RoyDunn, NC - In a powerful demonstration of community and collaboration, the Dunn Area Chamber of Commerce hosted its inaugural EmpowerHer event last Monday morning at the Dunn Shrine Center. Brought to life by powerhouse presenting sponsor KS Bank, the morning gathering was explicitly designed as an intentional space to encourage, equip, and empower local women making an impact in business, at home, and behind the scenes. Featuring a panel of local leaders and an energetic keynote address, the event challenged attendees to step away from their endless to-do lists and actively invest in their own self-preservation.

The morning's keynote address was delivered by Melissa Overton, local leadership consultant, nurse, and author of the upcoming book *Focused and Fearless Leadership*. Overton centered her remarks on a critical bottleneck that destroys organizational culture: the breakdown

of clear communication. "Clarity is going to reduce the risk of conflict," Overton told the audience. "We have to stop hoping people will just 'read the room' and figure it out. We need to step up and be clear about our expectations." Overton noted that maintaining clear communication requires intentional trust and selective transparency, warning that a lack of clarity forces people into harmful cognitive traps. "When we get burnt out, we experience an increase in assumptions," Overton explained. "Instead of stopping to think and process, we're too tired. We just take things at face value and assume that's what they meant. And you know what they say about assumptions—it makes an absolute mess out of a situation."

Drawing from her own recent experience at a silent women's retreat, Overton touched on a highly relatable modern affliction she dubbed the "busyness sickness."

"Busyness kills compassion and creativity," Overton stated plainly. "The busyness sickness is when we keep expecting to do more and more with less and less, and some-

how, that becomes normalized. But when you are completely burnt out, your 'giving-on' button is busted. The people you used to have immense compassion for become just a checklist item, a chest pain, and not a person." Overton explicitly challenged the common narrative that prioritizes constant grinding over personal well-being, especially for women trying to balance multiple cultural roles. "Self-care is not selfish; self-care is self-preservation," Overton said to murmurs of agreement from the crowd. "We are naturally expected to be the nurturers and the caregivers. That's fine, but at some point, we also decided to be these fierce, badass businesswomen. We didn't get to shift our energy, we just had to be fully present for both."

To combat burnout, Overton left the audience with practical tools for everyday life:

Take a Victory Lap: Celebrate successes great and small. "We think we can only celebrate when we get 'there,'" Overton said, quoting leadership expert John Maxwell. "But as soon as you get there, you're here, looking at the next 'there.' Celebrate

now to get the energy for the next great leap."

Surround Yourself with Builders, Not Suckers: Evaluate your circle. "Show me your friends, and I'll show you your future. Distance yourself from the energy suckers. Find girlfriends who encourage you to move forward instead of competing with you."

Organize Your Workspace: Avoid walking into structural chaos on a Monday morning, which instantly triggers an elevated stress response.

Cut Yourself a Break: Give yourself the exact same grace and mercy that you are expected to extend to others.

As a surprise concluding gift, Overton announced that every attendee in the room would receive an advance digital copy of three chapters from *Focused and Fearless Leadership* ahead of its physical print release on October 20. Following the keynote, attendees broke for a networking session, carrying forward real conversations about setting boundaries, cutting through the noise, and showing up for one another without emptying their own reservoirs.

A State Employee Group Says Auditor's Report Shows A 'Pay Crisis' In NC's Government, Not Vacancy Issue

NC NEWSLINE - The State Employees Association of North Carolina has a simple explanation for the raft of vacant positions in state government: poor pay.

A dashboard released by SEANC on Wednesday compiles findings from State Auditor Dave Boliek's January report on long-term vacancies in state government, arguing that the auditor's inquiry vindicates their assertion that inadequate salaries are the primary reason many of North Carolina's government positions go unfilled.

"State Auditor Dave Boliek's report shows what we have long argued: North Carolina's vacancy problem is a pay problem," said SEANC Executive Director Ardis Watkins. "The auditor himself recommends that the state bring salaries in line with neighboring states and appropriate additional funds where vacancy rates are high."

As of last August, 8,845 positions had been vacant for more than six months, representing about 11% of the state workforce, according to the dashboard and Boliek's report. More than a third of those long-term vacancies were attributed to low com-



pensation, the number one cause identified in the auditor's report.

The dashboard was released just after Republican lawmakers announced a budget framework that will include an average 3% pay raise for state government employees,

with higher increases in some of the areas Boliek identified as especially underpaid.

The vacancies, SEANC argues, are not necessarily a chronic issue. According to the dashboard, roughly 3,000 positions are legally blocked

from being filled because the state has been operating without an enacted budget. And in the eight weeks following the passage of the DAVE Act authorizing the auditor to probe government efficiency, 1,181 vacant positions were filled.

"The question now is whether the General Assembly will act on what the data shows," Watkins said.

Boliek's office did not respond to a request for comment. But while the auditor recommended increasing pay for some state employees — such as correctional officers and registered nurses — he also encouraged the General Assembly to consider eliminating at least a chunk of the longstanding vacancies.

"Long-term vacancies muddy the waters of government expenditures. In some agencies, you have tax dollars meant to go to a person serving a valuable state need, but instead that spot sits empty for years and the money goes elsewhere," he said in a press release accompanying the report. "[The report] includes several different options to improve government efficiency, from cuts to job vacancies, to increases in areas where additional resources may be

necessary."

According to the SEANC dashboard and the auditor's report, more than \$1.04 billion in lapsed salary has been generated by those 8,845 vacancies. Lapsed salaries would represent more than 16% of the state payroll budget or around \$482 million if the vacancy positions remained unfilled for a year.

Much of that money, funded through state appropriations and receipts, is available for use by the departments while the positions remain unfilled — going instead to things like overtime, temporary workers, and other operational costs.

Senate Democratic Leader Sydney Batch (D-Wake) told the press Wednesday that eliminating lapsed salaries would have serious consequences for state government programs. She said her caucus has concerns that Republican leaders plan to cover the cost of the pay raises by cutting vacant positions as outlined in the auditor's report.

"What they aren't telling you is, are they doing that by removing lapsed salaries, which a lot of our departments actually rely on in order to just do their programmatic work?"

Batch asked. "Are they going to do it by cutting a whole bunch of positions and using the auditor's report to say that you don't actually need human capital to run this government and somehow, AI is going to do it for us?"

However, House Speaker Destin Hall (R-Caldwell) told reporters Wednesday that this week's budget agreement slowing down the state's planned tax cut timeline has lessened the need to eliminate vacant government positions in the final bill.

"The need isn't as great to go in and look at all of those vacant positions. That doesn't mean some of those won't wind up being in there," Hall said. "I think Dave Boliek's done a good job as state auditor at getting us a bunch of information, new data that's out there — so areas across state government where we can improve efficiency, you may see some cuts there."

Asked about potential cuts to vacant positions Wednesday, state Senate President Pro Tem Phil Berger (R-Rockingham) declined to offer specifics, telling members of the media, "We're going to let the subcommittees go through the process."

Duke Energy's NC Campaign Donations — CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

was most "blatant." It was added after a North Carolina appeals court ruled that the Utilities Commission improperly allowed Duke Energy to include 2022 weather-related fuel costs in a 2024 request. The panel of judges said the utility couldn't go that far back.

While an appeal was pending, lawmakers passed Senate Bill 266.

"People budget for their utility bills," Prather said. "People have to plan. They need consistency. And this model of relying on the taxpayers and the consumers to make up for the costs, it's not sustainable."

While the various provisions of the bill, now law, don't directly contribute to Duke Energy's requested 18% rate hike over the next two years, they're part of a perfect storm for North Carolinians in the midst of an affordability crisis, Prather said.

"All of these changes have made things easier for Duke to make money and made it harder for taxpayers and consumers," she said.

A more Duke-friendly Utilities Commission?

A separate law, passed six months earlier, might aid Duke Energy in securing that requested rate hike, though.

In December 2024, lawmakers passed a Hurricane Helene recovery bill that included dozens of unrelated provisions. One part of the law took away one of the governor's appointments to the Utilities Commission, a five-member commission that approves or denies rate increase requests.

Before, the governor could appoint three members, effectively holding majority power. But the law gave one of his appointments to the treasurer, now a Republican. State Treasurer Brad Briner chose Donald van der Vaart, an engineer and attorney who previously worked for Shell Oil and Carolina Power & Light, which is now a part of Duke Energy. Van der Vaart reportedly disagrees with several te-

nets of climate science, including that greenhouse gas emissions are harmful to humans.

Three members of the Utilities Commission are former state lawmakers. Former House Republican William Brawley accepted over \$35,000 in Duke campaign contributions during his time in office. Former Senate Democrat Floyd McKissick accepted \$24,500. Former Senate Republican Tommy Tucker took \$11,000.

The newly configured Utilities Commission recently approved a merger between Duke Energy's two utilities, Duke Energy Carolinas and Duke Energy Progress, which served different portions of the state. The company said the move would save customers \$23 billion between 2027 and 2040 by allowing shared power sources and infrastructure.

Some opponents worry that these savings will never materialize.

What lawmakers get from Duke Energy

Former state Senator Newton wasn't a one-man show.

About 60% of current state lawmakers have accepted Duke Energy campaign contributions, with nearly a quarter accepting \$10,000 or more throughout their time in office, not including the latest election cycle.

Duke spreads its influence across the aisle — the top lifetime recipient of Duke money currently serving in the legislature is Senate Democrat Dan Blue, who has received \$70,900, followed by Senate Republican Bill Rabon, who's accepted \$60,900, according to campaign finance records stretching from 1999 to 2024.

Gaston Republican Sen. Brad Overcash (\$60,900), Senate Rules chairman John Bell (\$59,200), Senate leader Phil Berger (\$51,600), House Energy Committee chairman Dean Arp (\$51,000), Senate Agriculture, Energy and Environment chair Brent Jackson (\$43,600) and Senate Appropriations chairman Ralph Hise

(\$42,900) are the next highest recipients.

Top Democrat recipients include Blue, Rep. Garland Pierce, D-Scotland (\$28,500); Democratic House leader Robert Reives, D-Chatham (\$22,600); Rep. Becky Carney, D-Mecklenburg (\$22,250); now-unaffiliated Rep. Carla Cunningham, U-Mecklenburg (\$21,150); Sen. Paul Lowe, D-Forsyth (\$20,900); and Rep. Shelly Willingham, D-Mecklenburg (\$20,000).

Blue, Pierce, Lowe, Cunningham and Willingham originally voted for Senate Bill 266 to pass. When the legislation came back around for a veto override vote, Cunningham and Willingham again supported the bill, securing its passage alongside Mecklenburg Rep. Nasif Majeed, another former Democrat who is now unaffiliated.

Whatley and Cooper's connections

Republican U.S. Senate candidate Mi-

chael Whatley may have been another player laying the groundwork for Senate Bill 266 and other Duke-friendly legislation to succeed.

Before he became chair of the state Republican party in 2019, Whatley was executive vice president of Consumer Energy Alliance, an oil, gas and utility lobbying group with Duke Energy among its clients. CEA is operated by HBW Resources, Whatley's former lobbying firm.

While a lobbyist for CEA, Whatley and his fellow lobbyists argued in favor of rate increases, advocated for the Atlantic Coast Pipeline, which was led by Duke Energy and Dominion Energy, and asked the Utilities Commission to allow Duke Energy to pass along cleanup costs from a 2014 coal ash spill to customers.

CEA had a registered lobbyist supporting utility issues in the state legislature throughout 2025, when Senate Bill 266 was being considered.

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Health and Wellness

Conflicting Advice On When Should You Get A Mammogram

WASHINGTON (AP) — Deciding when to get routine mammograms is confusing. Some health groups recommend women begin at age 40 or 45 while another recently opted for age 50. They also differ on whether yearly or every other year is best.

The conflicting advice is at least partly because guidelines for breast cancer screening are designed for women at average risk and with no possible cancer symptoms. But breast cancer is so common that it is hard to know who is really “average” and how to balance the pros and cons of screening.

“Breast cancer is not one disease,” said Dr. Laura Esserman of the University of California, San Francisco. “So how in the world does it make sense to screen everybody the same when everyone doesn’t have the same risk?”

Esserman is leading research to better understand the nuances of who is at low or high risk or somewhere in between and eventually offer more tailored screening advice.

When to get a mammogram The newest guidance comes from the American College of Physicians, which recommends that average-risk women ages 50 to 74 get an every-other-year mammogram. For those 40 to 49, the guideline says to discuss pros and cons with a doctor and if they choose screening, to go every other year.

That advice, issued last month, was a surprise. Most other U.S. health

groups have urged women to start earlier, in their 40s. The influential U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recently switched its guidance to start every-other-year mammograms at age 40 instead of 50.

The American Cancer Society has long recommended yearly mammograms for 45- to 54-year-olds — but says they can choose to start at 40. For those age 55 and older, the cancer society says women can switch to every other year or choose to keep going for yearly checks.

The new American College of Physicians guidelines also say doctors can ask if women 75 or older wish to stop routine screening. In contrast, the cancer society says there is no reason to stop if they are still healthy.

Why don’t experts agree? The higher a woman’s risk of eventually developing breast cancer, the more benefit she will derive from more frequent screenings. But beyond some well-known factors like the cancer-causing BRCA1 or BRCA2 genes, it is hard for women to know their true risk. Age has long been a proxy because the risk of breast cancer rises as women get older.

Mammograms aren’t perfect. Sometimes they miss cancer or an aggressive tumor pops up after a routine mammogram. But guidelines seek to balance the benefits of catching cancer early with possible harms, such



as stress and pain from investigating suspicious spots that don’t turn out to be cancerous.

“We’re not saying there’s no benefit” from mammograms in the 40s, cautioned Dr. Carolyn Crandall of the University of California, Los Angeles, who chaired the American College of Physicians report. But “there’s a narrower balance between the benefits you could get and the harms in 40- to 49-year-olds.”

growing one, Smith noted.

How dense breasts affect mammogram advice

Nearly half of women over 40 have dense breast tissue, which can make it harder to spot a tumor on a mammogram and can slightly increase the risk of developing cancer.

