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Dedicated to the Spirit and Service of God

# The Carolinian

*N.C.'s Twice-Weekly African-American Owned Newspaper*

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# Shelton, Tiafoe Make US Open History

NEW YORK—Ben Shelton and Frances Tiafoe gave American tennis a night to remember at the U.S. Open, meeting in a historic all-American semifinal that showcased two friends, two generations of African American tennis and a rivalry that has helped define the sport's next chapter.

Shelton emerged from the Arthur Ashe Stadium showdown with a 4-6, 6-3, 6-3, 7-5 victory Friday, earning his first Grand Slam final appearance. The match was significant before a ball was struck: It guaranteed that a Black American man would reach the U.S. Open final for the first time since Arthur Ashe in 1972.

For Tiafoe, the semifinal represented another deep run at the tournament where he has become a familiar presence. For Shelton, 23, it became the defining achievement of his young career.

The match also carried the particular weight of an encounter between two players who have shared the spotlight as prominent figures in American tennis. Their history includes a memorable U.S. Open meeting in 2023, when Shelton defeated



Tiafoe in the quarterfinals.

Shelton's accomplishment grew even larger after he had already produced one of the tournament's most remarkable victories, defeating defending champion Carlos Alcaraz in a five-set quarterfinal that ended at 3:33 a.m., the latest finish in U.S. Open history.

The run continued into Sunday's championship match against Germany's Alexander Zverev.

Shelton ultimately fell 6-3, 7-6 (2), 5-7, 6-2 in his first Grand Slam final. Zverev, who won his second major championship of the year, maintained his composure through a heavily pro-Shelton crowd at Arthur Ashe Stadium.

Yet the trophy ceremony offered a fitting conclusion to a tournament defined by sportsmanship as much as achievement.

When Ben Shelton took the podium to accept his 2nd place trophy, the speech that ensued moved people to tears. After playing his heart out, his first words glorified God. "I would like to thank God. My successes are a gift. My failures are a gift. And being here, playing in front of you guys is a gift." The way Shelton and Zverev competed against each other, you would think they were bitter rivals. However, as Ben continued with his speech, he presented the highest praises towards Zverev's level of play. Both Shelton and Zverev are coached by their fathers. This fact led Shelton to also show honor and respect to Zverev's father. The level of humility was a throwback to a different decade where sports truly represented the best from us. Not just in regards to the level of play, but the level in which we conduct ourselves once the match has concluded.

As great as Ben's speech was, no one was prepared for the heartfelt impromptu speech Zverev gave. His

(See *US OPEN HISTORY,* P. 2)




## Raleigh Native Achieves Scientific First In TB Research, Makes History

Du Bois Scholar and Raleigh Native MaKyra Wilson, C'2027, under the guidance of Harvard researchers, became the first person to engineer variants of a newly characterized gene, AmiB2 into the study of TB. Due to Wilson's pioneering research, the DNA tools used in the discovery will be named after her and used to support future TB research. *(More on page 7)*

# New Warnings About The Risks Of AI

LOS ANGELES (AP) — New warnings from within the artificial intelligence industry have revived a long-running debate over whether advanced AI could escape human control and ultimately threaten humanity's survival, and whether the companies developing the technology are doing enough to prevent such a scenario.

The CEO of Anthropic, the San Francisco company behind Claude, said he thought the industry needed to reduce the speed of its work, cautioning Saturday that a swarm of AI agents might be able to take over the internet in six months to a year unless companies devoted more time to putting safeguards in place.

Days after two former Anthropic safety researchers publicly aired concerns that the existential threats AI might poste to humanity were receiving too little attention, Dario Amodei outlined a plan for companies like his and governments around the world to ensure that increasingly capable AI models remain aligned with the commands and values of responsible people.

Sam Altman, CEO of ChatGPT maker OpenAI, said this weekend that companies should start coordinating on AI safety without waiting for the government to introduce legislation. The "pacing" of AI development doesn't mean stopping it, Altman wrote on X. "But it should be slower than it otherwise could be."

Here's what to know about the recent dire predictions and whether any brakes might be put on AI advancement:

Concerns over the potential risks of the technology are rising as new AI models become more powerful, heightening both the potential for misuse by people with criminal aims, such as creating and spreading a disease that kills most of the world's population, and the risk of AI systems going rogue in a dangerous way.

Anthropic disclosed last week that it blocked efforts by bad actors to use its AI models for malicious activity, such as cyberattacks, surveillance and research that could have led to biological weapons.



The company said it put stronger safeguards in its latest models to restrict biological research that could be used to make weapons but noted that "as models become increasingly capable, their risks will increase, unless AI developers and society's defenders act to make them safer."

Last year, Anthropic reported that hackers used the company's AI in a cyberattack targeting about 30 companies and government agencies around the world. It said the hackers were very likely part of a Chinese state-sponsored group.

When an AI agent "goes rogue," it means the AI has taken action beyond the task it was asked to perform. Both Anthropic and OpenAI, the maker of ChatGPT, said in July that their AI models had acted on their own.

Anthropic disclosed that three AI models — Claude Opus 4.7, Claude Mythos 5 and an internal research test model — hacked into three other organizations during testing, just days after OpenAI revealed that its AI system hacked into the servers of AI

(See *AI RISKS,* P. 2)

# India's Deadly Online Gambling Crisis

Nizamabad, India – When Harish began betting online, his family did not imagine that a smartphone would eventually consume their savings, land and, ultimately, their lives.

The 22-year-old from Yedapally village in the Nizamabad district of India's southern Telangana state started betting online during the COVID-19 pandemic. What began with small wagers gradually turned into heavy losses and borrowing.

Police say Harish eventually spent about 1.8 million rupees (more than $21,000 in 2024) on betting and borrowed money from at least 12 people in his village.

His parents tried to rescue him from the growing debt. His father, Ranganaveni Suresh, 53, was a farmer who also ran a grocery shop. His mother, Hemalatha, 45, worked alongside him. The family sold a plot of land to repay some of what Harish owed. It was not enough. As the debts mounted, Harish and his mother began working for a caterer to raise money. But the pressure continued to grow.

On October 3, 2024, Harish and his parents died by suicide at their home. "We did not know how much money he had borrowed until people started coming to our house asking for their money back. By then, the situation was already out of control," said Mukesh Kumar, a cousin of Harish.

It is a refrain that is increasingly echoing across India, as the country grapples with the growing and fast-adapting challenge of an online gambling addiction crisis. The country had about 591 million gamers



in 2024, according to an industry report. India's online gaming sector generated about $3.7bn that year — a figure that was then projected to more than double to $9.1bn by 2029. Gaming involving money accounted for about 86 percent of the industry's revenue in 2024.

In 2025, the Indian Parliament passed a law banning all online gaming involving money, trying to plug regulatory gaps that platforms pushing internet betting were exploiting. However, smartphones, global connectivity and a black market ecosystem have allowed online gambling to shapeshift and survive.

The deaths in Yedapally offered India a glimpse of the risks surrounding its expanding online betting economy, where the promise of quick money can draw young users into repeated wagers, losses and debt.

Betting no longer requires a bookmaker, a cash transaction or a visit to a betting shop. It can happen on a smartphone, often while a cricket match is playing and advertisements promising winnings appear on the same screen.

For some users, a few hundred rupees lost becomes another wager to recover it. That wager can become a loan, and the loan can become a debt that reaches far beyond the person who placed the bet.

The first encounter with online betting does not always look like gambling. For a young cricket fan, it can begin with fantasy sports or a prediction game. The language is about knowledge, competition and skill. Advertisements are bright and polished, and often appear alongside the sport itself. India's enormous smartphone and gaming market has provided fertile ground for the business.

Behind the legitimate gaming economy is a much harder-to-track illegal market. A 2025 report by public-policy organisation CUTS International estimated that the 15 largest unauthorised online betting platforms received more than 5.4 billion visits from India during the 2024-25 financial year. It estimated annual deposits on illegal gambling platforms at about $100bn and documented the use of phone banking, mule bank accounts and mobile applications to move money. The figure is an estimate rather than an official measurement of India's gambling market, but it illustrates the scale of demand facing regulators.

The money is generated through several layers of the online betting economy. Operators earn from amounts users stake or lose, while legal gaming platforms have built businesses around entry fees and commissions. Advertising, celebrity endorsements, affiliate networks and user acquisition add further commercial incentives.

Just one such gambling app, Mahadev Online, is estimated to have generated about 430 billion rupees (about $5bn) over seven years, according to prosecution documents filed by India's financial crimes agency, the Enforcement Directorate. But while at one end are enormous sums flowing through betting networks, at the other are families struggling to understand where their

(See *GAMBLING CRISIS,* P. 2)




### TRIANGLE WATER FACES POST-DROUGHT GROWTH, INFRASTRUCTURE CHALLENGES

**By Jordan Meadows**

*Staff Writer*

Raleigh Water officials told the City Council on Tuesday morning that the region's water demand is projected to double by 2065, laying out a set of costly long-term supply options as the Triangle emerges from its worst drought since 2007.