After a mammogram, women are notified about their breast density. Many experts say it is not yet clear if women with dense breasts would benefit from adding ultrasounds or MRIs to their screening. But the new American College of Physicians guidance advises considering 3D mammography — what doctors call digital breast tomosynthesis or DBT.

What’s next for breast cancer screening

In the future, adding a gene test — one that looks at more than just those well-known BRCA genes — along with broader risk factors may help refine women’s optimal mammogram schedule.

A recent study of nearly 46,000 women, called the WISDOM trial, used age, genetic testing, lifestyle, health history and breast density to classify women as low, average, elevated or high risk. That risk level determined if they waited to start mammograms at 50, went every other year

or every year — and the highest-risk group was told to screen twice a year, once with a mammogram and again with an MRI scan. Risk-based scans were compared to standard yearly mammograms.

Risk-based screening worked as well as yearly screening, Esserman’s team reported in the medical journal JAMA. One surprise: About 30% of women whose gene testing indicated increased risk didn’t report relatives with breast cancer. While more research is underway, Esserman hopes the early findings will start influencing guidelines soon.

Also in the pipeline are AI tools being crafted to assess a woman’s risk of developing breast cancer in the next few years based on clues in her mammogram, another possible way to identify who might qualify for more or less frequent screening.

For now, women can talk with their doctors about close relatives who have had cancer, their own overall health and other risk factors such as whether they have had children and at what age.

Whatever mammogram age and interval they choose, the best advice is to stick with it, the cancer society’s Smith said: “Breast screening works best when it’s done regularly.”



NC Legislature Considers H1200 Tax-Free Pads and Diapers

By Jheri Hardaway

Staff Writer

Raleigh, NC - As we search for innovative solutions to the cost-of-living crisis, an important bill was filed in the North Carolina General Assembly on April 30, 2026, House Bill 1200, formally known as the Tax-Free Family Essentials Act. This bill proposes to eliminate the state sales tax on a critical list of non-negotiable healthcare and hygiene products.

Walking through the halls of the General Assembly on Advocacy Day, I was fortunate to run into Michelle Schaefer and Arlie Kidd. They were shepherding over 30 student leaders from high school freshmen to college-bound seniors, who are fighting to ensure that basic dignity is no longer treated as a luxury in North Carolina. The focus of their advocacy? H1200, this piece of legislation aimed at tackling “period poverty” is essential to their mission. Michelle Schaefer founded the Diaper Bank of North Carolina from her kitchen table in 2013, with an initial goal of distributing 50,000 diapers to families in Durham. Today, the organization is on the verge of hitting a staggering milestone: 40 million diapers distributed statewide across 80 counties, with four regional warehouses.

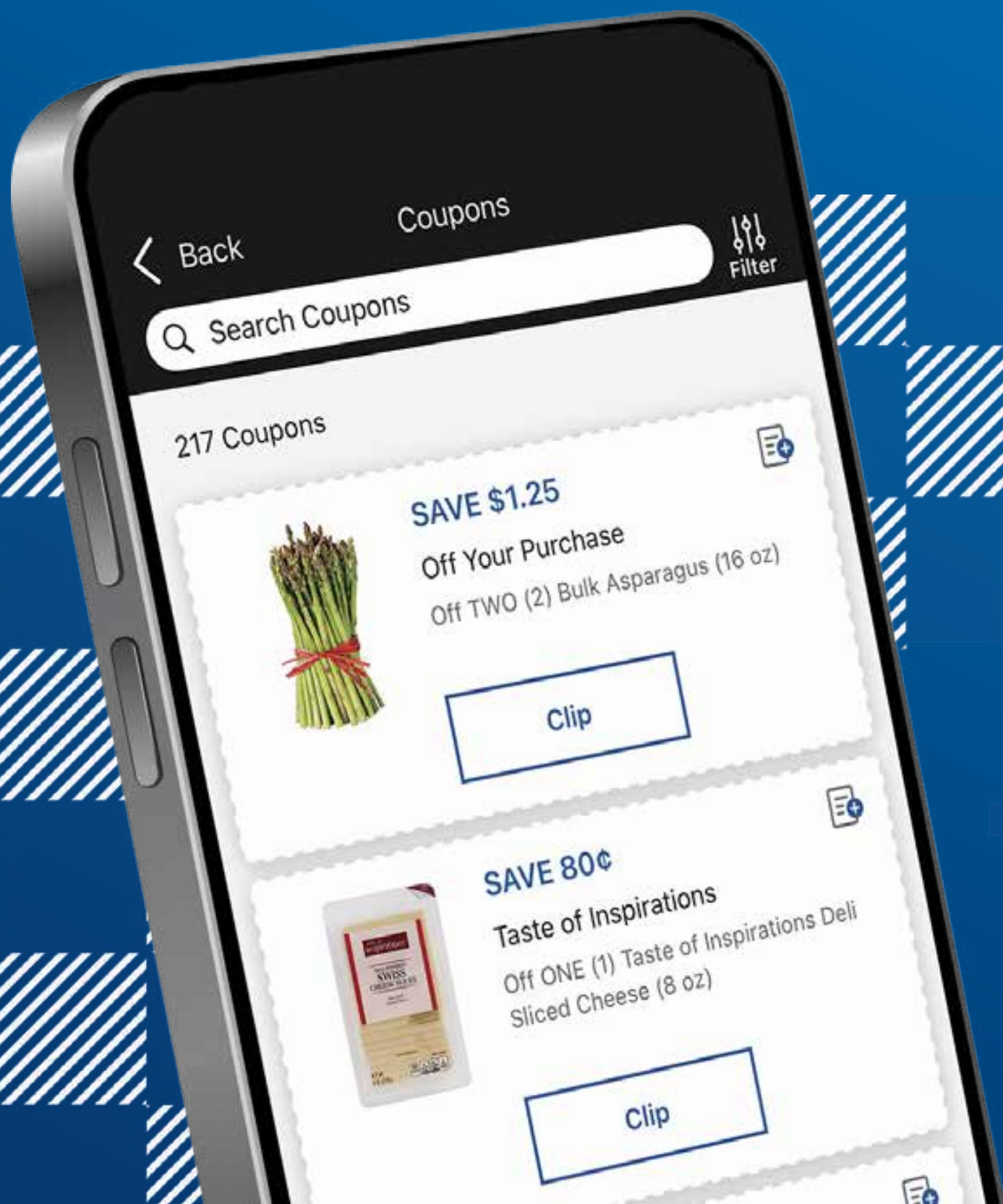
While doing the work, Schaefer quickly realized that a family struggling to buy diapers is also a family struggling to buy other basic hygiene essentials. In 2014, the organization expanded its mission to distribute period products. “One in four students miss school because they cannot afford period products,” Schaefer notes. “We wouldn’t ask students to miss school because they don’t have toilet paper in their backpacks. So why on earth would we ask them to miss school and run around looking for a tampon, texting all their friends to try to get a pad?” Today, the Diaper Bank supplies more than 1,000 schools across North Carolina not just with pads and tampons, but also with spare leggings, underwear, and shorts to protect students from the shame and disruption of an accident at school.

If passed, this vital piece of legislation will permanently lift the tax burden on essential goods like diapers, baby wipes, feminine hygiene products, prenatal vitamins, and over-the-counter children’s medications starting October 1, 2026. This urgent relief is necessary, and it shows that North Carolina lawmakers are thinking creatively about incremental solutions to the cost-of-living crisis. H1200 represents a massive step forward in making our state more affordable, equitable, and supportive of families, expectant mothers, and young children.

Exempting these essential items acknowledges a long-known basic truth: feminine hygiene is fundamental healthcare. By eliminating the state’s cut from these purchases, lawmakers are directly supporting women’s health and economic independence while ensuring that menstrual dignity isn’t locked behind an unnecessary tax barrier. The bill expands existing tax rules to exempt all retail sales of diapers and baby wipes from sales tax. Previously, diaper tax exemptions were tightly restricted to specific Medicaid-reimbursed channels. This required people to jump through unnecessary hoops. This change ensures that every single parent or person buying diapers in North Carolina gets relief at the register. The Carolinian will continue to follow the progress of H1200 as it makes its way through the House Committee on Finance.

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Arts & Culture

Preservation North Carolina's Franklin County Ramble



By Jheri Hardaway

Staff Writer

Franklin County, NC - Preservation North Carolina, or PresNC, has been Saving Places That Matter to the Diverse People of North Carolina Since 1939. As part of a recent historic "Ramble" in Franklin County, PresNC hosted visitors at several properties, including the Historic Perry's School, several churches, and historic residences.

The day began with a tour of the historic Perry's School educational complex in rural Franklin County. Standing as a monument to African American resilience, faith, and community determination, this sprawl-



ing site is a profound piece of North Carolina history currently waiting for its next chapter. "There was just so much love from your teachers," an alumnus recalled, looking around the weathered remains of a classroom. "They really cared about you... I just like thinking about it. The good old days."

Perry's School has lived multiple distinct lives. Following emancipation, formerly enslaved families in Franklin County recognized that true freedom required empowering both "the heart for God, and then the mind." Communities built local churches and quickly established modest, one-room schoolhouses nearby to educate their children. Lo-



cal white landowner Joshua Perry donated the acreage to build the first school. In the 1920s, philanthropist Julius Rosenwald partnered with Booker T. Washington to build thousands of state-of-the-art schools for Black children across the South. A larger Rosenwald frame structure was erected to accommodate the growing student population.

In 1949, a modern white school building was constructed, followed by a concrete block addition in 1953 and a gymnasium in 1963. Buses traveled massive distances across the county to bring Black students to the high school. Following integration in 1968, the county stripped the historic "Perry's" name from the high



school, re-designating the facility as K-5 Gold Sand Elementary before it permanently closed its doors in 1990. Today, the vacant campus stands in a delicate state of limbo. Since its closure in 1990, the building has faced severe challenges. Vandals have shattered windows, and roof leaks have allowed water to warp the walls of the old library. "It's amazing what water does," a ramble observed, looking up at the peeling ceilings. Yet, the bones of the structure remain remarkably resilient, and the passion of the community has not faded. To save Perry's School from total deterioration, local leaders and PresNC are looking toward the future with a clear strategy. PresNC and local advocates



are currently exploring avenues for grants, funding, and adaptive reuse to prevent this irreplaceable asset from being lost to time.

What began as a grassroots effort to educate Black children after slavery is now on its fourth life, transitioning from a beloved community beacon to an abandoned structure, and hopefully, now towards an empowered future of preserved legacy. During the tour, alumni shared vibrant memories of what it was like to be a student at Perry's during the 1950s and 60s. The school was a true community sanctuary. One former student pointed out the first-grade classroom and fondly remembered her teacher, Ms. Suit. "We were poor then and couldn't



afford to buy dresses," she shared, pointing to an old sewing machine left in the room. "We would wash flour sacks and bring them in, and she would make us a dress for the May-day play."

The school principal, Mr. Wilson, was remembered as a loving but firm figure. "All he had to do was walk into a class," a former student laughed. "He didn't have to say one word. You were gonna be quiet." More than anything, the school reinforced a foundational network of character training shared between the home, the church, and the classroom. Every morning before class, students participated in devotionals featuring scripture readings and spiritual songs.

Charlotte Crown Introduces New Era Of Women's Basketball

By Judaea Ingram

Special To The Carolinian

CHARLOTTE, N.C. - Charlotte's newest professional sports franchise officially stepped into the spotlight this week as the Charlotte Crown hosted its media day ahead of its inaugural season in the newly formed Upshot League, marking the return of professional women's basketball to the Queen City for the first time in nearly two decades.

Held ahead of the team's May 21 season opener, the event introduced players, coaches, branding, and the organization's vision while giving fans and media an early look at what the franchise hopes will become a major step forward for women's basketball in North Carolina.

The Charlotte Crown are set to become the city's first women's professional basketball team since the Charlotte Sting disbanded in 2007. The organization enters a sports landscape where interest in women's basketball has surged nationally, fueled by increased television viewership, growing attendance numbers, and expanding professional opportunities for players.



The team is part of the new Upshot League, which describes itself as "a new kind of opportunity" focused on uplifting talent and communities through women's basketball. The four-team league includes the Charlotte Crown, Greensboro Groove, Jacksonville Waves, and Savannah Steel, with two of the league's franchises based in North

Carolina.

League messaging emphasizes community and accessibility alongside competition.

"We are here to inspire, unite, and grow together," league branding states. "To up everyone's shot."

During media day, players participated in interviews, signed merchandise, met with fans, and revealed

team uniforms as excitement built around the franchise's debut. The event blended basketball promotion with community engagement, something organizers repeatedly emphasized as central to the team's identity.

The Crown's mascot, the Carolina Reaper, also made appearances throughout the event, adding energy to the atmosphere as fans interacted with players and staff.

The franchise will be led by former college head coach and former professional player Trisha Stafford-Odom, whose basketball career has included time in the WNBA, ABL, and NWBL, along with coaching experience at North Carolina Central University from 2017 to 2018.

Stafford-Odom described the launch of the franchise as both emotional and historic.

"I mean I really can't wait," Stafford-Odom said. "I feel we might get a little bit of the jitters out when we head to Jacksonville. I think they will start all over again when I realize this is the start of something in 2026 that will go down in history."

She also acknowledged the significance of building on the legacy

of women's basketball in Charlotte rather than starting completely from scratch.

"I am excited that we can actually start from almost ground zero," she said. "I can't say ground zero because we are building on the past and I respect that and understand what they have done."

Stafford-Odom believes the current growth of women's basketball nationally positions the Crown well entering their first season.

"Everybody's now in this basketball craze right now, so I feel like we are going to be true benefactors," she said.

Among the players drawing attention during media day was Deja Kelly, a former McDonald's All-American and three-time first-team All-ACC selection at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill from 2022 through 2024.

Kelly emphasized the variety of talent assembled on the roster, which includes players with professional and collegiate experience.

"It will be a great product that we put out there, especially having players who have WNBA experience, who have professional experience overseas, and also who are fresh out of college," Kelly said. "Being able to put that together and put that product out on the floor is something we'll still be figuring out at the

beginning of the season, but I think that will show just how highly talented this group of players are, this group of women is."

She added that the growth of the women's game continues to create new opportunities for athletes.

"It speaks volumes about how fast the women's game is growing and how many opportunities are being created," Kelly said.

Former Davidson College player Chloe Welch also highlighted the importance of remaining connected to the local basketball community.

"To be here in a place that I love and to be close to my alma mater at Davidson and surrounded by a community that I am familiar with, it gives more excitement to go and play," Welch said.

For Stafford-Odom, success for the franchise extends beyond wins and losses.

"When the fanbase grows and we have sellouts with regularity and tickets are hard to find, and little girls are asking for autographs, that will be successful," Stafford-Odom said. "I get emotional because I can see it happening."

The Charlotte Crown will officially begin their inaugural season on May 21, when they host their home opener at Bojangles Coliseum. A pregame Fan Fest is scheduled to begin at 5 p.m. before tipoff at 7 p.m.

Summer Concert Season Brings Community & Culture Outdoors Across North Carolina

As temperatures rise across North Carolina, outdoor concert venues are once again filling with crowds gathering for more than just music. Across Raleigh, Durham, and Charlotte, summer concert season has become a cultural tradition where live performances, fashion, food, and community all intersect.

From packed amphitheatres to large arena tours, concertgoers across the state are returning for performances that help define the atmosphere of summer in North Carolina. For many attendees, the experience extends far beyond the artist on stage. Summer concerts have increasingly become spaces for connection, celebration, and shared cultural experiences.

Major venues throughout the state continue drawing large crowds during the warmer months. Venues such as

Red Hat Amphitheater and Coastal Credit Union Music Park regularly host national tours featuring artists across hip-hop, R&B, gospel, and pop music, helping establish North Carolina as a growing destination for live entertainment.

This summer's concert lineup also includes major R&B performances in Charlotte, where artists such as Chris Brown and Usher are scheduled to bring their tours to the city in July. Large-scale tours featuring legacy and contemporary artists continue drawing multigenerational audiences, particularly within Black communities where R&B concerts remain major cultural events.

For many fans, the return of summer concerts also marks the return of a familiar social atmosphere. Groups of friends gather hours before per-

formances, restaurants near venues become crowded before showtime, and social media fills with concert outfits, videos, and crowd reactions throughout the night.

The experience of outdoor concerts often carries a different energy than indoor performances. Open-air venues allow audiences to spread across lawns and seating areas while music blends with warm weather and evening city skylines. Fans frequently describe concerts as both entertainment and escape, offering opportunities to unwind and reconnect during the summer season.

Concert season also creates important spaces for Black culture and artistry across the state. Hip-hop and R&B tours continue drawing large audiences throughout North Carolina, while DJs, opening acts, and local performers contribute to the broader con-

cert atmosphere. Fashion, dance, and crowd participation all become part of the experience, turning concerts into cultural gatherings as much as musical events.

Beyond the performances themselves, the economic impact of concert season stretches into surrounding communities. Local restaurants, bars, food vendors, parking services, and small businesses often see increased traffic during major concert weekends, especially in downtown entertainment districts.

Outdoor music events also continue to attract younger audiences, particularly college students returning home for summer break or looking for activities after the academic year ends. Many concerts become group outings that blend nightlife, music, and social connection into one experience.

Leon Thomas To Receive ASCAP Vanguard Award For Shaping The Future Of R&B

LOS ANGELES (AP) — From Broadway stages to Grammy winner, Leon Thomas is adding another milestone to his rising career.

The American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers announced Tuesday that the three-time Grammy-winning singer, songwriter and producer will receive the ASCAP Vanguard Award, which recognizes members whose work is helping shape the future of music.

Thomas will be honored June 25 at ASCAP's private, invitation-only celebration of top hip-hop, R&B and gospel songwriters in Los Angeles. Previous recipients of the Vanguard Award include Victoria Monét, Migos and Janelle Monáe.

"Leon Thomas is one of R&B's most creative forces today and is reshaping its sound with his boundary-breaking artistry," Nicole George-Middleton, ASCAP executive vice president and head of creative

membership, said in a statement. "His passion, creativity and undeniable talent have established him as a defining voice of this generation."

Thomas first emerged as a child performer on Broadway in "The Lion King" before becoming widely known for his role on Nickelodeon's "Victorious." After the show's end, he built a successful career behind the scenes as a songwriter and producer for artists such as Ariana Grande, Drake, Chris Brown and Kehlani.

In 2024, Thomas earned ASCAP's R&B/Hip-Hop and Rap Song of the Year award for co-writing SZA's "Snooze," which won a Grammy in 2022.

Thomas later stepped further into the spotlight with his sophomore album "Mutt," released in 2024. The project featured the breakout title track, which climbed to No. 1 on Billboard's Radio Songs chart and



earned double-platinum certification. The album also included the single "Yes It Is," which recently achieved gold certification from the Recording Industry Association of America.

"Mutt" helped solidify Thomas as one of contemporary R&B's ris-

ing stars, earning Grammy wins for best R&B album and best traditional R&B performance for "Vibes Don't Lie."

Thomas recently released his EP "PHOLKS" and is touring select markets with Bruno Mars on "The Romantic Tour."

NC musicians, concert venues join lawmakers in push to ban reseller bots, ticket fraud

NC NEWSLINE - Heather LaGarde owns Haw River Ballroom, a venue with a capacity of 750 in Saxapahaw, North Carolina.

Fifteen years ago, Gillian Welch & Dave Rawlings were the first band to ever perform at Haw River Ballroom. The group came back recently on tour.

"They were doing it in 6,000-person theaters across the nation, but they chose North Carolina. They chose little Saxapahaw to do a special two-night run, which is incredible," LaGarde told reporters Wednesday. "It's life-saving for little venues like ours, and we love them dearly, and everyone wants to get into that show."

Both nights of the show sold out in four minutes, leaving upset would-be concertgoers calling the ballroom. LaGarde estimates reseller bots snatched up at least 100 tickets from each night.

During the show, people lined up outside but couldn't get in without a valid ticket. But there were still empty spots inside that she thinks were purchased by bots.

"We had really reduced bar sales, which hits your venues very hard because you don't have your full capacity," LaGarde said. "The bands had really reduced merch sales, which they rely on so much for their bottom line."

LaGarde is one of the venue owners and musicians joining lawmakers to support legislation that would impose tougher penalties for fraudulent concert ticket sales in North Carolina and limit the number that can be bought by reseller bots.

Senate Bill 849, "Real Tickets, Real Fans Act," would implement more regulations for second- and third-party sellers, targeting price gouging and fraudulent sales of concert tickets.

Under the legislation, resellers would need to clearly identify themselves as resellers, not the box office, official artists or venue partner. The bill would also ban impersonators fooling fans into thinking they're buying directly from the source.

Resellers would need to provide an active link directly to the primary seller, giving fans a choice to view the original listing. Additionally, the measure would ban the sale of speculative tickets, which aren't in the possession of a reseller at the time of listing, sale or advertisement.

The bill would also ban software scalpers from using bots to purchase tickets before real fans can even load the page, according to primary sponsor Sen. Jay Chaudhuri (D-Wake).

Artists and musicians play a key role in driving tourism in North Carolina, Chaudhuri said. The measure would help preserve that industry.

"Those economic contributions deserve the same marketplace protections we extend to every other industry so our constituents and our fans don't need a fraud-detection course to buy a concert ticket," Chaudhuri added.

When Jason Isbell came, LaGarde said, he and the venue agreed to sell the tickets for \$25, but resellers listed them on fake sites for \$700, according to LaGarde.

A woman surprised her husband with a ticket as an anniversary gift to see his favorite artist, LaGarde said. Upon arriving, she learned the ticket was fake.

"She's sobbing outside the door, she's hysterical," LaGarde said. "This is her gift of the year to her husband, and it's a fake ticket."

In cases like those, venue owners can relay the story to the artist, and in some instances, the artist still allows them in, but neither the venue nor the artist ever sees any of the money paid for the ticket.

"We cannot sustain that when it's 100 fake tickets. The artists can't sustain it. We can't work as businesses and artists that way," LaGarde said.

Community

City Moves Forward On SE Raleigh Project Despite Alarms

By Jordan Meadows

Staff Writer

Tensions between Southeast Raleigh residents and city officials over the implementation of long-planned parks bond projects have resurfaced, as community members argue that years of grassroots planning are being overshadowed by a lack of transparency and limited public input, according to documents from the South Park-East Raleigh Neighborhood Association (SPERNA) obtained by The Carolinian.

The concerns center on several initiatives tied to the historic South Park-East Raleigh neighborhood—including the John P. “Top” Greene African American Cultural Center, Heritage Plaza, the South Park Heritage Trail, and Phase II of the John Chavis Memorial Park master plan—projects that residents say are drifting from the community-driven vision.

The South Park-East Raleigh area, Raleigh’s largest historic African American neighborhood and a National Historic District designated in 1991, has long served as a cultural and educational hub for Black residents dating back to the late 19th century.

According to SPERNA documents obtained by *The Carolinian*, the neighborhood’s modern organizing structure began in 2006 when the South Park-East Raleigh Neighborhood Association was formally established at the recommendation of the City of Raleigh’s Neighborhood Services Department to ensure more focused advocacy for issues specific to the community. The organization, which represents residents within the historic district, centered its mission on preserving the cultural and historical legacy of the neighborhood.

That advocacy intensified in the mid-2000s as residents pushed back

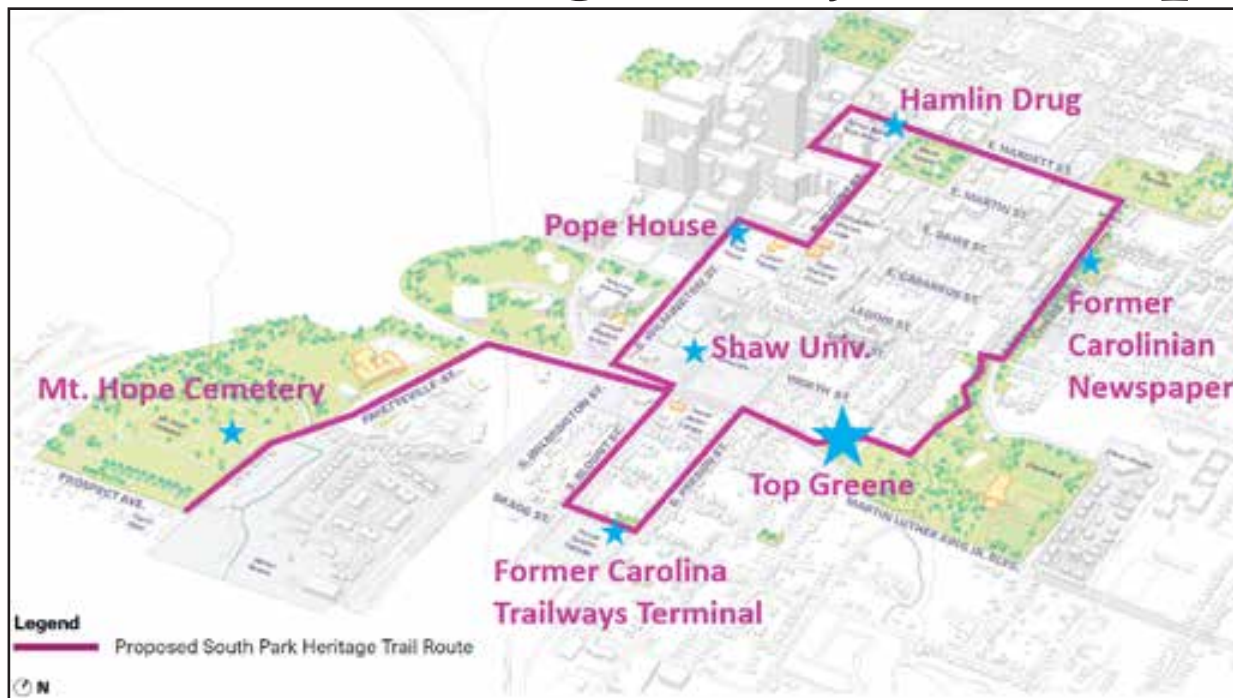
against redevelopment practices they believed threatened displacement.

According to the documents, community members raised concerns that traditional redevelopment models—particularly those tied to federal housing funds—prioritized demolition and new construction that would not be financially accessible to longtime residents. In response, SPERNA partnered with North Carolina State University’s College of Design around 2007–2008 to develop a community-led revitalization strategy focused instead on preservation, cultural storytelling, and improving quality of life for existing residents.

The resulting South Park Heritage Walk Revitalization Strategy, developed through extensive community engagement, oral histories, and asset mapping, became the foundation for many of the projects now funded under the city’s 2022 parks bond.

Those projects include the Historic John Chavis Memorial Park master plan, the renovation and expansion of the John P. “Top” Greene African American Cultural Center, Heritage Plaza, and the South Park Heritage Trail. The documents describe the strategy as a direct response to resident concerns about displacement, cultural erasure, and a lack of investment in preserving Black history in Southeast Raleigh.

Efforts to document and elevate that history were extensive. The organization helped launch archives and preservation initiatives as early as 2005 at the Top Greene Center, organized public history events like the Historic Chavis Park Festival in 2008, and collaborated with academic partners to produce oral history projects, visual “knowledge maps,” and educational programming. These efforts were largely volunteer-driven and, in some cases, funded through private donations and small grants—described as years



of community-led work preceding formal city investment.

Momentum appeared to build when Raleigh voters approved a \$275 million parks bond referendum in November 2022, which included funding for several Southeast Raleigh projects that originated from the SPERNA-led strategy.

However, residents now say the transition from planning to implementation has created a growing disconnect between the community and city staff. According to residents, and supported by SPERNA documents obtained by *The Carolinian*, communication has largely been routed through staff channels, limiting direct engagement with decision-makers and, in some cases, resulting in project changes that were not part of the original community recommendations.