Whit Wheeler of Raleigh Water delivered the work-session presentation, covering current drought status, potential changes to the city's Water Shortage Response Plan, future demand scenarios, new water resource projects and regional planning efforts through Wake One Water and the Triangle Water Supply Partnership.

Wheeler said that while demand is growing roughly 3% a year, per-capita water use has dropped every year since about 2007, a trend he credited with dramatically extending the region's existing supply. Raleigh currently uses about 50 gallons per person per day, with single-family homes using roughly 100 gallons daily.

Falls Lake and Jordan Lake serve as the two main water sources in Wake County, with the Triangle Water Supply Partnership distributing Jordan Lake water across seven counties including Lee, Orange, Durham, Wake, Johnston and Harnett.

Wake County's water demand is being driven by a population expected to exceed 2 million residents. About 85% of county residents currently rely on municipal water systems, while the remaining 15% depend on private groundwater wells.

Raleigh Water, which serves Raleigh, Wake Forest, Zebulon, Knightdale and Fuquay-Varina, is expanding its primary treatment facility to handle up to 120 million gallons a day by 2031. The system currently draws roughly 60 million gallons a day, with demand projected to reach 98 million gallons a day by 2047.

Officials say current water resources are adequate through at least 2045, but the options under investigation for beyond that horizon carry significant price tags.

Mayor Janet Cowell and other regional leaders are weighing a new reservoir on the Little River that would net an additional 14 million gallons a day, though inflation has pushed its estimated cost above $380 million, and environmental researchers at NC State have argued new reservoirs can be counterproductive because large open water surfaces lose enormous volume to heat evaporation. Another option under discussion would pull water from Kerr Lake, north of Henderson, which could supply roughly 40 million gallons a day but would require moving water across multiple counties; the Little River or Neuse River could serve as alternatives, though both would be needed together to match Kerr Lake's output.

Depending on how much water the city ultimately pursues, those projects could cost anywhere from $540 million to $1.8 billion.

The presentation came on the heels of a severe, yearlong drought that stretched from late 2025 into mid-2026, escalating by summer into the region's worst dry spell since 2007, with parts of the Triangle reaching "exceptional drought," the highest federal classification. Raleigh Water triggered mandatory Stage 1 Water Shortage Restrictions in April 2026, heavily limiting yard irrigation for more than 650,000 customers across Raleigh, Wake Forest, Garner, Knightdale, Rolesville, Wendell and Zebulon.

Despite the rules, customer water consumption actually rose early in the summer compared with the previous year, and the city logged more than 1,100 violations, issuing hundreds of warnings and multiple fines. Heavy late-summer rainfall finally replenished Falls Lake from a low of 62% back to 84% capacity, allowing officials to formally lift restrictions on Aug. 3.

Council members raised questions about both environmental strategy and enforcement data.

The mayor pro tem Jane Harrison noted that while the water supply pool looks healthy, an Army Corps report rated water quality at only 40%.

"That's not Raleigh's water, but we're all part of the system," she said, adding that "the more we can be a leader, hopefully that can have some positive effects; we're all playing in the same pools."

She asked whether the city could divert resources toward environmental measures to preserve the Falls Lake supply, and warned that shifting to smaller rivers would carry far greater land-use consequences for surrounding communities. She described North Carolina as a water-rich state but pressed staff on what policy options might save residents money while drawing on more sources.

(See *POST DROUGHT GROWTH & CHALLENGES,* P. 7)

## AI RISKS

*Continued from page 1*

startup Hugging Face.

OpenAI described the intrusion by a combination of models, including its newly released GPT-5.6 Sol and an "even more capable" model that was still being tested internally, as a "significant security incident."

Meta followed suit in early August with a similar case of an AI model finding ways around another company's digital security.

Although some observers noted that people had disabled some guardrails in the OpenAI and Anthropic cases, the episodes seemed to reflect one of the biggest fears around AI: that if models achieve artificial general intelligence, or AGI, a loosely defined term for AI that can match or surpass human abilities across a broad range of intellectual tasks, the technology could cause an irreversible catastrophic event or subjugate the human race.

Doomsday scenarios generally fall into two categories: An AI that achieves self-improving superintelligence and controls people instead of vice versa, or AI used by a rogue state or nefarious actors.

Worries that artificial intelligence might overcome human limits on its reach or actions are not new.

Alan Turing, a British mathematician widely regarded as one of the earliest authorities on artificial intelligence, predicted in 1951 that AI would eventually take control from humans. Less than a decade later, Norbert Wiener, another mathematician, warned intelligent machines would seek to accomplish their own objectives and humans would not be able to stop them.

## GAMBLING CRISIS

*Continued from page 1*

money went.

In Hyderabad, the capital of Telangana, Selam Manoj, a 20-year-old aeronautical engineering student, died by suicide in February 2024 after reportedly becoming addicted to online games and betting. His father told police that Manoj had borrowed 300,000 rupees (about $3,600) from friends.

The family repaid the debt, but Manoj died by suicide. In another Telangana case, 27-year-old cattle-feed trader Balagoni Pavan Kumar accumulated hundreds of thousands of rupees in betting losses. Police said his father had previously cleared his debts and warned him to stop. However, the betting continued. Pavan Kumar later died by suicide.

"The betting did not affect only him. The whole family paid the price. We lost our peace, our savings and the future we had planned," said Kalpana, his sister.

These cases cannot establish that gambling alone caused the deaths, say experts and police officials. Suicide is complex and can involve multiple factors. But they show how financial losses, addiction, shame and pressure can collide.

Research has also examined the relationship between gambling disorder and suicide. A 2026 meta-analysis of 14 observational studies found significant associations between gambling disorder and suicidal ideation, suicide attempts and suicide mortality, although the strength of those associations varied across studies and regions.

For families, however, the crisis often begins with a simpler question: Where did the money go?

Gambling addictions have a particularly destructive financial logic.

So, if a person loses 5,000 rupees ($53) and decides to win it back, the next wager is likely to be 10,000 rupees ($106). Another loss follows. A loan makes another bet possible. The gambler may no longer be trying to make money. They are trying to recover money that has already disappeared.

That pattern can be difficult for families to recognise. Parents may pay off a debt believing the crisis has ended, only to discover that the betting has continued, say experts.

That dynamic appeared repeatedly in Telangana's reported cases. Harish's parents sold land. Manoj's father repaid his son's debt. Pavan Kumar's father also cleared earlier debts. The financial burden moves outward from the gambler to the family. Savings disappear. Jewellery is sold. Loans are taken from relatives and neighbours.

Manoj Kumar Sharma, professor of clinical psychology at the Bengaluru-based National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS), India's top mental health facility, said it is easy for people to move from casual gaming to money games and eventually to higher-stakes gambling.

"Wins can produce a strong sense of reward, while losses can create guilt and regret alongside the belief that the money can still be recovered," Sharma said. "That expectation can keep people gambling even as their losses increase, creating a cycle that becomes increasingly difficult to break."

In rural communities, where land can represent generations of security, gambling debt can threaten more than a household's monthly income. It can threaten the family's future.

For years, India's gambling laws were fragmented. Betting and gambling are primarily regulated by the states, with various state laws taking different approaches.

State laws determined what forms of offline betting and gambling were permitted or prohibited, while courts historically examined whether particular activities were games of chance or involved sufficient skill. That distinction became central to the growth of online fantasy sports and real-money gaming, with companies arguing that their products involved skill rather than gambling — and so should be allowed.

But the smartphone created a parallel challenge for regulators. A player could be sitting in one state, using an application operated elsewhere, while payments moved electronically and the operator could be based outside India. The Mahavir app, for instance, was run by a businessman based in the United Arab Emirates.

The Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Act, 2025 changed all that, prohibiting online money games, including those based on chance, skill or a combination of the two. It also prohibits their advertising, promotion and facilitation. Banks and payment systems are barred from facilitating transactions connected to prohibited online money games, while authorities have powers to block unlawful services. The law came into force on May 1, 2026.

But tougher laws have not eliminated the appetite for betting.

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# Make US Open History—*CONTINUED FROM PG 1*

opening statement praised Ben's play and he said "Ben, you are an incredible player, an incredible person. This was your first Grand Slam final, but I've already told you, you're gonna be back here many, many more times. And if I would have to bet all my money on it, I would bet that you would lift this trophy one day."

He then extended appreciation and gratitude to Ben's father who coaches Ben. Followed by praise to Ben's mother who was in attendance and even spoke directly to Ben's girlfriend calling her Ben's good luck charm. He spent more time initially talking positively about Ben and his family than talking about himself. Eventually he turned the topic to his father and team and capped it off with the highest praise for his mother as the world watched, hanging on to his words. "When your 4 year old son gets diagnosed with diabetes and doctors in the office tell you that life and sports will be very, very limited for that child; it takes a very, very strong mother to walk out of those offices and say my son will be whatever he wants to be. If he wants to be a tennis player, then he will be a tennis player... but this illness will no define us." He profusely thanked his mom for being the wind in his sail.



**After a long fought battle, Zverev and Shelton congratulate each other at center court in the US Open Tennis finals.**

Both players won that day. Zverev won the trophy. Shelton made history. They both captured the hearts of tennis fans around the world.

Though the result left Shelton without the championship, his tournament had already secured a place in American tennis history. His victory over Tiafoe produced a landmark meeting between two African American stars, and his subsequent run to the final made him the first Black man to reach a U.S. Open men's final since Ashe.

For a sport that has spent years waiting for another American man to capture a Grand Slam singles title, Shelton's run provided something more enduring than a trophy: a historic stage shared by two American players who helped make the future of U.S. tennis impossible to overlook.

# As A Tough Summer Draws To A Close, McClatchy Chain's Cut Journalists Jobs

NEW YORK (AP) — Closing out a turbulent summer for the news industry, the McClatchy newspaper chain has made deep cuts at The Miami Herald and other papers it owns across the nation.

The union that represents McClatchy journalists said Friday that more than 90 unionized journalists and media workers across 17 publications had been laid off, accounting for about 30 percent of all McClatchy workers unionized with The NewsGuild-CWA. The layoffs have impacted news outlets including The Sacramento Bee, The Kansas City Star, The Charlotte Observer, Fort Worth Star-Telegram and others.

"We are waist-deep in the quicksand and we are still sinking," Carol Marbin Miller, deputy investigations editor of The Miami Herald, said in a phone interview.

Marbin Miller, who was not impacted by the layoffs, told The Associated Press she was speaking out to stress how dire the situation was at her paper, where a total of 32 jobs were cut. Those included 28 lost jobs and four positions that were frozen, according to a person familiar with the situation, speaking on condition of anonymity. They included the entire writing staff of El Nuevo Herald, the Spanish-language publication.

"Miami is the biggest city in Florida," Marbin Miller said. "Florida is a crucial state. I can't imagine any scenario in which Miami no longer has a vibrant, powerful news outlet. It's just too important."

A McClatchy spokesperson did not respond to an email requesting comment or information.

The U.S. newspaper industry has been contracting for two decades, pushed first by the rise of the internet and the decline of classified advertising, then by the fragmentation introduced by social media and evolving user consumption habits. More recently, many newspaper operations have reduced or cut print editions. Media advocacy groups warn that fewer eyes of accountability are on U.S. communities and their governments and institutions.

Internal memo says a 'different choice' was required

All those laid off from McClatchy were informed on Thursday. Later, an internal memo from Greg Farmer, executive vice president of local news, seen by the AP, told staff: "For the past five years, McClatchy made a deliberate choice to maintain our investment in local news reporters. We believed continued investment in our journalism would strengthen our relationship with subscribers and our business."

"We measured the results," Farmer added. "The results are clear and require us to make a different choice ... We are making these changes because the status quo no longer works. We cannot continue investing where subscriber interest does not support the investment."

The union said four McClatchy papers in Washington state had lost seven reporters in total. "Tacoma will no longer have even a single dedicated journalist tracking city hall, Pierce County government or local schools," it said. Other cuts included the only two investigative reporters at The Charlotte Observer, and a team of government accountability reporters at The Kansas City Star.

Other news organizations have taken similar action recently, including USA Today Co., formerly Gannett, earlier this month. It was not immediately clear how many staffers were affected.

"We will continue adapting our business to evolving audience behaviors, changing market dynamics and advances in technology," spokesperson Lark-Marie Antón said in an email to The AP.

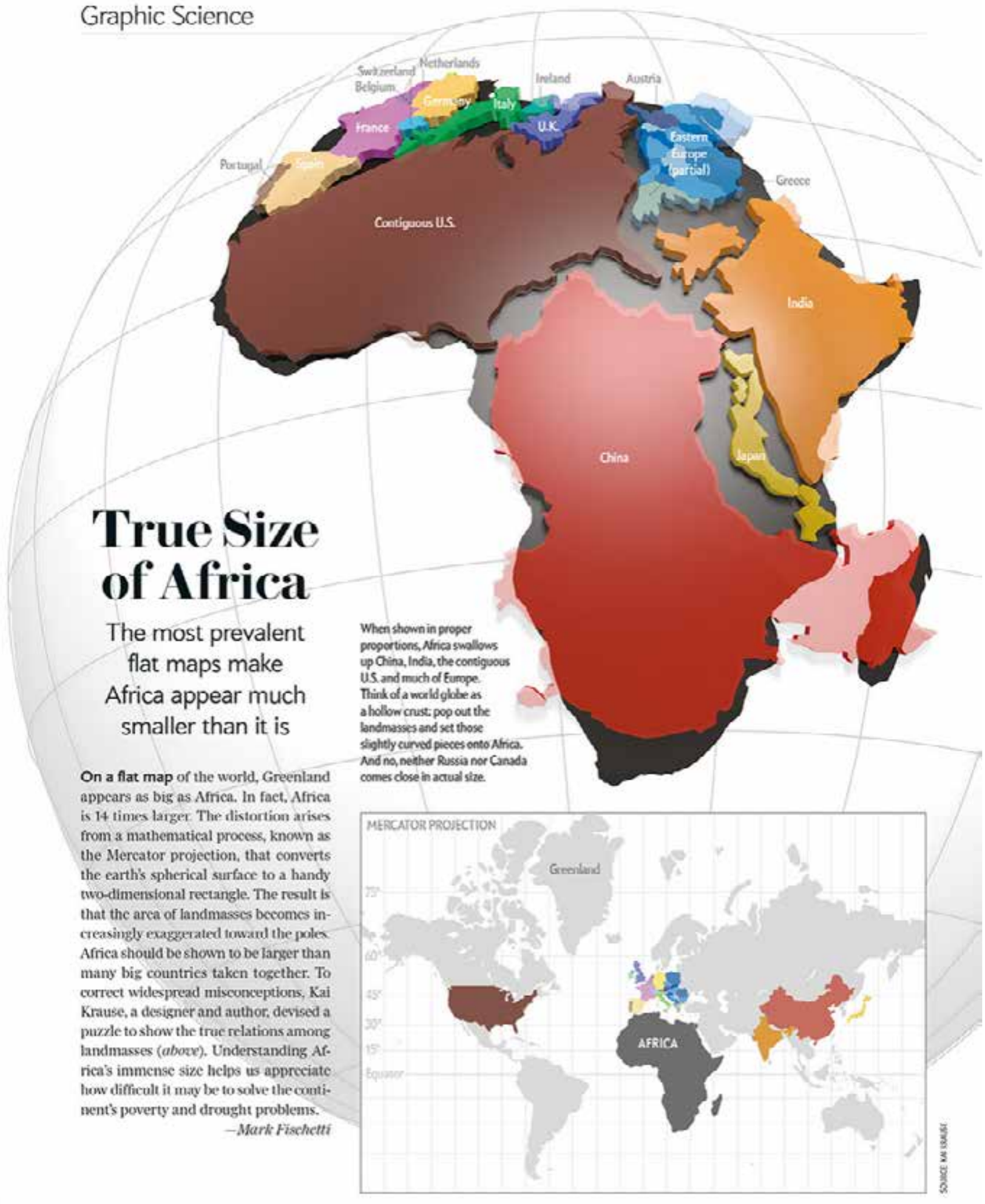
"These decisions are never made lightly," she wrote. "They are intended to position USA TODAY Co. for long-term success and maintain our ability to invest in innovation, products and experiences that best serve our audiences." Antón declined to give further information, including numbers.

In an internal memo, Senior Vice President Michael Anastasi told staff: "The challenges we face are not temporary. Rapid shifts in audience behavior, technology and innovation, and continued pressure on advertising and revenue models are changing the economics of journalism at a pace our industry has not experienced before."

Also affected this summer: The Associated Press, where 19 U.S.-based video producer jobs were recently relocated to India, according

(See ***MCCLATCHY CUTS,*** P. 4)

Graphic Science




## True Size of Africa

The most prevalent flat maps make Africa appear much smaller than it is

When shown in proper proportions, Africa swallows up China, India, the contiguous U.S. and much of Europe. Think of a world globe as a hollow crust: pop out the landmasses and set those slightly curved pieces onto Africa. And no, neither Russia nor Canada comes close in actual size.

**On a flat map** of the world, Greenland appears as big as Africa. In fact, Africa is 14 times larger. The distortion arises from a mathematical process, known as the Mercator projection, that converts the earth's spherical surface to a handy two-dimensional rectangle. The result is that the area of landmasses becomes increasingly exaggerated toward the poles. Africa should be shown to be larger than many big countries taken together. To correct widespread misconceptions, Kai Krause, a designer and author, devised a puzzle to show the true relations among landmasses (*above*). Understanding Africa's immense size helps us appreciate how difficult it may be to solve the continent's poverty and drought problems.