“The staff decided how the money would be spent to implement these

projects without any community input,” one resident said.

Among the concerns raised are proposed changes to the interior use of the Top Greene Cultural Center, including converting key community space into a recording studio—an idea residents say was never part of the original plan and could limit the building’s use for exhibitions and public gatherings.

Despite these concerns, at least one major component of the original vision continues to move forward: the South Park Heritage Trail. The approximately two-mile trail will connect historically significant sites throughout the South Park-East Raleigh neighborhood, including Shaw

University, the former Hamlin Drug Store, the John P. “Top” Greene African American Cultural Center, the Lincoln Theatre, and the Pope House Museum. Designed with interpretive signage, public art, and storytelling elements drawn from community archives, the project aims to preserve and share the history of one of Raleigh’s most significant Black neighborhoods.

Funded through a combination of parks bond dollars and a \$1.5 million federal grant, the trail is currently in the design and environmental review phase, with construction expected to begin in fall 2027 and conclude by spring

2029. According to SPERNA documents obtained by *The Carolinian*, the concept of a heritage trail was always intended as part of a broader cultural district vision.

Still, broader frustrations remain about other projects tied to the bond, with residents pointing to delays, incomplete plans, and what they describe as a shift away from the community’s original intent. Some have even questioned whether developments should continue to carry the names of figures like John P. “Top” Greene and John Chavis if the projects do not reflect the values and historical context those names represent.

Those tensions were again evident last Saturday, when residents gathered at the John P. “Top” Greene African American Cultural Center for a meeting with city staff to receive updates on the park’s bond projects. The meeting included presentations on the South Park Heritage Trail, the cultural center’s renovation and expansion, and associated public art initiatives, as well as discussion about reestablishing the Central Citizens Advisory Council. According to attendees, the meeting was both an opportunity to hear updates and a continuation of long-standing concerns about community input and accountability in the process.

While the continued advancement of the South Park Heritage Trail signals that key elements of a decades-long community vision are being realized, residents believe the depth of that vision—and the extent to which residents believe it must remain community-driven—is a primary concern.

Bridget Long Continues Her Fight To Be Heard In Civil Rights Case

By Karl Cameron

Contributing Writer

GREENSBORO—Bridget M. Long filed a timely response to Magistrate Judge L. Patrick Auld’s Memorandum and Recommendation, dated April 3, 2026 to dismiss the pending lawsuit against United States Federal District Court Judge William L. Osteen, Jr. for his committing the crime of Obstruction of Justice in Employment Civil Rights Case No. 1:13-CV-315, by means of a Court Order to remove her case from a pending prepared set calendar Court Docket, and by doing so denying her a of her U. S. guaranteed Civil Rights. Ms. Long states in court documents, “I being a protected Class of Taxpaying Citizens under the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitutional Laws, which were and now are ratified laws, passed by the UY.S. Congress, prohibiting anyone in this country to overstep the boundaries of Equal Protection laws that govern all citizens in which no judge can supersede these ratified laws, and no supporting aiding Magistrate Judge can circumvent these Federal Law Mandates by being a contributor after the facts of this Federal Crime, and not be prosecuted under the U.S. governing Laws for the protection of every citizen. Such court over racism

has destroyed my livelihood with a doubt.

Rev. Isaiah Green, Jr. and is Civil Rights Group, Equal Treatment Now, Inc., has supported Ms. Long since 2023 in her Civil Rights Employment Discrimination Retaliation Claim, when no Attorney at Law would represent her in United States Federal District Court in North Carolina.

The late Radio Talk Host, Minister Earl Harrison, talked to Rev. Green after being on a Radio Program with him in Thomasville, N.C., and requested that his organization held Ms. Long.

Rev. Green says, “The Federal Middle District Court Judges are under fire, because of what they have done to Ms. Long, a Black

Female whose case came shortly behind the Lilly Ledbetter Case, which was supported by former Presidents Barack Obama and Joseph R. Biden, which produced the now known Public Law Statue, The Lilly Ledbetter Act of 2009.”

Rev. Green went on to say, “The now Presidents Donald J. Trump and J.D. Vance control of the USDOJ Civil Rights Division has downplayed this case, and has literally killed this Black Women, whom the EEOC has ruled in favor. President Trump is also against the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, which in most instances does a very good job in their investigations of Employment Discrimination cases.”

(See **BRIDGET LONG**, P. 9)



EAST WAKE-JOHNSTON CHAPTER OF JACK AND JILL OF AMERICA, INC.

This past Sunday afternoon, the East Wake-Johnston Chapter of Jack and Jill of America, Inc. had the honor of presenting a donation of 1,011.23 to the Dorothy Mae Hall Women’s Center. This gesture recognizes the Center’s remarkable commitment to supporting women and children throughout the Wendell community. Their passionate team works tirelessly to provide not only vital resources but also encouragement and a broad range of supportive services that help women move from homelessness toward greater stability, self-assurance, and independence. We are truly grateful for the opportunity to partner with such an impactful organization, one that is making a meaningful and lasting difference in the lives of local families. *Mathias Bishop Photo*

Cooper's “Make Stuff Cost Less” Tour

By Jheri Hardaway

Staff Writer

Smithfield, NC - Former Governor Roy Cooper brought his U.S. Senate campaign to Johnston County, speaking to a packed room of supporters about affordability, healthcare, and corporate accountability. His focus is “making stuff cost less.” During the Smithfield event, Cooper heavily contrasted his record in North Carolina state government with that of his Republican opponent, former Republican National Committee Chairman Michael Whatley, whom he repeatedly labeled a “Washington, D.C. insider.” Cooper, who served as the state’s governor from 2017 to 2025, framed his run for the open Senate seat as a direct response to policies currently coming out of Washington.

“I had not planned on running; I thought about doing something else when I left the governor’s office,” Cooper told the crowd. “But then I saw what started happening to people in my state when this administration took hold, and my opponent was supporting these policies that were hurting people. I kept thinking about that verse from the book of Luke: ‘To whom much is given, much is required.’ I needed to step up right now.” Cooper pointed to major legislative and executive achievements during his tenure in Raleigh as the blueprint for what he hopes to accomplish federally. He noted that under his administration, North Carolina saw the creation of 640,000 new, better-paying jobs and implemented paid parental leave for state employees via executive order.



A central pillar of Cooper’s speech was his successful, years-long push to expand Medicaid in North Carolina, a move that ultimately extended health insurance coverage to more than 750,000 residents. Cooper also highlighted a landmark medical debt relief initiative executed during his time in office. By leveraging federal funds and coordinating with 99 of the state’s hospitals, the program effectively wiped away \$6.5 billion in medical debt for more than 2.5 million North Carolinians. “We have removed medical debt that stifles people,” Cooper said, sharing a story of a local woman named Mary who had a \$54,000 judgment completely cleared. “When you have a civil judgment against you, you can’t get a credit card, you can’t buy a house. This makes a real difference in people’s lives.”

Turning his attention to the general election matchup, Cooper launched a fierce critique against Whatley’s professional background as a corporate lobbyist. “My opponent, Michael Whatley, is a longtime lobbyist who lobbied for Big Oil and utility companies like Duke Energy,” Cooper charged. “He is the kind of person who is looking out for himself and his billionaire buddies, supporting policies that are making stuff cost more and taking healthcare away from people. We need somebody who will put the people before power, party, and politics.”

In a post-event press conference with reporters, Cooper addressed the immediate economic anxieties of voters in a county that voted heavily for Donald Trump. When pressed on surging fuel costs and grocery inflation, Cooper outlined a comprehensive

policy platform aimed at lowering standard middle-class overhead. He advocated for rolling back “chaotic tariffs” that increase supply chain costs for small businesses, farmers, and restaurants. He also called for heightened antitrust enforcement to block major grocery store mergers and curb price-gouging algorithms. Cooper also addressed international factors affecting North Carolina utility and fuel costs, pointing to the ongoing conflict involving Iran. He argued that Congress must exert pressure to stabilize domestic energy markets. “Gas and diesel were okay until this war in Iran, and then it sent it through the roof,” Cooper remarked. “Congress has got to say, ‘Look, you’ve got to focus on what’s happening at home.’ We’ve got to make sure that we reduce gas prices and diesel prices for people, because transportation costs affect almost everything they buy.” Cooper’s team also shared that Cooper for North Carolina has launched “Black Leaders for Roy” Coalition. The press release indicates that more than 125 Black leaders and supporters from across the state joined the launch of “Black Leaders for Roy.”

Despite Johnston County’s conservative voting history, Cooper expressed confidence that his message of economic consensus would resonate across party lines. “First, I’m gonna be a senator for everybody, and I think it’s critical to have someone who will work across the aisle to make government work,” Cooper said. “I think people are tired of the partisanship where people are yelling at each other. You have to be willing to move in and gain consensus and compromise.”

Cheerwine Festival Fills Salisbury Streets With A Carolina Tradition



By Judaea Ingram

Special To The Carolinian

SALISBURY, N.C. – Downtown Salisbury was packed with visitors Saturday as thousands gathered for the annual Cheerwine Festival, celebrating the cherry-flavored soft drink that has remained a North Carolina favorite for generations.

Music echoed through downtown streets as festivalgoers moved between vendor tents, food trucks, live performances, and family activities during the daylong event. Bright red Cheerwine branding could be seen throughout the festival as crowds filled sidewalks carrying drinks, merchandise, and bags from local vendors.

One attendee stood out among the crowd dressed head-to-toe in a Cheerwine-themed suit complete with a hat decorated with Cheerwine cans, capturing the playful energy and hometown pride that filled Salisbury throughout the festival.

Described as a celebration of something “Uniquely Southern,” the family-friendly event featured performances from several local and regional bands along with live entertainment including still walkers, jugglers, and free history tours throughout downtown Salisbury. Families crowded around the festival’s free fun zone, which included rock climbing and activities for children and visitors of all ages.

Long lines formed around vendors selling Cheerwine-inspired food, desserts, and handmade merchandise. Sweet Mornings Farm offered Cheerwine jelly, mustard, and pickles, while Zulia Bakery featured Cheerwine syrup cinnamon rolls and Cheerwine cookies that quickly attracted visitors throughout the afternoon. Wonky Sweets sold freeze-dried Cheerwine candy, and Roses & Whiskers introduced festivalgoers to Cheerwine brookie sandwiches, combining brownies and cookies into one dessert.

Beyond the food, local artists and small businesses filled downtown Salisbury with Cheerwine-themed crafts and gifts. Southern Made Signs sold wooden Cheerwine art and magnets, while Tri Laser Focus featured custom cutting boards, ornaments, glasses, and bottles inspired by the soft drink. Other vendors displayed handmade jewelry, stickers, leather goods, and accessories tied to the festival’s signature theme.

A Bojangles food truck added another familiar Southern touch to the atmosphere as visitors moved between crowded vendor tents and entertainment stages throughout the day. Despite the large turnout, the festival maintained a welcoming community atmosphere with families, tourists, and longtime Salisbury residents gathering together in celebration of the hometown drink.

Church

Obituaries

CLARENCE EDWARD WILLIAMS

Clarence Edward Williams, age 76, of Garner, NC, entered eternal rest on April 19, 2026. Born on Nov. 4, 1949 to Pauline Tate and Cornelius Williams, Clarence lived a life marked by faith, service, mentorship, and an enduring love for community.

Clarence devoted nearly five decades of his professional life to WRAL-TV, beginning as a teenage trainee in 1966, and later becoming a respected director and producer. Following service in the US Army, he returned to WRAL in 1970, where he became a steady and trusted presence behind the scenes. Upon his retirement in 2015, he was recognized as the longest-serving employee in Capitol Broadcasting Co. history.

Widely admired for his warmth, professionalism, and humility, Clarence welcomed students, veterans, and community members with genuine hospitality. Whether meeting a stranger on the street or engaging with prominent dignitaries here and



abroad, he extended the same steady respect to all. He was known for his joyful spirit, signature bow ties and hats, and his belief that every person deserved dignity and encouragement.

A lifelong resident of the Raleigh area, Clarence was educated locally, and was a proud graduate of St. Augustine's University. His life was grounded in family, faith, and service.

In retirement, Clarence continued

his commitment to serving others by working on the farm with the Inter-Faith Food Shuttle, helping provide fresh food and hope to families throughout the community, an extension of the same quiet generosity that defined him. He also served on several boards and community organizations, continuing his commitment to serve, and leadership beyond his professional life.

He was a devoted husband, father, grandfather, foster parent, and mentor whose steady presence and quiet leadership shaped countless lives. Clarence's legacy lives on in the people he loved, the community he served, and the faith that sustained him. He will be remembered with gratitude, affection, and deep respect. He is survived by wife Deborah Burnett Williams, his children Dameon Shawn Williams (Randeal), Danele' Nicole Williams (Kenneth Pratt), Christina Antoinette Best (Alex), Jacarlos Antoinio McKoy, and his grandchildren Cadence Williams, Masen Williams, Esllyn Williams, and Nysere McKoy.

DORA HEATH MCCAIN

Dora Heath McCain, affectionately known as "Adora" and lovingly called "Cissy," was born on September 21, 1953, in Mooresville, North Carolina, to the late Troy Heath and Dorothy McCauley Heath.

On May 12, 2026, at 72, Dora peacefully entered eternal rest surrounded by her loving family.

Dora was a devoted mother, wife, grandmother, great-grandmother, sister, aunt, cousin, and faithful friend. She was known for her warmth, courage, wisdom, creativity, and unwavering love for people. Her laughter, wit, poetry, songs, and encouraging words touched everyone blessed to know her.

A true trailblazer, Dora helped lead marches advocating for school busing and educational equality for Black students in Mecklenburg County during the late 1960s. Her courage and determination helped pave the way for future generations.

Dora received her education through Iredell County Schools and Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. She later became a successful entrepreneur through her cleaning business before retiring from The Hayward Group after years of faithful service.