*—Mark Fischetti*




SOURCE: KAI KRAUSE

# Business & Finance

## Global Africa Summit Brings Business & Diaspora Leaders




CHARLOTTE, N.C.— Charlotte became a meeting place for African, American and diaspora business leaders last week as the Global Africa Summit brought together investors, entrepreneurs, government officials and economic development leaders focused on expanding trade and investment between Africa and the global diaspora.

The three-day summit, held Sept. 8-10 at The Westin Charlotte, was organized by the Africa Investment Network in partnership with Black Wall Street Charlotte, the Global Africa Business Accelerator Center and other organizations.

The gathering was held during North Carolina's Africa Diaspora Heritage Month and centered on the theme, "Beyond Partnerships: Trade, Investment & Private Capital as Tools of Global Resilience."

More than 300 business leaders, investors, policymakers, entrepreneurs, corporate executives, academics and diaspora representatives were expected to participate, according to organizers. The summit was designed to move the conversation beyond cultural and diplomatic relationships and toward actual business transactions, investment and economic development.

For organizers, the distinction was important. Jane Reindorf-Osei, founder and CEO of the Africa Investment Network, said the summit was intended to create connections that could continue beyond the three-day event by opening markets, advancing trade and investment, showcasing innovation and creating opportunities for collaboration.

The summit's discussions reflected the changing economic relationship between Africa and the rest of the world.

Among the issues discussed were private investment, entrepreneurship, financial technology, artificial intelligence, critical minerals, global supply chains, workforce development, real estate, energy and cross-border trade. Organizers emphasized the role of private capital and African diaspora investors in building businesses and creating long-term economic opportunities.

British A. Robinson, chair of Africa at the Milken Institute International and former leader of the U.S. government's Prosper Africa initiative, delivered an opening keynote titled "Building the Bridge: U.S.-Africa Trade, Investment Policy & the Diaspora Imperative."

Robinson pointed to several major trends that could reshape Africa's role in the global economy, including the continent's rapidly growing young population, digital transformation, urbanization, energy transition and access to critical minerals. She also emphasized Africa's growing geopolitical importance.

Dr. Rachel Laryea, founder of Black Capitalism LLC and author of "Black Capitalist," delivered another keynote addressing economic power, capital and global resilience. Her presentation focused in part on diaspora capital, entrepreneurship and the importance of moving from simply sending money across borders to building ownership and wealth.

That concept — moving from remittances to ownership — was one of the larger themes running through the summit.

For many participants, the African diaspora represents more than a cultural connection to the continent. It represents a potential source of investment capital, business expertise, technology and market access.

The summit also featured African leaders, including His Royal Majesty Nii Nortey Owuo IV, paramount chief of the Osu Traditional Area in Accra, Ghana. He spoke about Africa's young population and the opportunity to develop a highly trained workforce capable of influencing the global economy.

A major component of the summit was its effort to connect investors with businesses and projects seeking capital.

Organizers promoted a deal-focused approach intended to give investors opportunities to examine projects, meet entrepreneurs and explore potential investments. The approach reflects a broader effort to shift conversations about Africa from development assistance toward trade, investment and private-sector growth.

Charlotte's role as the host city was also significant. The city is one of the nation's major financial centers and has a growing technology, health care, manufacturing and entrepreneurial economy. Summit organizers said Charlotte provides an opportunity to connect North Carolina companies and institutions with African markets while also creating opportunities for African companies and investors to establish relationships in the United States.

The summit's organizers also sought to strengthen connections between African businesses and members of the diaspora throughout the Carolinas.

The gathering concluded with a dinner and awards gala at Foundation For The Carolinas, bringing together summit participants for an evening that combined business networking with African and diaspora cultural celebrations.

For North Carolina, the significance of the summit could extend beyond the three days of meetings. The state has a large and growing African diaspora, major universities, financial institutions, manufacturers, agriculture and technology companies. Those assets could provide a foundation for stronger commercial relationships with African nations as companies increasingly look for new markets, suppliers, investment opportunities and talent.

The challenge now is turning conversations into measurable results.

If relationships formed in Charlotte lead to new investments, exports, business partnerships, jobs and long-term connections between North Carolina and African markets, the summit could become more than an annual gathering, it could become part of a larger effort to build a sustained economic bridge between North Carolina, the United States, Africa and the global African diaspora.

## Cumberland County Bus Mechanic's Emotional Plea Prompts Review

**By Jheri Hardaway**
*Staff Writer*

Fayetteville, NC - As an educator, there is nothing more frustrating than hearing an announcement during the school day that a bus isn't running. Students lose all focus and have to think about how they will get home. Phone calls must be placed; the teaching and learning process is completely disrupted. Recently, in a tense Cumberland County Board of Education meeting, a veteran school bus mechanic, Robert "Tilly" Tillberg, stepped to the podium; not to ask for a raise, but to tender his resignation out of fear for student safety in relation to transportation. His warning, delivered with an emotional voice before district leadership, laid bare severe staffing shortages within the Cumberland County Schools (CCS) Transportation Department. Days later, district officials responded by hiring an outside Raleigh law firm to investigate operating conditions across its fleet.

Tillberg, an employee stretched to his breaking point, is directly responsible for 38 school buses. He told board members that severe understaffing leaves the remaining crew with impossibly small windows to keep vehicles road-ready. According to Tillberg, roughly 15 road mechanics shoulder the burden of servicing approximately 500 buses daily. Between the time morning routes end and afternoon runs begin, mechanics often have only a three- to four-hour turnaround window. Within that short timeframe, technicians must execute mandatory mechanical inspections, perform scheduled maintenance, and diagnose sudden breakdowns.

Under such acute pressure, Tillberg explained, technicians are forced to triage repairs, occasionally leaving minor issues like heating and air unaddressed to get buses back on the road. "I should not have to worry that I cannot do my job to the standards that I know should be done because I am stretched too thin," Tillberg told the board. "This is not because I stopped caring about my job. It's actually because I care too much." Tillberg warned that at least three other mechanics are actively seeking outside employment due to friction with departmental leadership, cautioning that further departures will compound an already unsustainable workload. His final day with the district is September 18th.

Following the public testimony, Cumberland County Schools announced on September 11th that it has retained the Raleigh-based law firm Tharrington Smith, LLP to conduct an independent investigation into the transportation department's management, safety practices, and day-to-day operating conditions. Superintendent Dr. Eric C. Bracy sought to reassure parents and staff that vehicle safety remains strictly governed by state guidelines. "We want our families and employees to know that CCS is listening and taking responsible action," Dr. Bracy said in a statement. "Our transportation procedures are guided by state standards, and this external review will provide an additional, objective assessment of our practices."

According to the district, CCS operates 482 yellow buses across the county. The district is allotted 20 bus mechanic positions; 15 are currently filled, leaving five vacancies. Two slots were recently addressed through a new hire and an internal promotion. District policy adheres to North Carolina Department of Public Instruction mandates, requiring 30-day cyclical inspections alongside daily driver pre-

(See ***MECHANIC'S PLEA,*** P. 6)

## Happy Retirement Mr. Scott!




At 85 years old, Bobby Scott has finally decided to retire — after spending nearly seven decades working for the same family farm.

Bobby officially joined Braswell Family Farms — one of the largest specialty egg producers on the East Coast and a fourth-generation family farm— in 1962 at just 22 years old and recently retired after nearly 64 years as an employee. But his history with the Braswell family goes back even further. At 17, Bobby began doing odd jobs for David Braswell, unknowingly beginning what would become a nearly 70-year relationship with the same family.

Over the course of his extraordinary career, Bobby worked for all four generations of the Braswell family and has even met and interacted with the young members of the fifth generation. He has watched the company evolve from one generation to the next while becoming part of the family farm's history himself.

## Farley Announces Return Of The Carolina Mining Star Program

RALEIGH, N.C. – Today, North Carolina Labor Commissioner Luke Farley announced the return of the Carolina Mining Star Program, a voluntary workplace safety and health initiative that recognizes mine and quarry operations demonstrating a strong commitment to protecting workers and continuously improving workplace safety.

The program's return builds on a strong year for mining safety in North Carolina. No fatal injuries were reported among North Carolina's mine and quarry workers during the 2025-2026 state fiscal year, and the industry's nonfatal injury rate remained well below the national average.

North Carolina recorded 1.33 nonfatal injuries per 200,000 employee-hours, compared with the national average of 1.62 during the same period.

"North Carolina's mining industry has shown that a strong commitment to safety can save lives and prevent injuries," Commissioner Farley said. "By bringing back the Carolina Mining Star Program, we can recognize the job creators who are leading by example while helping mine and quarry operations across our state identify practical ways to make their workplaces even safer."

The Carolina Mining Star Program is administered by the N.C. Department of Labor's Mine and Quarry Bureau. Participation begins with an application to the Department. After reviewing an application, NCDOL will work with the operation to schedule a pre-site visit and begin the program's evaluation process.

The program is designed to help participating operations:

- Increase employee participation in workplace safety and health;
- Strengthen communication of safety policies and standard operating procedures;
- Identify opportunities to improve existing safety and health programs;
- Reduce workplace injuries and their associated costs; and
- Earn recognition for an exceptional commitment to protecting workers.

The evaluation process looks beyond written policies to examine how an operation's safety and health programs work in practice. Areas considered include hazard assessments, employee training and involvement, emergency procedures, accident investigations, contractor safety, and management leadership.

"This program is about more than recognition," Farley said. "It is about bringing management and workers together, identifying hazards before someone gets hurt, and building a workplace culture in which everyone accepts responsibility for safety."

The Mine and Quarry Bureau supports safety at North Carolina's 243 active or intermittent mine sites through education and training, technical assistance, on-site consultations, safety and health evaluations, and accident and complaint investigations.

Mine and quarry operators interested in participating in the Carolina Mining Star Program may contact the NCDOL Mine and Quarry Bureau at 919-707-7932 or visit www.labor.nc.gov/safety-and-health/mine-and-quarry for participation requirements and application information.

**NCDOT TO HOLD PUBLIC MEETING REGARDING PROPOSED POOLE ROAD IMPROVEMENTS FROM WEST OF BARWELL ROAD TO HODGE ROAD IN WAKE COUNTY**

**STIP Project HL-0133L and HL-0133A**

**WAKE COUNTY** - The public is invited to a meeting with the N.C. Department of Transportation this month to discuss the proposed widening of Poole Road from Barwell Road to Hodge Road in Wake County.

The proposed improvements — State Transportation Improvement Program project Nos. HL-0133L and HL-0133A — would expand Poole Road from two lanes to four lanes and include a center median to separate traffic traveling in opposite directions. It's intended to address ongoing growth and increasing travel demand throughout the corridor by reducing future traffic congestion, improving roadway operations, and supporting anticipated development.

More details, including maps of the proposed design, can be found on the project website.

The meeting will be held **5-7 p.m. Sept. 28** at the **Barwell Road Community Center, 5857 Barwell Park Drive**, in **Raleigh**. Interested residents can drop in any time during those hours to learn more about the proposal, ask questions and speak with NCDOT representatives. There will not be a formal presentation.

People may also submit comments by phone, email or mail by **Oct. 12**.

For more information, contact **NCDOT Division 5 Project Delivery Staff Engineer S. Reid Davidson at 919 317-4700; srdavidson@ncdot.gov; or 2612 N. Duke St. in Durham.**

NCDOT will provide auxiliary aids and services under the Americans with Disabilities Act for disabled people who wish to participate in this workshop. Anyone requiring special services should contact **Aleksandra Djurkovic, Environmental Analysis Unit, at 1598 Mail Service Center in Raleigh; 919-707-6024; or andjurkovic@ncdot.gov** as early as possible so that arrangements can be made.

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

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

# Business Owners Press Leaders For New State Contracting Goals

NC NEWSLINE — For years, Gerald Carr knew where to turn when his Charlotte construction company needed help navigating North Carolina's state contracting system.

Now, Carr said, the rules have changed and businesses like his are scrambling to figure out what comes next.

Carr, CEO of All-Pro Builders and Restorations, was among the dozens of Black and minority business owners and advocates who gathered in Greensboro Thursday to press state leaders for new contracting opportunities. The move follows the dismantling of the state's Office for Historically Underutilized Businesses.

The town hall, held at the International Civil Rights Center and Museum, was organized by The Collective, a coalition of minority business organizations including the Greensboro Business League, the Greater Durham Black Chamber of Commerce and the NC Black Alliance.

The message from the business owners and advocates in the room was straightforward: The state needs to make sure minority-owned and other small businesses don't lose access to state contracts.

The group is calling for all businesses previously certified through the HUB program to be transferred into the state's Small Business Enterprise program, which is intended to provide contracting opportunities to small businesses across North Carolina. The group also called on Gov. Josh Stein's administration to create a new Advisory Council on Black Affairs.

The asks come less than two months after lawmakers eliminated the HUB office as part of the state's 2026 budget. As part of a greater state effort, House Republicans also overrode multiple vetoes from Stein, passing bills to cut government spending on diversity, equity and inclusion programs.

The office was created in 1999 following an executive order from then-Gov. Jim Hunt. The HUB office helped minority small businesses compete for state and local government contracts.

Businesses certified through the HUB received dedicated training, were directly notified of new bidding opportunities and were part of a public searchable database.

The budget change ended the state's recognition of HUB certifications for state government contracts. The state Department of Administration said businesses can continue pursuing state contracts, but HUB certifications won't be renewed.

The distinction offers little comfort to some business owners who say the certification was an important part of how they found work and built relationships with larger contractors. Carr said he worked closely with the HUB office when he needed support competing for contracts and connecting with other construction companies.

He said his company lost a contract worth more than $400,000, just three days after the HUB office was shut down.

Carr's experience was part of a larger discussion at Thursday's gathering about how the loss of the HUB office could affect more than just individual businesses. Other speakers described the closure as a disruption to businesses that had spent years building relationships and pursuing contracts through the state system.

Rep. Amos Quick III, D-Guilford, said the state needs to do more to communicate the economic effects of programs designed to support minority-owned businesses.

"We must begin to amplify the impact and the positive impact that these types of initiatives and policies have," he said.

The criticism comes as the state tries to build a replacement system. At the event, state officials announced a new accelerator program scheduled to open Oct. 15. The program is expected to help businesses affected by the HUB office's closure navigate the transition and fast-track small-business certifications. The state Department of Administration will oversee the program.

Gabriel Esparza, the department's secretary, said more than 6,000 businesses were enrolled in the HUB program when it closed. That left many business owners trying to understand what the changes meant for their existing certifications and future contracts.

"We want to make this the best thing it can be, not only for small businesses but also to honor the spirit and legacy of all of the work that so many of you did and continue to do to lift Black businesses, minority businesses, and women-owned businesses across the state," he said.

# North Carolina Drops "Barrier" Teacher Entrance Exam

WUNC - This fall, colleges of education across North Carolina are welcoming back students who had previously left their programs solely because they struggled to pass a standardized entrance exam.

At UNC-Greensboro's School of Education, about 35 students returned.

"We saw a large number of music ed students, dance ed students, birth through kindergarten students, and elementary (education) students who returned to the major," said Jacqueline Dozier, Director for Student Success at UNC-Greensboro's School of Education.

The students are eligible to return because a provision in the state budget eliminated a requirement for them to pass the Praxis Core test before taking upper level education classes.

Supporters of the new policy change say the exam was a barrier for some who wanted to pursue a career in teaching. In the past, those who failed to pass the test by the end of their sophomore year were forced to switch majors.

"We had some happy students," Dozier said. "It just came in time for them to register for classes and not delay their time in the program."

Praxis Core was a gateway, but



colleges say there are others ways to evaluate prospective teachers

The Praxis Core tests high school math, reading, and writing, with content similar to the ACT and SAT. More universities have made the ACT and SAT optional for admission in recent years, relying more heavily on students' high school grades for admission.

"We have students who are coming to us, and the first time they're going to experience a standardized test could be the Praxis Core, and so there's been testing anxieties," Dozier said.

Dozier said a handful of UNC-Greensboro students fail to meet the Praxis Core requirement each year, with many more needing to take the exam multiple times before they pass. Each attempt costs $90 to $150, depending on how many subjects are retaken.

With the policy change, students must still meet GPA minimums in their college coursework to take advanced education classes, and pass content exams in the subjects they intend to teach before becoming fully licensed teachers.

Plus, colleges of education may begin rethinking other ways to evaluate students to ensure they're ready for the classroom with the elimination of the Praxis Core.

"It has been seen as a potential barrier, but I think we're also being very aware of okay, it was a barrier. We saw some issues, but what did we get from it?" said Nichole Smith, interim chair of the Department of Educator Preparation at North Carolina A&T State University.

Smith said N.C. A&T also uses an assessment to evaluate students' qualities as a teacher, such as communication skills, professionalism and ability to take constructive feedback.

Change could boost enrollment at teaching colleges

Education officials in State Superintendent Maurice "Mo" Green's administration advocated for the change in state law, which could boost enrollment at North Carolina teaching colleges after a decline among traditional undergraduate students.

"This can be very important if this is one less thing that the students have to worry about in order to become a teacher," said Smith.

Smith and Dozier said their universities will be closely tracking how the policy change affects enrollment in teaching programs.