In 1998, she began her Property Management career with The Hayward Companies. Dora enjoyed her career and was awarded several recognitions for providing excellent customer service, marketing, and cold calls. She came up with the idea of "Klutter Keeper" and sold the name to the company. She also created the slogan "I Got You Covered," a phrase she meant literally, as she constantly covered the company in prayer. Dora later retired from The Hayward Group in 2019.

Music and ministry were essential to Dora's life. Through Community Bible Fun Days, Dora impacted countless families and children throughout her community. Every summer, she would open her backyard to neighborhood children, creating what she lovingly called "Community Vacation Bible Fun Days,"

Obituaries



Dora was a sharpshooting Prayer Warrior and Intercessor for many. She was also an anointed Psalmist whose worship and ministry often moved audiences to their feet. Dora served as the North Carolina Coordinator for Chuck Colson's Prison Fellowship Angel Tree Ministry. She did Prison Fellowship and faithfully ministered to countless incarcerated men and women where she became a Chaplain ministering throughout North Carolina prison systems.

She was preceded in death by her siblings William Plass Heath, Roland Heath, Darrell Heath, and Olivia Wilson.

She also leaves to cherish her memory her surviving siblings, Mary Onetta Heath, Robert Wayne Heath Sr., Donna McCorkle (Dean), and Betty Connor (Benny), along with Dora's beloved children, Malik El, Shawanda Heath, and Tiffany Davis McCaskill (Roscoe).

Dora's legacy continues through her beloved grandchildren, Xavier Hendrix (Dessiah), Dominique Heath, and Shekinah Davis, and her treasured great-grandchildren, Xavier Hendrix Jr. and Da'Miah Hendrix.

She also leaves behind her loving husband, Melvin Parks, Goddaughter Charlene Smith; best friends Kim Guest (deceased), Shirley Walker, and Elaine Underwood Sawyer; along with a host of nieces, nephews, cousins, spiritual children, and dear friends who will forever cherish her love, wisdom, and beautiful spirit.

Special thanks to Atrium Health Main and their exceptional team on 3 Tower.

Palliative Care — Dr. John Rainwater treated Mommy with dignity and respect. He also treated our family with kindness.

Dora's kindness, selflessness, faith, and love for souls touched countless lives. Her legacy of service, evangelism, compassion, and prayer will continue for generations to come. Though she has departed from this earthly life, her love, prayers, wisdom, and beautiful spirit will forever remain in the hearts of all who knew and loved her.

The History Of The Lincoln Park Holiness Church All Male Chorus

The Male Chorus was organized in 1977 under the leadership of Bishop Eli Ratcliff Jr. The chorus was born out of Bishop Ratcliff's sincere prayers for God to send more men to Lincoln Park.

As men began joining the church, Bishop Ratcliff sought God's direction regarding their purpose and gifts. The Lord answered his prayer, saying in essence, "I have answered your prayers. Now use these men and their gifts to uplift and glorify My Kingdom."

When Bishop Ratcliff asked what the men could do, the answer he received was, "Find something they will enjoy doing together."

While praying for further guidance, more men continued to unite with the church, including Brother William Currie, who had a great love for singing. Recognizing this as confirmation from God, Bishop Ratcliff asked Brother Currie to organize a male chorus.

The original members of the Lincoln Park Male Chorus included:

- Brother William Currie – President
- Rev. Donald Hooker
- Trustee Billy Hinton
- Rev. Abraham Green
- Brother Alfonso Blaylock
- Brother James Byrd
- Deacon Harvey Horton

After Brother Currie later left Lincoln Park to worship with his family, Trustee Billy Hinton became president and faithfully served for many years. Two favorite songs during those early years were "God Is Able," led by Brother Currie, and "I Can't Even Walk Without You Holding My Hand," led by Trustee Billy Hinton.

Following Trustee Billy Hinton's tenure, Brother Hampton Bunch became president and faithfully served until his untimely passing.

Afterward, Deacon Curtis Boykin became president and lead singer, with Deacon-Elect James Rivers serving as vice president and lead singer.

Now, under their leadership, the Lincoln Park Male Chorus continues to grow stronger and has remained active in ministry. Even during the pandemic, the chorus never stopped singing, never blinked, and never took a break.

Wherever they go, they sing with the Spirit of God dwelling in their hearts and within the walls of the Lincoln Park Holiness Church, located at 13 Heath Street, Raleigh, North Carolina.

The musicians and song leaders who continue to support and participate with this ministry include:



- Elder Troy Brown – Minister of Music/ Organ & Keyboard
- Pastor William "Billy" Eli Ratcliff – Organist
- Leon Smith – Guitarist
- Deacon-Elect Quenten Ratcliff – Drummer
- Shawn Scarborough & Overseer-Elect Demetrius Hunter as – Backup Drummers.
- Additional song leaders include:
 - Valentino Spencer
 - Deacon-Elect Levi Jones
 - Barry Campbell
 - Billy Hinton
 - Leon Smith

- Deacon Roscoe White
 - And Elder-Elect James Waddell
- Also, any men, young or old, interested in joining the Lincoln Park Male Chorus are encouraged to see Deacon Curtis Boykin, Deacon-Elect James Rivers, or the Pastor, and we all will joyfully and gratefully welcome you as a new member.

Last but not least, we are so thankful for all of our active and faithful church members who support us as we celebrate 49 years of singing to the GLORY of God. May He richly bless you! To God Be the Glory!

Practical Biblical Principles

GOD HEALS THE BROKEN HEARTED

Read: Psalm 147:1-11

By John L. Caldwell, Pastor New Jerusalem Baptist Cathedral

Dear Child of God are you at a place in your life where things appear to be at a standstill? Are you losing the battle in trying to keep the dark clouds from being over your heads? Are your hopes and dreams for the future appear to be falling apart? Well, don't go down without a fight! God doesn't want you to run away from a fight. We speak here of a spiritual fight only. Our God doesn't want us to keep coming to Him crying without fighting back (Ephesians 6:12).

First thing we must do is give God our broken pieces and not try and fight or solve this problem all by yourself (James 4:7).

Your storms or circumstances may be different, but the point is to fight back. Put on the armor of God everyday (Ephesians 6:11).

Jelia Coleman-Hepner, in her book, "Give God Your Broken Pieces," states, "Instead of allowing the devil to win over you by just crying, getting upset, or complaining, do something about it. Pray, read Scripture aloud, speak aloud and tell the devil he can't win. Post scripture around your house, use a prayer closet and fast. If you need to use holy water around the house, do so. Let the devil know you will fight him back with Christ at your side. The devil attacks in ways that are physical and mental. Your marriage, job, relationships, family, or feelings can be nothing but a playing field for the devil to use to execute his plans. Learn to fight back!

Jelia Coleman-Hepner tells her true story when she was forced to go to the Social Service office to apply

for medical and food assistance. She was eight months pregnant and filled with a broken spirit. Her husband had walked out on her for another woman, leaving her with no car, no money, and a set of five-year old twins to take care of by herself, she was forced to go back home to stay with her mother adding embarrassment to her pain. She was feeling empty hurt, humiliated, lonely, and the list goes on and on.

It wasn't long as she was looking out of the window, the woman who signed her in called her name, and while looking directly at Julia, she removed her glasses from her face, and said, "Jelia. God told me to tell you He hears you, and everything will be okay." Jelia immediately burst into tears. The night before, Jelia had kept crying, praying, and screaming out to God, asking Him, "Why me?" She had begged Him for a sign, "Please reveal to me You are with me and hear me."

Jelia knew then it was God speaking to her. It was impossible for that woman to have known her situation or circumstances. With God's help, Jelia eventually rose above her painful circumstances and prospered (2 Timothy 4:18).

Jelia was awarded the 2018 ACHI award for the year in journalism after having obtained her bachelor's in mass communications and master's in journalism. Never give up! Never give up!

It is the work of the devil to make you "give up" in your struggles. The devil's efforts are to blot out the fact there is no God to call upon. This is not true. There is always a God available to us 24/7 (Psalm 34:17). The devil desires you to have doubt. He loves it when you hurt or feel defeated. He takes those moments to attack and crush you. Remember, we

are in Christ and He didn't bring us this far in life just to leave us.

Child of God, this means war. God had given us the armor to put on and fight back, and to win.

God hears our cries, recognizes your frustrations, and feels your pain. No matter how broken you are, make a good effort to replace your feelings with as much faith as you can, it doesn't take much, and allows the Potter to put you back together again. We must learn to give our broken pieces to God. Whether its divorce, depression, loss of a loved one, facing illness, or having a child on drugs, just give it to God.

God understands when we are weary, emotionally damaged, and want to give up, but know God sees you and hears you cry and curse. He understands what you are going through, just as He did when His own Son cried out from the cross, "Father, why have You forsaken Me?"

No real child of God can never say that God did not rescue him/her in time when they called for help. He may not have come when they wanted Him to, but He came to them on time and in time. God never fails! Do not go down without a fight! God's children are not cowards. And before they take a step backwards in faith, they will just stand until help arrives. The storm can't last but so long. Therefore, the name of the game is to somehow, by faith, learn how to outlast the storm.

Blowing storms often cleanse the air when it passes over. In a spiritual sense, this is also true for a Christians, who has just been through an emotional and spiritual storm. One's doubts and fears are cleansed out and removed. And you are able to see clearly now that the storm has passed over and gone.



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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.

Fix my Unwanted Behaviors: Chasing after Unavailable People

By Jasmine Deloatch

We've seen the stats and we've presented the effects of unwanted behaviors. What now? Let's fix them.

The first behavior that we're honing in on is sometimes referred to as anxious attachment. Do you ever find yourself double texting, calling when they haven't texted back or inviting them out for the third time that week after they've denied the last two invites? This can show up in romantic relationships, friendships or family relationships.

We're going to dig into one of my favorite ways to overcome unwanted behavior, which is by pairing a preferred with a nonpreferred. In this case, the nonpreferred (which is the thing that you don't want to do) would be abstaining from reaching out to that individual. And the preferred could be a combination of a few things.

Working on ourselves and becoming someone that we're proud of can help us to see another individual that we placed on a pedestal just as they are. Often, we embrace individuals because they may carry something that we feel that we lack. That could be personality, physical fitness, conventional beauty, lifestyle, education, wisdom, career or edge.

For personality, when you feel yourself reaching back to that person, you can go to a bar or running club and try some lines from Pinterest on conversation starters. Studying conversation starters and how to build connections can help you become what you cherish in that person.

Do you just admire their discipline and physical fitness? Start promising yourself that you'll go to the gym whenever you have enough downtime to think about reaching back to them.

Conventional beauty? Well, here's a secret. Is beauty ever as conventional as Hollywood tries to make it? Conventional beauty comes from having a sense of style and charisma that works best for you. A classic look that fits you can be fun to find! Play around with different looks on Pinterest and really explore who you are as a person and how your style can match your personality and your lifestyle.

Lifestyle is always a big one. Some people latch on to others because they appreciate that person's lifestyle. Good news, you can create that on your own. Create a lifestyle that fits you and makes you happy. Have to work long hours for the trip? Put in the work. Make a mood board of what you want your life to look like. Slowly make changes that take you into that direction. This is parallel to the education example. Make the changes necessary to improve yourself.

Some of us get entangled in the career of others. We like to hear the entertaining stories from the guy who has a dangerous job or we connect our identity to being a Police girlfriend or we enjoy the time spent traveling with a trucker boyfriend, or flight attendant girlfriend, or maybe we just miss waking up at 2am to cook for our blue collar boyfriend. We get entangled with the lives of our partner when we forget to create our own. Are you fully invested in his dangerous Private Investigation job? Let's swap the unpreferred. Instead of reaching back out, you're going to figure out why this career interests you so much. Are you interested in working in investigative journalism or maybe you'd like to join a law enforcement branch. Or maybe you appreciated the times you all spent traveling and instead of calling him, you could road trip and blog solo! Miss waking up at 2am to cook for your blue collar boyfriend? You don't have to stop cooking for blue collar men, you could create a late night food business that provides late meals for those that get off late.

Edge is another big one. Have you ever heard the girls say that they just want a bad guy? This guy is usually spontaneous, audacious, humorous, courageous and in a lane of his own. Often, there's nothing very bad about him after all. Many girls just admire the way that he answers to no one, makes choices as he pleases, does what he feels, doesn't take life too seriously and stays true to who he is whether people like it or not. As women, we often struggle with caring about what people think, we're often not able to drop everything and be spontaneous. We're caretakers and mothers and friends. We're also constantly under a microscope as women and the judgement that we receive can be overwhelming. We're expected to constantly let someone know where we are, make safe choices and get home before dark. Being audacious and living in a lane of our own can be difficult. But this just means that maybe we need to carve out more time to take care of ourselves. We can book a solo trip out of the country or maybe just a weekly solo bar visit to a bar in a state that's a two hour drive away.

Put down the phone, you don't have to text him, you don't have to call her. Replace the unpreferred behavior with a preferred that creates in you what you're chasing in them.



SOMETHING DOESN'T FEEL RIGHT

The air is shifting. You can feel it in your bones before you can explain it with your mouth. And lately, I've been feeling something familiar — not the fear we knew in the 60s, not the open hostility of Jim Crow, but a quieter kind of pressure. A tightening. A testing. A moment that asks us to pay attention.

When I talk with my contemporaries — on the phone, after church, in the grocery store aisle — I hear the same thing. "Something's changing." "Something doesn't feel right." "I'm trying to keep up with it all." And I understand that. The world is moving fast, and the noise is loud. But underneath all that noise, there are some truths we can't afford to ignore.

Priscilla Shirer preached at my church this past Sunday. Her message came from Revelations 4. The graphic descriptions in Revelations can be off-putting however, desperate times call for desperate measures. There was one central theme: HOPE. There is nothing our community, the community of people, believers, need more now than hope. Not that passive kind of hope but the hope that comes with tasks, responsibilities, charges. We are indeed in a battle, and we can't sit back and hope it goes away.

Black church leaders — the same ones who prayed us through segregation, funerals, and first Sundays — are warning that some of the old tactics are showing up in new clothes. They're watching changes in voting rules, court battles over district lines, and policies that make it harder for seniors to vote the way we've always voted. They're not telling us to panic. They're telling us to stay awake. They're reminding us that our right to participate has never been something we could take for granted.