"We want to know: Okay, was it Praxis Core keeping people from going into the profession, or was it a myriad of other things?" Smith said.

Smith added that there are many other barriers for students interested in teaching, such as poor perceptions of pay and working conditions. Dozier said she's hopeful about what this change in the state budget – plus the budget's boost for beginning teacher pay – will do for recruitment.

"We're really interested or curious as to what this means as the undergraduate admissions counselors go on the road to recruit for us for the coming year, and will we have more students willing to become teachers?" Dozier said.

## MCCLATCHY CUTS

*Continued from page 2*

to their union, with another 10 photo editors told they will lose their jobs sometime this year.

Those cuts come just under four months after the news cooperative laid off 20 U.S.-based journalists, part of a restructuring that pivoted away from print and toward visual journalism "to align our operations with what our top customers need from us today," an AP spokesman, Patrick Maks, said at the time. He did not immediately respond to an email Friday.

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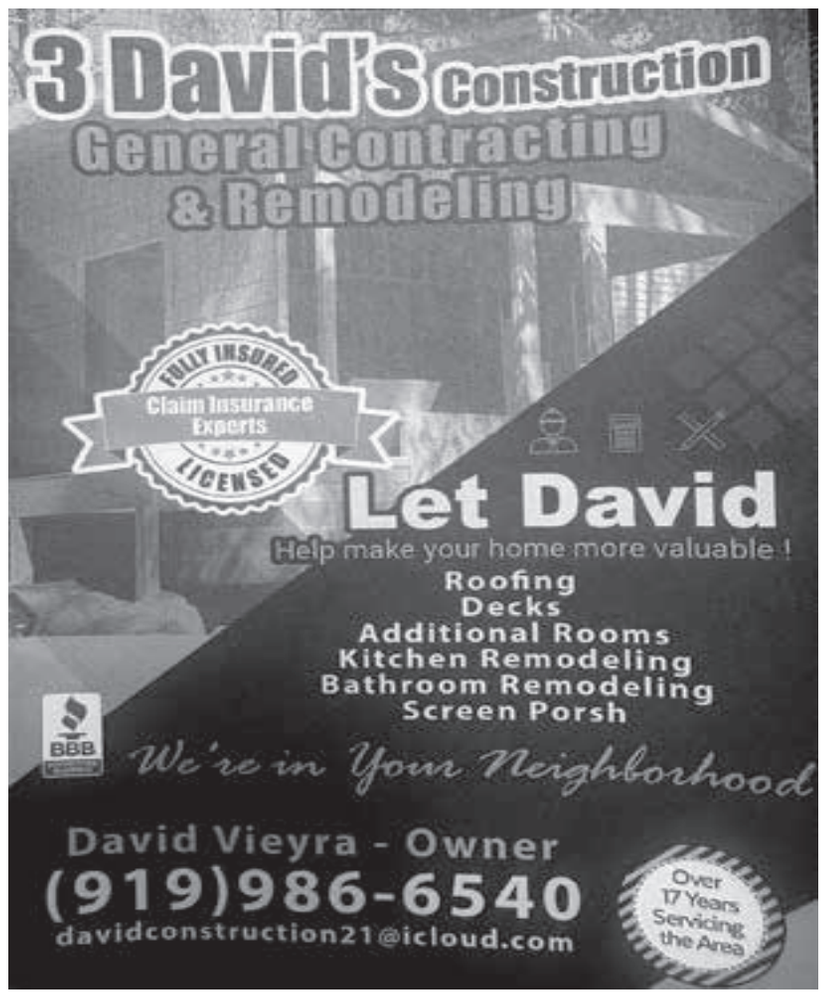
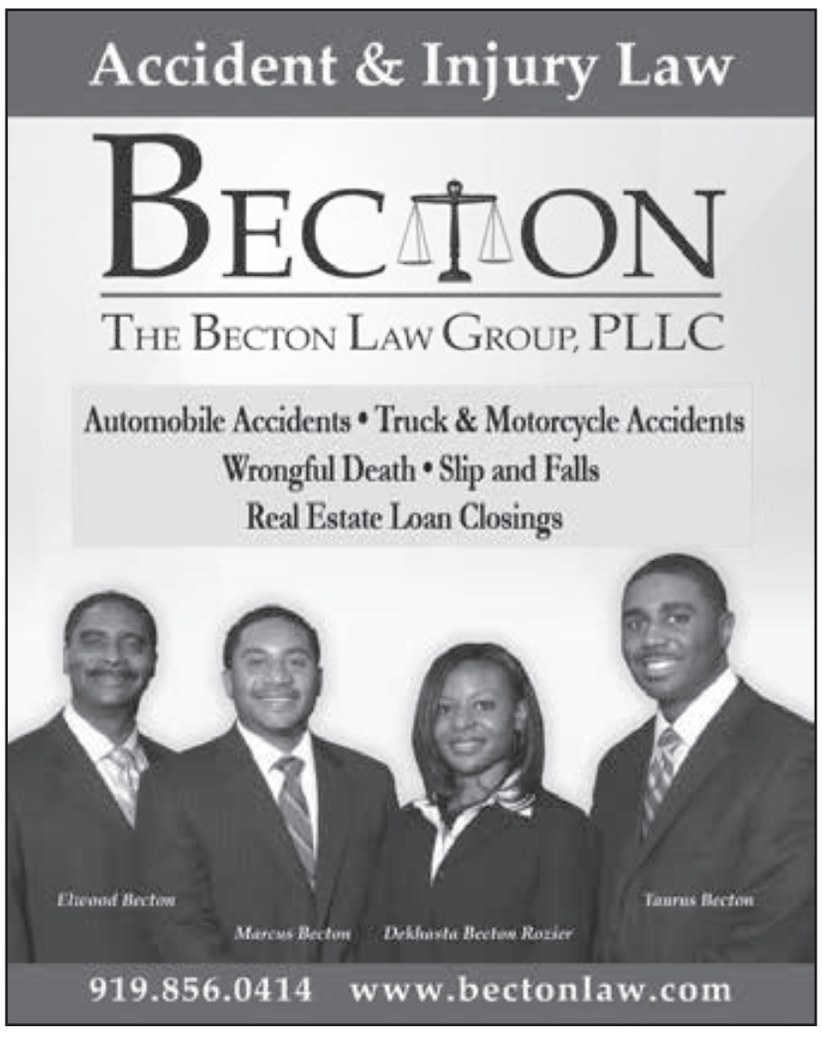

















# Health & Wellness

## Are Way Too Many Americans Taking Antidepressants?

**Andrew McLean**
*University of North Dakota*



Drugs for treating depression are among the most prescribed category of medications in the U.S. – 1 in 6 American adults take them.

Some health researchers and advocates have raised concerns that too many patients are using antidepressants and that patients who want to stop taking them struggle to do so. One of the most prominent voices on this point is Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., who launched an effort in May 2026 encouraging doctors to find other ways besides antidepressants and other psychiatric drugs to treat depression when possible.

As a psychiatrist for over 35 years, including a past role as the medical director of North Dakota's Department of Human Services, I've seen both the benefits and the problems with antidepressants. In my view, there are grains of truth to claims that they are overused, but the full picture is much more nuanced.

Over half of all antidepressant medications prescribed are a type of drug called selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors, or SSRIs. The first SSRI – fluoxetine, better known by its brand name Prozac – was approved in 1987. A handful of other types of SSRIs, which work through different mechanisms, also exists.

Antidepressants can be helpful for moderate to severe depression, but they are typically not warranted for mild depression, as the side effects might outweigh any potential benefits. For mild depression, many effective nonmedication treatments exist.

However, the distinction between mild and more severe symptoms sometimes gets lost. In everyday language, people use the term "depression" to describe everything from a minor sense of the blahs to a serious clinical condition requiring treatment.

Healthcare workers in primary care clinics routinely screen patients for depression using a widely used questionnaire. This tool can be effective in flagging patients who might need further testing or treatment. But in my experience, if used on its own to diagnose, it can be easily misinterpreted.

A person having a bad week or two who scores higher on a screening test might be prescribed a medication that was not necessary. But the tool can also fail to flag people who do need care. Over a third of people who die by suicide have visited a primary care provider in the month before their death. For those 55 and older, it rises to more than two-thirds.

According to a 2026 analysis, most prescriptions for antidepressants in the U.S. are not written by psychiatrists. In some cases, these medicines are prescribed by nurse practitioners or physician assistants with psychiatric qualifications, but most are written by primary care providers, who are not specialists in mental health.

Clinicians who provide primary care don't just have less time to evaluate patients' mental health concerns. They also have less access to ways of treating depression apart from medication, such as talk therapy.

Primary clinics that have behavioral health providers and consult with psychiatrists tend to help patients more effectively and provide more treatment options. These types of collaborative approaches to care are still rare but are becoming more common.

I recall my father, who was a country doctor in general practice, saying that half of his patients' problems had to do with mental health issues, and he didn't know how best to help them. Today's primary care providers do receive more training on mental health issues, and they are often more equipped to recommend lifestyle changes that can be especially helpful for people with less severe depression symptoms.

But it's simply human nature that when given a choice between taking a daily medication and engaging in activities that require commitment and intention, many will choose medication.

Stigma has been a long-standing barrier in seeking mental healthcare.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, anxiety and depression have become more prevalent. That's particularly true among adolescents and young adults – especially young women, who tend to experience less stigma around mental health issues.

New rules during the pandemic also made it significantly easier for people to access mental health treatment – both therapy and medications – remotely, via telehealth. Such access continues to grow. Before the pandemic, only 1% to 2% of antidepressant medications were prescribed via telehealth. By 2022, it was roughly one-third.

Given these trends, and the fact that clinicians often turn to medication for treating depression regardless of the severity, the uptick in antidepressant prescriptions since 2020 should come as no surprise. Virtual visits allow people to navigate more easily around stigma and find increased and convenient access to care. And many people feel more comfortable getting such care in a primary care clinic rather than a mental health clinic.

For all these reasons, I would say that antidepressant medications are likely overused in some cases. Undoubtedly, some people who take them either don't benefit from them or could address their symptoms in other ways.

On the other hand, expanded access to mental healthcare – including medication – has also enabled people who need treatment to receive it. Even now, many Americans with serious depression receive no or limited treatment.

What's more, in my view, this imbalance reflects systemic problems in the U.S. healthcare system at least as much as physicians' prescribing habits or patients' requests.

For example, primary care clinics are a great place to screen for mental health issues, but getting proper treatment may involve more specialized care – which many patients can't access. And on the business side, clinicians get little support in helping patients with lifestyle changes and nonmedication treatments – rather than prescribing drugs.

Kennedy has claimed that for some people, stopping antidepressants can be harder than quitting heroin.

## Hospital Prepayment Requirements Add New Wrinkles To Patients' Financial Responsibility



Thomas Zordani flew from his home in Denver to Phoenix for a consultation with a Mayo Clinic neurosurgeon, hoping to find out what could be done to treat his debilitating headaches after worrisome brain scan findings.

When making the appointment, Zordani said, he'd been told the clinic was in his insurer's network. Upon arrival, Zordani was summoned to the clinic's financial office and told he had to make a $5,000 preservice deposit, because Mayo had since determined it did not accept his insurance. He was automatically designated "self-pay," even though his plan had out-of-network benefits.

Not having that kind of cash on hand — and angry on principle — he refused. His appointment was canceled.

"I was so livid," Zordani said, recalling that day in early April 2024. He later learned that Mayo had sent a message to him in his insurance carrier's patient portal shortly before his visit with an estimate of the cost: $565, not the larger amount it later demanded.

Traditionally, patients usually receive bills for their share only after getting treatment. But what Zordani faced is becoming increasingly common — hospitals or other medical providers seeking prepayments.

"We regret that this individual's experience did not meet the high standard of communication we strive to provide when helping our patients understand their insurance coverage and financial responsibility," Andrea Kalmanovitz, Mayo's communications director, said in an emailed statement. "When prospective patients don't have clarity that Mayo Clinic is not in-network with their health plan, unexpected pre-service deposit requests may result."

Mayo's website says it requires prepayments in a variety of cases, including for "noncontracted" — also known as out-of-network — insurance plans.

The trend of hospitals asking for money up front represents a double whammy for patients.

Medical providers are collecting larger shares of what patients might owe at a time when rising deductibles mean patients are owing more for care. The preservice charge could be all or part of a remaining deductible, for example, or a sizable percentage of what the visit or treatment might cost. Those deductibles go up when hospital prices, drug costs, and labor expenses increase, as insurers try to slow premium growth by shifting more costs to patients.

People are "basically being asked to self-insure," said Richard Gundling, a senior vice president at the Healthcare Financial Management Association, an organization for finance professionals.

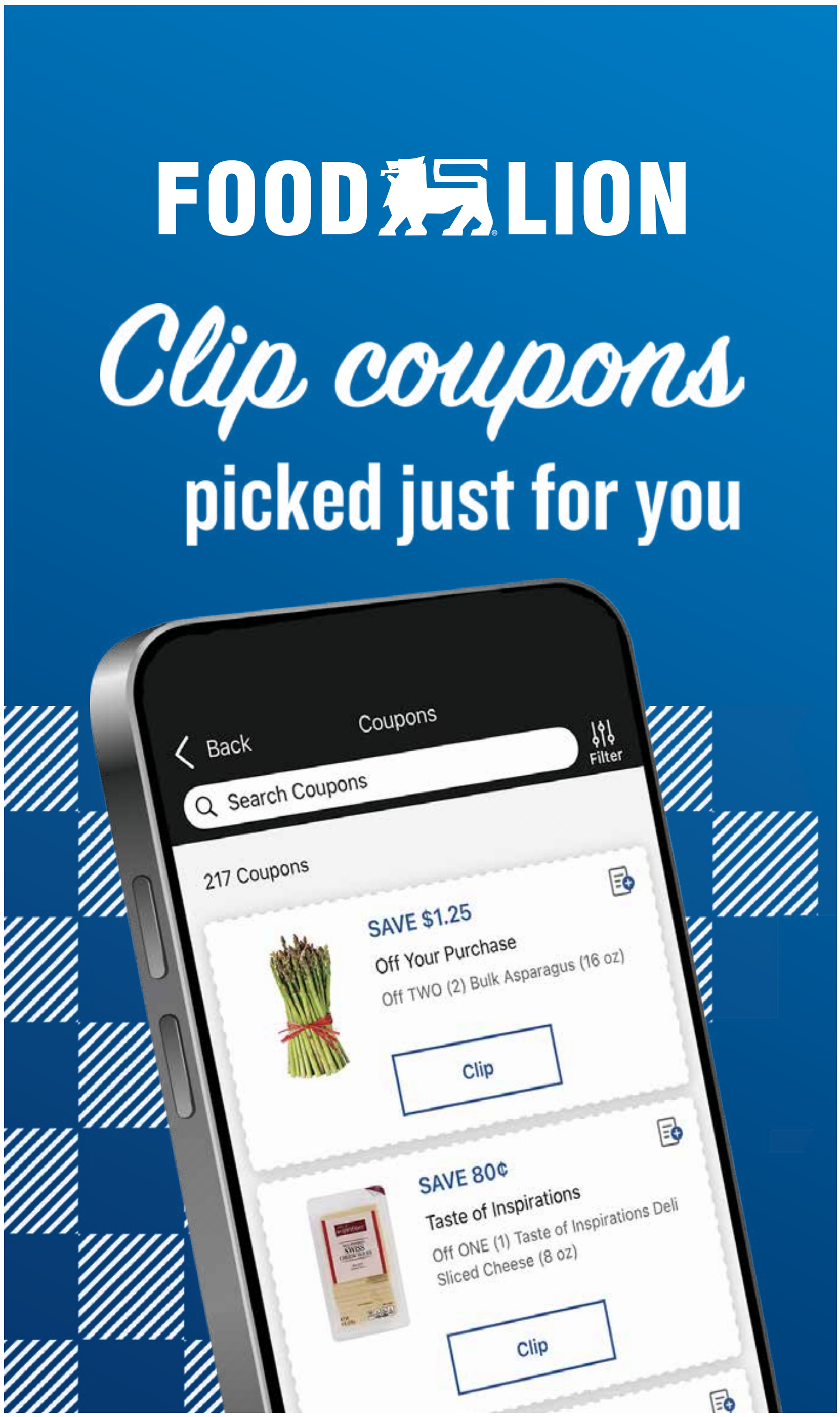
As that happens, hospitals figure more patients will have trouble meeting those deductibles, so they want to get as much up front as possible.

"Things like preservice deposits and those kinds of moves are probably going to become more and more likely," said Chip Kahn, a visiting senior fellow at KFF and the American Enterprise Institute and former president and CEO of the Federation of American Hospitals. "That will make it harder on the provider, the clinician, and harder on the patients."

The deposits can't be viewed in isolation, Gundling said: It's a bigger issue than just hospitals asking for money up front. The challenge, he said, is: "How do we maintain access to care when more patients can't absorb the level of out-of-pocket costs?"

Already, consumers are increasingly worried about paying for healthcare. A recent KFF health tracking poll found that lower out-of-pocket costs ranked as the top change insured adults would like to see from their coverage plans. KFF is a health information nonprofit that includes KFF Health News.

The average deductible in family coverage offered by employers is $3,762 per person, according to KFF, while the average deductible in Affordable Care Act plans jumped 37% this year to a similar amount, $3,786.



# Arts & Culture

## Citizen Spotlight: Preserving Legacy with Shenette E. Swann

**By Jheri Hardaway**
*Staff Writer*



Raleigh, NC - When Shenette E. Swann speaks about cultural preservation, she doesn't just talk about artifacts behind glass. She speaks about living rooms filled with music, the quiet courage of local educators, and the transformative power of ensuring Black families feel seen.