Then I listen to the young folks — the activists, the organizers, the ones who speak with fire in their voices — and I hear a different kind of urgency. They're worried about things we didn't have to think about at their age: misinformation spreading online, the cost of housing pushing them out of neighborhoods they grew up in, the way climate disasters hit Black communities first and hardest. They talk about policing, about student debt, about the rollback of diversity programs. They're not trying to disrespect the elders. They're trying to build a world where they don't have to fight the same battles we did.

And here in North Carolina, our leaders are dealing with challenges that hit close to home. We've seen our voting maps redrawn more times than I can count. We've watched housing prices climb so high that some of us can't afford to stay in the neighborhoods we raised our children in. We've seen hospitals close in rural counties, leaving seniors to travel miles for basic care. These aren't partisan issues. These are kitchentable issues. These are "how am I going to make it" issues.

But here's what I keep coming back to: we have been here before. Not in the exact same way, but close enough that our spirits recognize the pattern. Progress, pushback, resilience. That cycle has shaped our entire journey in this country.

And every time, we have met the moment.
 We met it with prayer.
 We met it with organizing.
 We met it with wisdom.
 We met it with a kind of quiet strength that doesn't need applause to be real.

As our community's seniors we must stay informed, not overwhelmed. Engaged, not exhausted. Connected, not isolated. Most importantly, we must remain ever vigilant in protecting our minds and our peace.

We don't have to know every detail of every policy. We don't have to argue with strangers online. But we do need to understand the basics: how voting rules are changing, how local decisions affect our neighborhoods, how our grandchildren are experiencing the world we're leaving them.

We also need to listen — really listen — to the younger generation. They may speak differently, march differently, organize differently, but their love for our people is the same. They're not trying to replace us. They're trying to carry the baton we've held for so long.

And finally, we need to remember our own power. We are not bystanders or relics.

We are the generation that built churches, raised families, held communities together, and kept the faith when the world gave us every reason to lose it. Our presence still matters. Our voice still matters. Our example still matters.

This moment may be challenging, but it is not hopeless. Not for a people who have survived everything we've survived. Not for a people who know how to pray, how to organize, how to endure, and how to rise.

We've weathered storms before.
 We'll weather this one too — together.



WHY ARE YOU/WE HERE

I watched and listened to a sermon last week by a pastor at Alfred Street Baptist Church in Alexandria, and he asked a provocative question: Why are you here? I had never really considered his reasoning before, because as he explained what those who have chosen to be Christians have already obtained, he said, in essence, you have already been saved from your sins, your place with God has already been prepared, and once you have truly made that commitment, nothing can separate you from the love of God. So if that is true, then why are you still here?

Now I am saying it differently than he did, but I hope I understood his message correctly, because what I heard was this: we are not here just for ourselves. We are here for others. I do not have anything to prove to anybody, not even God. I just have to trust the purpose God has for my life and understand that if the script has already been written, then my responsibility is obedience and trust.

I have been hearing this message my whole life through scripture, teachers, family members, friends, and books like A Course in Miracles. And the older I get, the more I believe it is true for everybody, even when people do not realize it yet themselves. We really do not have to spend our lives trying to impress the world, because the world constantly changes its rules anyway. One day people think you should dress a certain way, spend money a certain way, support certain causes, or become some version of success that somebody else created, but none of that determines your worth.

We have already been fearfully and wonderfully made, and our souls already know that truth, even when our minds forget it. And what is also true for me is true for everybody else too. That is the part people struggle with. We were all born free to either follow God's purpose or ignore it, but the freedom was given to all of us.

Yesterday's Sunday school lesson from Deuteronomy, Ephesians, and 1 Timothy about justice, responsibility, and how we treat one another really made me think about why our world feels so troubled right now, because we are living in a time where people who call themselves Christians are following leadership that openly moves against the very principles they claim to believe. Last week I wrote about how dangerous and spiritually unhealthy that is, and I do not think some people liked those words, because people do not like hearing words like evil or demonic, but I can only write what I feel I am given.

We are living in a time where justice often no longer looks like justice, and where truth has become political instead of moral. That troubles me deeply. It is hard to believe that one man born in the same generation as me could twist things so completely, but I have to believe it because I am watching it happen with my own eyes. Birmingham feels like Birmingham again. People are marching again. People are standing on the Edmund Pettus Bridge again. History keeps reminding us that progress is never guaranteed.

So I believe I am here for a reason, and that reason is not to sit silently while people lose hope or forget who they are. My job is to reclaim people for goodness, for truth, and for God, just as I believe I myself have been reclaimed many times over throughout my life. Whatever God gives me, I am supposed to pass on to somebody else. I honestly believe that is all of our jobs while we are still here.

And I do not think we have to spend our lives worrying about how we will know what to do, because somehow the direction comes. Maybe not dramatically, maybe not with angels appearing in front of us, but guidance comes when we are willing to listen. It reminds me of those old Charlie's Angels episodes where the instructions always arrived exactly when they were needed.

People died for our right to vote, and the truth is we have not even had that right for very long when you really look at history. Their sacrifices should not be in vain, and neither should our living.

BRIDGET LONG
 Continued from page 7

Reverend Green wrote the first EEOP for the NC State Highway Patrol in 1974, and says little has been done to enhance the progress for fairness in Employment issues, because the USDOJ Administrators have been persuaded to use Employment Discrimination as a tool to restrict the income of Black and Brown Taxpaying Citizens in North Carolina, which is controlled by this present day U.S. Federal District Court System.

Rev. Green pointed out, "The same White Concert Racist Actors, circumvent the Federal Laws that prevent justice from prevailing in the Racist Courts, where some of the judges and clerks of these courts, will soon be tried for their actions."



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Classifieds

BEAUFORT COUNTY

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF BEAUFORT

NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION DANIELLE CARAMANICA
In The General Court of Justice
District Court Division
File No: 26-Ja-000012-060

IN RE: V.H.C., minor child.
TO: DANIELLE CARAMANICA,
mother of a Caucasian Female
child born on or about August
13, 2013, in Wake County, North
Carolina.

TAKE NOTICE that a Juvenile
Summons and Petition has been
filed for the above-described
juvenile, who is alleged to be
neglected.

You must prepare and file with
the Clerk of Superior Court of
Beaufort County a written answer
to the petition within 30 (THIRTY)
days of the first date of publication
of this summons, the 14th day of
May 2026. You must also serve
a copy of the answer on the
petitioner or its attorney.

The Beaufort County Department
of Social Services has alleged that
the above named juvenile is in
need of protective services. The
Court will conduct a hearing to
determine whether the juvenile is
in need of protective services. Notice
of the date and time and location
of the hearing will be mailed to you
by the petitioner after you file an
answer.

If you fail to file an answer, the
relief sought will be granted. The
petitioner will apply to the court for
the relief demanded in the petition.

You have a right to be
represented by counsel. If you
want a lawyer and cannot afford
one, the Court will appoint you one.
Matthew W. Jackson
Attorney for the Petitioner,
Beaufort County DSS
632 West Fifth Street
Washington, NC 27889
Dates of publication:
5/14, 5/21, and 5/28/2026

CHATHAM COUNTY

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
CHATHAM COUNTY

NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION
In The General Court of Justice,
District Court Division
File No: 26CV000351-180

To: SEGUNDO GUEVARA
EUCEDA, Defendant.

Take notice that a pleading seeking
relief against you has been filed.
The nature of the relief being
sought is for child custody. You are
required to make defense to such
pleading no later than July 1st ,
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,
FRANCIA MAIDELYN FUENTES
MALDONADO, will apply to the
court located at 40 E Chatham St,
Pittsboro, NC 27312 for the relief
sought.

This, the 21st day of May, 2026.

Aneta Pavai
Pavai Law Offices, PLLC
Telephone: (919) 410-6690
5/21, 5/28, 6/4, and 6/11/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
CHATHAM COUNTY

NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION
In The General Court of Justice
District Court Division
File No: 26CV000546-180

To: JULIO CESAR HERNANDEZ-
MADRID, Defendant.

Take notice that a pleading seeking
relief against you has been filed.
The nature of the relief being
sought is for child custody. You are
required to make defense to such
pleading no later than July 1st ,
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, NUVIA
YANETH PINEDA-MEJIA, will
apply to the court located at 40 E
Chatham St, Pittsboro, NC 27312
for the relief sought.

This, the 21st day of May, 2026.

Aneta Pavai
Pavai Law Offices, PLLC
Telephone: (919) 410-6690
5/21, 5/28, 6/4, and 6/11/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
CHATHAM COUNTY

NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION
In The General Court of Justice
District Court Division
File No: 26CV000489-180

To: KAIN JUBENCIO
HERNANDEZ-CHAJ, Defendant.

Take notice that a pleading seeking
relief against you has been filed.
The nature of the relief being
sought is for child custody. You are
required to make defense to such
pleading no later than June 17,
2026 said date being at least forty
(40) days from the first publication
of this Notice, and upon your failure
to do so, the Plaintiff, HORTENCIA
MARIA AGUSTIN-AMBROCIO, will
apply to the court located at 40 E
Chatham St, Pittsboro, NC 27312
for the relief sought.

This, the 7th day of May 2026.

Aneta Pavai
Pavai Law Offices, PLLC
Telephone: (919) 410-6690
5/7, 5/14, and 5/21/2026

CURRITUCK COUNTY

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
CURRITUCK COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS:
RE: THE ESTATE OF Sally Carroll –
26E000060-260

Having qualified as Administrator
of the Estate of SALLY CARROLL,
deceased, Currituck County, North
Carolina, the undersigned does
hereby notify all persons, firms,
and corporations having claims
against the estate of said deceased
to exhibit them to the undersigned
on or before the 5th day of August,
2026, or this notice will be pleaded
in bar of their recovery. This the 5th
day of May, 2026.

Marvin Wilkerson, Executor
DSR Legal, PLLC
PO Box 51596
Durham, NC 27717
5/7, 5/14, 5/21, and 5/28/2026

DURHAM COUNTY

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

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

File No.: 26E000608-310

THE UNDERSIGNED, having
qualified on the 19th day of May,
2026, as Executor of the Estate of
LACY DOUGLAS TILLEY,
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 22nd day of
August, 2026, or this Notice will
be pleaded in bar of their recovery.
All persons indebted to said Estate
will please make immediate payment
to the undersigned.

This, the 28th day of May, 2026.

Charles Howard Tilley, Executor
6221 Horse Fly Trl
Wake Forest, NC
5/28, 6/4, 6/11 and 6/18/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

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

File No.: 26E000592-310

THE UNDERSIGNED, having
qualified on the 12th day of May,
2026, as Executor of the Estate of
ARTHUR JOEL PAGE, 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 22nd day of August,
2026, or this Notice will be pleaded
in bar of their recovery. All persons
indebted to said Estate will please
make immediate payment to the
undersigned.

This, the 21st day of May, 2026.

Susan Renee Marks, Executor
3921 Pixley Pritchard Rd.
Timberlake, NC 27583
5/21, 5/28, 6/4, and 6/11/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

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

File No.: 26E000572-310

THE UNDERSIGNED, having
qualified on the 7th day of May,
2026, as Executor of the Estate of
JOANN SANDLING ADCOCK,
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 22nd day of
August, 2026, or this Notice will
be pleaded in bar of their recovery.
All persons indebted to said Estate
will please make immediate payment
to the undersigned.

This, the 21st day of May, 2026.

Edward Earl Adcock, Executor
1412 Hounds Ear Rd.
Hillsborough, NC 27278
5/21, 5/28, 6/4, and 6/11/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

The undersigned having
qualified as Executor of the Estate
of ROBERT S. GEBELEIN a/k/a
ROBERT SEAVER GEBELEIN,
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 25th day of
August, 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 21st day of May, 2026.

Hilary Kerr Enyedey, Executor,
Estate of Robert S. Gebelein a/k/a
Robert Seaver Gebelein, Deceased
Robert A. Idol, Esquire IDOL LAW,
PLLC Attorney at Law
PO Box 51759 Durham, NC 27717
(919) 401.5151
5/21, 5/28, 6/4, and 6/11/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
File No: 26E000540-310

All persons, firms and
corporations having claims against
FRED WILLIAM ASHCRAFT,
deceased, of Durham County, North
Carolina are notified to exhibit
the same to the undersigned on
or before the 14th day of August,
2026, or this notice will be pleaded
in bar of recovery. Debtors of
the decedent are asked to make
immediate payment.

This the 14th day of May, 2026.

Karen A. Cole, Administrator
Estate of Fred William Ashcraft,
Deceased
654 White Cross Road
Chapel Hill, NC 27516
5/14, 5/21, 5/28 and 6/4/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
File No: 26E000562-310

Having qualified as EXECUTOR
of the Estate of VIRGINIA COOKE,
deceased, of Durham, the
undersigned does hereby notify all
persons, firms, and corporations
having claims against the estate
of said decedent to exhibit them
to the undersigned in care of the
attorney for the estate on or before
August 15, 2026, or this notice will
be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

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

This the 14th day of May, 2026.

Lorraine Cooke Rutt, Executor
1814 Hideaway Lane
Durham, NC 27712
5/14, 5/21, 5/28 and 6/4/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
File No: 26E000518-310

Having qualified as Administrator
CTA of the Estate of ROY LEE
BROOKS, deceased, of 701 Buxton
Street, Durham County, Durham,
NC 27713, the undersigned does
hereby notify all persons, firms,
and corporations having claims
against the estate of said decedent
to exhibit them to the undersigned
in care of the attorney for the estate
on or before August 15, 2026, or
this notice will be pleaded in bar of
their recovery.

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

This the 14th day of May, 2026.

Jeffrey L. Austin
Administrator CTA of the Estate of
ROY LEE BROOKS
Law Office of Jeffrey L. Austin,
PLLC
500 Westover Dr. #32043
Sanford, NC 27330
5/14, 5/21, 5/28 and 6/4/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
File No: 26E000487-310

Having qualified as Public
Administrator of the Estate of
JOHN WESLEY LEE, SR.,
deceased, care of Diamond View
II, 280 South Mangum Street, Suite
130, Durham County, Durham,
NC 27701, the undersigned does
hereby notify all persons, firms,
and corporations having claims
against the estate of said decedent
to exhibit them to the undersigned
in care of the attorney for the estate
on or before August 15, 2026, or
this notice will be pleaded in bar of
their recovery.

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

payment to the undersigned.

This the 14th day of May, 2026.

Jeffrey L. Austin
Public Administrator of the Estate
of John Wesley Lee, Sr.
Law Office of Jeffrey L. Austin,
PLLC
500 Westover Dr. #32043
Sanford, NC 27330
5/14, 5/21, 5/28 and 6/4/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

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

File No.: 26E000501-310

Having qualified as EXECUTOR
of the Estate of PATRICIA LEE
CHRISTIAN, 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 August 15, 2026, or this
Notice will be pleaded in bar of
their recovery.

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

This the 14th day of May, 2026.

Carolyn Pulley, Executor
c/o Marion Law Office, PLLC
2741 University Drive
Durham, NC 27707
5/14, 5/21, 5/28 and 6/4/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

THE UNDERSIGNED, having
qualified on the 26th day of March
2026, as Executor of the Estate
of MYRA M. HALL AKA MYRA
ANN MANESS HALL, 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 8th day of August
2026 or this Notice will be pleaded
in bar of their recovery. All persons
indebted to said Estate will please
make immediate payment to the
undersigned.

This, the 7th day of May 2026.

KATHRYN H. BONE AKA
KATHRYN HALL BONE
EXECUTOR
ESTATE OF MYRA M. HALL AKA
MYRA ANN MANESS HALL
c/o Shirley M. Diefenbach, Attorney
Walker Lambe, PLLC
Post Office Box 51549
Durham, North Carolina 27717
5/7, 5/14, 5/21, and 5/28/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

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

File No.: 26E000473-310

THE UNDERSIGNED, having
qualified on the 4th day of May,
2026, as Executor of the Estate of
MARGARET CHANDLER SMITH,
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 8th day of August,
2026, or this Notice will be pleaded
in bar of their recovery. All persons
indebted to said Estate will please
make immediate payment to the
undersigned.

This, the 7th day of May, 2026.

LANTY LLOYD SMITH
EXECUTOR
ESTATE OF MARGARET
CHANDLER SMITH
c/o Jennifer Dalman, Attorney
Walker Lambe, PLLC
Post Office Box 51549
Durham, North Carolina 27717
5/7, 5/14, 5/21, and 5/28/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

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

File No.: 26E000473-310

Having qualified as EXECUTOR
of the Estate of JANICE ELAINE
BURGESS, 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 31, 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 7th day of May, 2026.

Cynthia Young, Executor
2503 Davie Dr.
Durham, NC 27704
5/7, 5/14, 5/21, and 5/28/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
File No: 25E001528-310

Having qualified as Administrator
of the Estate of ALFRED
FLESSNER, SR., deceased, of
3007 Pickett Rd #218, Durham,
NC 27705, the undersigned does
hereby notify all persons, firms,
and corporations having claims
against the estate of said decedent
to exhibit them to the undersigned
in care of the attorney for the estate
on or before August 8, 2026, or this
notice will be pleaded in bar of their
recovery.

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

This the 7th day of May, 2026.

Kevin John Flessner and
Cassandra Flessner Kaiser
Administrators of the Estate of
Alfred Flessner, Sr.
c/o N. Vail Gardner, Esq.
Vail Gardner Law, PLLC
732 9th Street #621
Durham, NC 27705
5/7, 5/14, and 5/21/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

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

File No.: 26E000482-310

Having qualified as
ADMINISTRATOR CTA of the
Estate of KENNETH L. JONES
A/K/A KENNETH LAMON JONES,
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 August 8, 2026,
or this Notice will be pleaded in bar
of their recovery.

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

This the 7th day of May, 2026.

Joyce Jones, Administrator CTA
c/o Law Office of Anne Page
Watson
3400 Croasdaile Drive, Suite 205
Durham, NC 27705
5/7, 5/14, 5/21, and 5/28/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

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

FILE NO.: 26CV001212-310

ELGIN GOMEZ, Plaintiff v.
AUGUSTO CESAR ALEMAN-
MARTINEZ, Defendant

TO: AUGUSTO CESAR ALEMAN-
MARTINEZ

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 damages for personal
injuries arising from a motor
vehicle accident due to alleged
negligence.

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 the 7th day of May, 2026.

Lance E. Pickell, Esq.
Attorney for Plaintiff
SCHEHR LAW PLLC
101 N McDowell Street, Suite 200
Charlotte, NC 28204
5/7, 5/14, and 5/21/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

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

File No.: 26E000301-310

Having qualified as EXECUTOR
of the Estate of JANICE ELAINE
BURGESS, 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 31, 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 30th day of April, 2026.

Ronchadd Jarvell Wilkins, Executor
3007 Petty Road Unit 104
Durham, NC 27707
4/30, 5/7, 5/14, and 5/21/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

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

File No.: 26E000141-310

Having qualified as EXECUTOR
of the Estate of DEBORAH H.
JOLLY, 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 31, 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 30th day of April, 2026.

Syreetta Jolly, Executor
904 Arnette Ave.
Durham, NC 27701
4/30, 5/7, 5/14, and 5/21/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
File No: 26E000275-310

Having qualified as Executor
of the Estate of DEBORAH G.
BROGDEN, deceased, of 610
Trent Dr., Apt. # 306, Durham
County, Durham, NC 27705, the
undersigned does hereby notify
all persons, firms, and corporations
having claims against the estate
of said decedent to exhibit them
to the undersigned in care of the
attorney for the estate on or before
July 31, 2026, or this notice will
be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

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

This the 30th day of April, 2026.

Heather B. Brooks
Executor of the Estate of Deborah
G. Brogden
c/o Jeffrey L. Austin
Law Office of Jeffrey L. Austin,
PLLC

500 Westover Dr. #32043
Sanford, NC 27330
4/30, 5/7, 5/14, and 5/21/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

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

File No.: 26E000482-310

Having qualified as EXECUTOR
of the Estate of JULIA KING ALLEN,
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 31, 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.

DURHAM COUNTY

Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This, the 30th day of April 2026. **GEORGE THOMAS MORRIS EXECUTOR**
ESTATE OF **GEORGE THOMAS ARNOLD MORRIS**
c/o E. J. Walker, Jr., Attorney
Walker Lambe, PLLC
Post Office Box 51549
Durham, North Carolina 27717
4/30, 5/7, 5/14, and 5/21/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File No.: 26E000443-310
Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of **RUFUS KENNY HEADING**, 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 31, 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 30th day of April, 2026. **Carolyn James Wheeler a/k/a Sue Wheeler** c/o Law Office of Anne Page Watson PLLC
3400 Croasdaile Drive, Suite 205
Durham, NC 27705
4/30, 5/7, 5/14, and 5/21/2026

GRANVILLE COUNTY

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
GRANVILLE COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
File No: 26E000225-380
All persons, firms and corporations having claims against **MAXINE GIBSON** on or before August 15, 2026, or this notice along with the appropriate general statute will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the deceased are asked to make immediate payment. This the 14th day of May 2026. All correspondence should be to the **Byron E. Cash**, Ancillary Administrator c/o **Florence A. Bowens**, Attorney, P.O. Box 51263, Durham, NC 27717.
5/14, 5/21, 5/28 and 6/4/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
GRANVILLE COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
File No: 25E000541-380
Having qualified as Administrator of the Estate of **GLADYS CHRISTINE BLACKWELL**, deceased, of 5205 Curl Lane, Creedmoor, NC 27522, the undersigned does hereby notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the estate of said decedent to exhibit them to the undersigned in care of the attorney for the estate on or before August 15, 2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons, firms, and corporations indebted to the said estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.
This the 14th day of May, 2026. **Dana Watson Welborn** Administrators of the Estate of **Gladys Christine Blackwell** c/o N. Vail Gardner, Esq. Vail Gardner Law, PLLC
732 9th Street #621
Durham, NC 27705
5/14, 5/21, 5/28 and 6/4/2026

NASH COUNTY

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
NASH COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
All persons, firms and corporations having claims against **BERTHA RUTH BATTLE**, DECEASED, of Nash County, NC, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before August 8, 2026, or this notice along with the appropriate general statute will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the deceased are asked to make immediate payment. This the 7th day of May 2026. All correspondence should be to the **Gerald Tyrone Battle**, Administrator c/o **Florence A. Bowens**, Attorney, P.O. Box 51263, Durham, NC 27717.
5/7, 5/14, 5/21, and 5/28/2026

WAKE COUNTY

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File No.: 25E004341-910
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 23rd day of January, 2026, as Administrator of the Estate of **CAREY ALPHONSO WAINWRIGHT**, Deceased, of Wake 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 22nd day of August, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This, the 21st day of May, 2026. **Michelle Wainwright**, Administrator
40 BP Court
Rocky Mount, NC 27804
5/21, 5/28, 6/4, and 6/11/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
ALL PERSONS, firms and corporations having claims against **BARBARA ANN HINTON**, Deceased, of WAKE COUNTY, NC, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before AUGUST 21, 2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment.

This is the 21st day of MAY, 2026. **Sean C. Hinton**, Administrator of the Estate, c/o **MONROE JENKINS**, PA
Post Office Box 12534
Durham, North Carolina 27709
5/21, 5/28, 6/4, and 6/11/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File No.: 25E004045-910
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 12th day of November, 2025, as Executor of the Estate of **MAJORIE LYNNETTE DEBNAM**, Deceased, of Wake 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 22nd day of August, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This, the 21st day of May, 2026. **Marie Georgette Debnam**, Executor
1615 E. Davie Street
Raleigh, NC 27610
5/21, 5/28, 6/4, and 6/11/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File No.: 25E002273-910
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 11th day of May, 2026, as Executor of the Estate of **NATHANIEL GAY**, Deceased, of Wake 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 22nd day of August, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This, the 21st day of May, 2026. **Teresa Jacobs Gay** Executor
c/o Mitchell Law Group, PLLC
2530 Meridian Parkway, Suite 100
Durham, North Carolina 27713
5/21, 5/28, 6/4, and 6/11/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY

sought.
This the 21st day of May, 2026. **Katrice Ordenez Aguilar**, Plaintiff
2512 New Hope Church Rd
Raleigh, NC 27604
5/21, 5/28, and 6/4/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File No.: 26E001197-910
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 10th day of April, 2026, as Executor of the Estate of **VIRGINIA HALLOCK LIDDLE**, Deceased, of Wake 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 15th day of August, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This, the 14th day of May, 2026. **Roger F. Liddle**, Executor
1101 Kinsdale Drive
Raleigh, NC 27615
5/14, 5/21, 5/28 and 6/4/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File No.: 26E000473-910
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 4th day of May, 2026, as Executor of the Estate of **BETTY SUE DAVIDSON A/K/A BETTY SHEPHERD DAVIDSON**, Deceased, of Wake 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 15th day of August, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This, the 14th day of May, 2026. **Kevin Mansfield Pardue**, Executor
1038 Branch Line Lane
Apex, NC 27502
5/14, 5/21, 5/28 and 6/4/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY

NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION
In the General Court of Justice
District Court Division
File No: 26CV008530-910
SONYA WALLACE, Plaintiff v. **ANTHONY DURANOL WALLACE**, Defendant
TO: **ANTHONY DURANOL WALLACE**

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 Absolute Divorce.

You are required to make defense to such pleading within forty (40) days after the first date of publication of this notice, or the Plaintiff will apply to the Court for the relief sought.
This, the 14th day of May 2026. **Sonya Wallace**, Plaintiff (Pro Se)
5145 Dezola Street
Apex, NC 27539
5/14, 5/21, and 5/28/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY

NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION
In the General Court of Justice
District Court Division
File No: 25CV025762-910
GLORIA AKPE, Plaintiff v. **CHUKWUDI AKPE**, Defendant
TO: **CHUKWUDI AKPE**

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 Absolute Divorce.

You are required to make defense to such pleading within forty (40) days after the first date of publication of this notice, or the Plaintiff will apply to the Court for the relief sought.
This, the 14th day of May 2026. **Gloria Akpe**, Plaintiff (Pro Se)
1513 North Raleigh Blvd
Raleigh, NC 27610
5/14, 5/21, and 5/28/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY

NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION
In the General Court of Justice
District Court Division
File No: 26CV000818-910
DIANA LAURA PEREZ, Plaintiff v. **LUIS ALONSO GONZALEZ GUEVARA**, Defendant
TO: **LUIS ALONSO GONZALEZ GUEVARA**

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/

Visitation.
You are required to make defense to such pleading not later than forty (40) days after 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 14th day of May 2026. **Diana Laura Perez**
5352 Pelican Pl
Raleigh, NC 27610
5/14, 5/21, and 5/28/2026
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 **HENRY RUSSELL GATLING**, 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 August 8, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

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

This the 7th day of May, 2026. **Elaine Jacobs Hampton**, Executor
5501 Moss Hill Drive
Raleigh, NC 27616
5/7, 5/14, 5/21, and 5/28/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
File No: 26E000701-910
Having qualified as Administrator of the Estate of **OLIVIA SEAGROVES JORDAN**, deceased, of 320 Perry St, Raleigh, NC 27608, the undersigned does hereby notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the estate of said decedent to exhibit them to the undersigned in care of the attorney for the estate on or before August 8, 2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

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

This, the 7th day of May, 2026. **Rachel Jordan** Administrators of the **Olivia Seagroves Jordan** c/o **N. Vail Gardner, Esq.**
Vail Gardner Law, PLLC
732 9th Street #621
Durham, NC 27705
5/7, 5/14, 5/21, and 5/28/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File No.: 25E003678-910
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 8th day of April, 2026, as Executor of the Estate of **DOROTHY MORAS ALTMAN**, Deceased, of Wake 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 8th day of August, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This, the 7th day of May, 2026. **Jane W. Maina**, Executor
2010 Hodges Creek Dr. Apt 204
Raleigh, NC 27609
5/7, 5/14, 5/21, and 5/28/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY

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

TAKE NOTICE that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above-entitled action. The nature of the relief being sought is Absolute Divorce and Resumption of Former Name.

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 the 7th day of May, 2026. **Brenda Ebert**, Plaintiff
5/7, 5/14, and 5/21/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
Having qualified as the Personal Representative of the Estate of **STEVEN ROBERT DUKE**, late of Wake County, North Carolina, the undersigned does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the estate of said decedent to exhibit them to the undersigned in care of the attorney for the estate,
Sonya S. Linton, Magnolia Legal, 3001 Academy Rd., Sute 120, Durham, NC 27707, on or before the 29th day of July 2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons, firms and

corporations indebted to the said estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.
Thea Marie Craft
Personal Representative
File #: 26E001320-910
Attorney for Estate:
Sonya S. Linton
Magnolia Legal
3001 Academy Rd., Suite 120
Durham, NC 27707
4/30, 5/7, 5/14, and 5/21/2026.
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
ESTATE OF **BONNIE LYNNE WHEATLEY**

FILE NO 24E003243-910
All persons, firms and corporations having claims against **BONNIE LYNNE WHEATLEY**, deceased, of Wake County, NC, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before July 31, 2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This the 30th day of April, 2026. **Emily Griffith**, Administrator CTA, c/o **Blue LLP**, 205 Fayetteville St, Suite 300, Raleigh, NC 27601. The Carolinian, 4/30, 5/7, 5/14, and 5/21/2026

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
CASE NO.: 05-2025-DR-037416-XXDR-BC
THE MINOR CHILD: DIVISION: F
MILANEE MONA BELL
DOB: 07/26/2008
GEORGE BELL
Petitioner

NOTICE OF HEARING TO TERMINATE PARENTAL RIGHTS AND FINAL ADOPTION HEARING
TO: **Gail Villanueva**: Last Known Address: 447 Ballantyne Common Circle, Apt 103, Hendersonville, NC 28792
Physical Description:
• Height: 5'9"
• Brown hair
• Brown eyes
• Approx. 200 lbs
Children: **Milaneé Mona Bell** (DOB: 07/26/2008)
• Place of Birth: Holmes Regional Medical Center, Melbourne, Brevard County

A Petition to Terminate Parental Rights And Petition for Adoption was filed on 10/22/25. You are being served with a copy of the petition along with this notice. A hearing on the petition will take place on May 22, 2026, at 9:00 a.m., presided over by Honorable Judge Dookhoo, via remote proceedings. The court has allocated 15 minutes for this hearing.


You are hereby notified that an action has been filed seeking the termination of parental rights to **Milaneé Mona Bell** (DOB: 07/26/2008) pending their adoption.

You are required to serve written defenses to the petition upon the attorney for the petitioner, whose name and address are provided in the petition, and to file the original written defenses with the Clerk of the Circuit Court at the address P.O. BOX 219 TITUSVILLE, FL 32781-0219 no later than 20 days after the date of service of this notice.

If you fail to serve written defenses and file them with the Clerk within the specified time, a default may be entered against you for the relief demanded in the petition, which may include termination of parental rights concerning **Milaneé Mona Bell** (DOB: 07/26/2008) pending their adoption. Court documents and information regarding this case are available for your review at the office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court. If you wish to access or obtain copies of these documents, you may contact the Clerk's office directly.

You are required to keep the Clerk of the Circuit Court informed of your current address at all times. Future papers and notices in this proceeding will be mailed to the address on file with the Clerk.
WARNING: Rule 12.285, Florida Family Law Rules of Procedure, requires certain automatic disclosure of documents and information. Failure to comply with Rule 12.285 may result in sanctions, including dismissal of pleadings, striking of claims or defenses, or other penalties as determined by the court.

Judge Dookhoo
<https://f118.org/judgedookhoo>



PURSUANT TO SECTION 63.089, FLORIDA STATUTES, FAILURE TO SUBMIT A WRITTEN RESPONSE TO THIS NOTICE AND THE PETITION IN A TIMELY MANNER, AS WELL AS FAILURE TO APPEAR AT THE SCHEDULED HEARING, MAY RESULT IN THE COURT TERMINATING ANY PARENTAL RIGHTS YOU HOLD OR CLAIM CONCERNING THE MINOR CHILD.
DATED This 24th day of April 2026.
RACHEL M. SADOFF, CFCC
CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT
4/30, 5/7, 5/14, and 5/21/2026

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

MBE
BCS needs MBE/WBE participation for the demo and construction of a tennis/pickleball courts, walkways, fencing and benches. Construction consists of restroom building including structural, mechanical, electrical and site development . BCS will break down or combine elements of work into economically feasible units to facilitate minority participation. We will try to negotiate joint ventures to help increase minority participation. BCS will also provide quick pay agreements to meet cash flow demands. Need bids by June 1 emailed to bcscontractors22@gmail.com. Plans/specs may be viewed at our office (call 252-903-4102) or emailed to you.

NC Department of Adult Correction
ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS
The North Carolina Department of Adult Correction has the following contract in McDowell County out for bid: C- 11852 Marion Roof Replacement . The bid opening is scheduled for: Thursday, 06/25/2026 . To obtain the Notice to Bidders, any Pre-Bid Requirements, and any Addenda visit: <https://evp.nc.gov/solicitations/details/?id=fe719d2d-6e50-f111-bec6-001dd800b811>



College Graduates In The Triangle Enter A Shifting Job Market

By Judaea Ingram

Special To The Carolinian

As graduation season peaks across North Carolina, thousands of college students in the Triangle are stepping into a job market that remains strong overall but increasingly competitive for entry-level positions.

The Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill region, often referred to as the Research Triangle, continues to rank as one of the fastest-growing hubs for college-educated residents in the country. Recent Census-based analysis shows the area has seen a significant increase in the share of adults with bachelor's degrees, the highest gain among U.S. metropolitan areas in recent years.

That growth is fueled by the presence of major universities such as Duke University, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and North Carolina State University, which collectively produce tens of thousands of graduates each year and feed directly into the regional workforce.

While the region's economy remains strong compared to national trends, recent data shows signs of



cooling job growth across North Carolina. State employment growth has slowed to around 0.8% year-over-year as of early 2026, reflecting a broader national slowdown in hiring expansion.

For new graduates, the transition

from campus to career is increasingly shaped by timing, networking, and industry demand rather than guaranteed immediate placement.

Data from NC State's post-graduation outcomes reports show that a majority of graduates do find em-

ployment or continue their education within months of finishing their degrees, but outcomes vary widely depending on major and field. Some graduates enter graduate or professional school, while others secure jobs before graduation through in-

ternships or campus recruiting pipelines.

Across the UNC System, recent surveys show that about 60% of graduating seniors report having employment plans shortly after graduation, while others pursue graduate school, military service, or continue job searching.

Despite those outcomes, students say the job search process can feel overwhelming and uncertain, even for highly qualified candidates.

"You'll apply to over a hundred jobs and you either don't hear back or you get two to three rejection emails," said Domini Rose, a recent graduate reflecting on her experience entering the job market.

Her comment reflects a broader sentiment among new graduates who say the transition from college to career often involves high volumes of applications, delayed responses, and repeated rejection before landing an opportunity.

At the same time, the Triangle continues to benefit from long-term growth trends. The region has become a major destination for recent graduates nationwide, ranking among the top U.S. metro areas attracting

new degree holders, a factor that continues to support local industries and innovation-driven companies.

Economists say the region's strength lies in its diversity of industries, including education, biotechnology, healthcare, and technology, which helps buffer against downturns in any single sector.

UNC System officials have also acknowledged the mismatch between workforce demand and degree production in some industries, noting that North Carolina may need thousands more graduates annually in high-demand fields such as healthcare, engineering, and education to meet employer needs.

Even so, students say the path after graduation is rarely straightforward. Many rely on internships, networking, and career development platforms to secure their first full-time role, while others take gap periods or pivot fields entirely.

As the class of 2026 enters the job market, the Triangle continues to represent both opportunity and competition — a region where degrees are abundant, but where landing the first role increasingly depends on timing, experience, and adaptability.

Which College Majors Offer The Best Return On Investment?

By Aimee Picchi

Yahoo Finance

As college costs climb and skepticism about higher education grows, many Americans are asking whether a bachelor's degree is still worth the price.

A new analysis of Texas public college students shows that, long-term, they generally earn far more than those who never attended college, even in liberal arts.

The analysis, by the Postsecondary Commission, a nonprofit education group, tracked about 29,000 students who enrolled in bachelor's degree programs in the 2008-09 academic year. Researchers then tracked their "cumulative net value-added earnings" over the next 15

years. That metric compares college enrollees' total earnings over a period of time with those of workers who never attended college, while also subtracting educational expenses such as tuition, room and board and income lost while attending their higher-education program.

On average, college entrants out-earned high school graduates by almost \$87,000 over that 15-year period, even after accounting for college costs.

Engineering and architecture majors enjoyed the highest returns. But even liberal arts majors, whose degrees can translate into lower earnings, outperformed their peers without bachelor's degrees by about \$35,000, the study found.

"Those pursuing a bachelor's degree — regardless of field of study — are likely making a wise investment," Michael Itzkowitz, president of higher education consulting firm HEA Group, told CBS News of the findings. "That's a financial gain that will likely grow even more over time, as these learners and earners progress throughout their careers."

The Postsecondary Commission study is limited to Texas students, and results may vary in other states where regional economic differences can require different levels of employment training, Itzkowitz noted. But the analysis shows that even lower-paying fields of study tend to offer economic benefits for college enrollees, he said.

"This study is quite rigorous, as it

takes opportunity costs into account, meaning it includes the foregone costs of spending time in college in comparison to those who begin working straight out of high school," he said.

To be sure, the research focuses on students who enrolled in college nearly two decades ago, before generative AI reshaped the labor market. Some recent graduates have expressed concerns that AI could reduce entry-level opportunities, raising new questions about the long-term value of higher education.

Boost from other degrees Enrolling in a bachelor's degree program isn't the only way to boost earnings, with the analysis also assessing the long-term earnings boost for students who entered associate's degrees and certificate programs.

Most associate's degrees enrollees generated positive returns. The construction trades provided the strongest payoff at nearly \$73,000 over 10 years.

By contrast, some two-year programs, including culinary services and

logistics, resulted in net losses of about \$13,000 and \$15,000, respectively.

Certificates also showed mixed results. Construction trade certificates generated the highest return,

at roughly \$48,000 after five years. But seven certificate fields, including social sciences and information technology, resulted in net losses during that period.



On Saturday April 18, 2026, the Durham Beta Phi Chapter of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity hosted a UPI Stem Day. The event was held at the Boys and Girls Club of Durham & Orange County 1010 Martin Luther King Boulevard, Durham, N.C. 27713 from 9:00am-3:00pm. The event welcomed K-12 participants for a full day of hands-on activities designed to inspire curiosity and creativity across the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. The event was inspiring, enthusiastic, interactive and fun for everyone involved. Brother Gene Lofton, who is pictured in the photo is Chair of the UPI STEM Committee.

What I Wish I'd Known After Graduation: A Startup Guide

By Kyle Wong

CEO of Fixlee

Dear Recent College Grad and Aspiring Entrepreneur,

Congratulations! You've been working on a startup idea that you've been iterating on throughout senior year. While your parents are happy you received your diploma, they are confused about your career choice: namely why you would give up a prestigious and secure job to work on a crazy idea without a salary for the indefinite future. The vast majority of startups fail, and yet you're about to step into the fire with very little savings and even less experience.

Don't worry. I (like many others) were in your shoes before. Here's what I wish I had known:

1. Get comfortable with uncertainty

Up until now, and for most of your life, there was a general set of directions that you needed to follow. To get into college you needed the right classes, grades, and SAT scores. In college you knew which classes you had to take to get your diploma. In each class, your syllabus provided you with all the details you needed to succeed.

Unfortunately, there is no course syllabus for startups. In college, you could prepare for exams because you knew which topics they'd cover. You could pull an "all-nighter" to study and do alright. But as the cofounder of the startup, you don't have anyone telling you what you should be doing. You can pull all the "all-nighters" you want, but it won't help if you're working on the wrong problems.

One of the advantages you have as a very young entrepreneur is that you have "less to lose." Chances are you don't have a wife, kids, or a mortgage to pay off—at least not yet. The flip side is that you don't have any structure around you either.



This uncertainty and lack of direction can drive entrepreneurs crazy; learning how to deal with it will help you stay focused and sane.

2. Know what you don't know

Some of you probably did really well in school and excelled in every topic. As a startup co-founder you're not expected to be good at everything. In school, grades often tell you if you aren't good at something. But in startups, there are no "grades," and as a result you have to be self-aware and honest with yourself about your strengths and weaknesses. Your job is to understand your needs and attract the right people and resources to help you.

As a young entrepreneur people are willing to help you, and you should welcome that help with open arms. They understand that you are new to things and chances are you're too have faced the struggles you're dealing with. Meet smart people, stay connected, and don't be afraid to ask questions. Remember people love to give advice!

3. Build for how you want the world to work

About a year ago, Aaron Levie, the CEO of Box, tweeted out, "Uber is a lesson in building for how the world should work instead of optimizing for how the world does work." This tweet really resonated with me and how I think young entrepreneurs should think about their businesses. As a fresh college grad you probably don't have a lot of industry experience. This can be a good thing because you don't come to the table with preconceived biases of how things are done. It allows you to dream big and challenge the status quo. Using Uber as an example, sometimes you need to think outside the box instead of improving on current solutions.

My advice to you is to find a balance between creativity and pragmatism. Dream big, but do your homework on matters relevant to your business. You can't succeed running blind no matter how fast you go. Harness that unbiased and unlimited curiosity to make that dream a reality.

Congrats on graduating! Now welcome to the real world.



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