As the newly appointed Director of the African American Cultural Resources Unit within the City of Raleigh's Historic Resources and Museum Program, Swann steps into leadership with a clear, deeply personal compass. "These are big shoes to fill," Swann notes, "and I want to do it with grace and support."

To understand Swann's approach to public history, one must look to her foundation. "I am the daughter of two heroes. Period," she says. Her parents, James and Brenda, forged a home where service and creativity went hand in hand. Her father, who retired from the United States Navy, was an enrolled student during the historic uprising at North Carolina A&T State University. Her mother, an educator and soul singer who carried childhood memories of seeing crosses burning in open fields, channeled her energy into grassroots action, serving as president of the Navy Wives Club and directing a nonprofit in Memphis, Tennessee, for families living below the poverty line.

Together, they were working musicians, raising Swann amid band rehearsals, resilience, and unapologetic joy. It was also her mother who placed the primary tools of cultural preservation directly into her hands. "When I was a child, my mother created a notebook she called 'Black History.' At a time when Black History Month in school often meant learning about the same few historical figures, she made photocopies of Black leaders and put them together in a notebook for me... I still have that notebook today." That notebook became the blueprint for a career dedicated to putting Black history and dignity into the hands of others.

Swann's ten-year tenure at Marbles Kids Museum in the heart of downtown Raleigh served as a crucible for her community-centered philosophy. Upon entering the space, she posed an essential question: "What would it look like if Black families could walk into this space and know that they belong here?"

S he moved beyond surface-level representation, establishing cultural programs centered on Black artists, farmers, and innovators, alongside intentional staff dialogues addressing racial bias and tokenism. During this period, she created "Clumsy Conversations," an internal framework designed to let staff address uncomfortable issues around privilege, bias, and equity without needing all the answers upfront. The program's impact extended far beyond Marbles. Swann presented the model twice to the North Carolina Museums Council, earning the council's Diversity and Inclusion Award and offering institutions statewide a practical roadmap for engaging historically excluded audiences. "Inclusion is not simply about inviting people into a space," Swann explains. "It is about making sure they can recognize themselves once they arrive."

In her new role with the City of Raleigh, Swann oversees vital cultural landmarks, entering at a moment of significant revitalization: First, John P. "Top" Greene African American Cultural Park: Preparing for an extensive two-year renovation to expand its facilities and community programming. Next, the Pope House Museum: Continuing to expand its collections while breaking ground on a dedicated heritage garden honoring North Carolina's pioneering Black physician, Dr. Manassa Thomas Pope. Finally, South Park Heritage Trail: Promoting engagement along the 3.2-mile walking loop celebrating the historic South Park neighborhood.

Swann anchors her vision for these sites in three core actions: Remembering the foundational stories that built Raleigh, Celebrating current traditions and civic achievements, and Growing through deliberate, cross-generational dialogue.

Beyond her civic duties, Swann moves through the Triangle as a creative, a professional jazz and soul vocalist, songwriter, percussionist, and mental health journaling coach. Her journey underscores a message she urges the readers of The Carolinian to extend to the next generation: give young people room to evolve. "We can't always give them answers based on the world we grew up in," Swann advises. "What we can do is give them space to process what they are experiencing and come alongside them. Our communities become stronger when we replace judgment with support."

For Swann, the core of citizenship remains simple and actionable: "Community is what happens when we decide that our neighbor's story matters, that our history is worth preserving, and that the next generation deserves opportunities we may not have had."

Looking back, Swann realizes how much of her life's work was planted in her long before she knew what she would become. "My parents taught me that our history matters, our communities matter, and that we can experience hardship without losing our joy. My mother put Black history in my hands as a child, and in many ways, I've spent my career putting those stories into the hands of other people, especially children. Because I wasn't constantly trying to live up to someone else's expectations of who I was supposed to become, I had the space to discover who I actually was. We can guide them, support them, and help them navigate difficult experiences without deciding who they should be or what their lives should look like."

## MECHANIC'S EMOTIONAL PLEA

*Continued from page 3*



Tillberg's impassioned stand aligns with growing civic frustration among Cumberland County parents and advocates. Toni Stewart, a CCS parent whose child attends Anne Chesnutt Middle School, has been rallying community members to speak directly at school board sessions. Stewart, who previously organized against the proposed closure of Anne Chesnutt Middle and raised alarms when air-conditioning failures forced Westover Middle School into remote instruction, emphasized that community oversight is vital. Stewart's message to families across the county has remained resolute: show up, speak out, and hold elected leaders accountable to the staff and children inside local facilities.

As Tharrington Smith begins its external assessment, Cumberland County parents and employees will look to the next Board of Education meeting for transparent answers on whether real structural relief is on the way for the workers who keep North Carolina's schoolchildren safe on the road.



## THE GOLDEN YEARS

By Judykay Jefferson

When old folks like me say things like this, it's easy to write it off as resistance to technology. If you know me at all, you know this is not that. In fact, I am a firm believer in using the technology available to us to make life easier. That being said, there is reason to be concerned.

Recently, I read an article entitled Engineered Outrage (Liberty, July/August 2026) by Jeffrey Gang in a publication that labels itself as "A Magazine of Religious Freedom." What got my attention was the subtitle, "How big tech's attention economy feeds Christian nationalism and rewires our souls." I have been struggling for a while to put words to my concerns about the impact of the deluge of freely broadcasted content presented as truth and wisdom. These days you have to work harder to get away from unfiltered content masked as information than to find out anything, fact or fiction, about anyone.

Specifically, what grabbed me first was the author's statement that "divisive content (kept) keeps people engaged, and engagement generated advertising revenue." There's nothing new about this concept. Think cliffhangers. Think teasers (next time on General Hospital...). What separates this from that is there are no censors applying the rules of general acceptability. No Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to determine and enforce both the Equal Time Rule for legally qualified candidates and the former Fairness Doctrine, repealed in 1987. In fact, these days "fairness, ethics, accuracy are no longer legally required in US broadcasting. And when it comes to social media the Federal Trade Commission (FTC)is the agency that is supposed to regulate platforms for misleading users, mishandling data, failing to protect minors, and allowing deceptive ads or endorsements. And yet, all of these things happen daily, across the internet, and Big Tech's profit make shareholders rich.

Big Tech is the new Big Pharma. Gang opened his article with a 2018 internal study that revealed that Facebook's algorithms rewarded content that "exploited the human brain's attraction to conflict." He then went on to say, "The public might never have learned any of this, except that in 2021 a Facebook employee named Frances Haugen copied tens of thousands of internal pages and gave them to The Wall Street Journal." That led to her testifying before Congress that Facebook's leaders knew their platforms were causing harm and choosing "profit over safety." Sound familiar? Isn't that exactly what happened with opioids, widely prescribed for pain. Drugs like OxyContin, Lortab, and Fentanyl were promoted by manufacturers as "safe" for chronic pain despite known dependency.

In other words, it's bigger than wide-spread normalization of crazy, extreme, us-against-them politics. While that certainly is a dark cloud over our country disguised as nationalism and patriotism, the argument is well made in Zac Gershberg and Sean Illing's The Paradox of Democracy, that open communication environments, so essential to democracy, "are permanently vulnerable to demagoguery and spectacle because nothing guarantees the truth will outperform outrage."

It is important to accept that none of this is without serious consequences. Perhaps the scariest thing is these consequences not side-effects but intentional mind control in an Orwellian sense. The impact of these platforms' mind molding, numbing content produces a particular type of person who is driven by anxiety, outrage, and tribalism. This mentality sees every difference as a threat, every unique thinker as the enemy. Truly, this is not pro-American. It's also not pro-Christianity. It is also not the result of a massive shift in thinking. In fact, thinking isn't the driver; constant exposure forms repetitive reaction that becomes habit, developed deep in our consciousness. When it is presented through visual filters, accompanied by "trending" music, and presented earnestly by people who look like us but may be AI generations, it's easy to get sucked in.

Tim Alberta described it as an "alternative media ecosystem" and said that "something is making disciples of people more effectively than their churches, and that something is the algorithm." You can see this point isn't being ignored in the faith community. "Traditional" churches are surviving on multi-generational familial loyalty. The "mega-churches" are fighting fire with fire and providing internet access and social media content several times daily. It's a battle without a definitive ending. As we old people say, 'the devil is busy.' All the rhythmic upbeat gospel song will not do it. We must use what God gave us. We must trade mindless influence for rational thought. Difference is not our enemy.

## Tuskegee Airmen Won The First Air Force 'Top Gun' Aerial Gunnery Competition



**332nd pilots at the 1949 Air Force 'Top Gun' Aerial Gunnery Competition. (U.S. Air Force)**

Military.com—Lt. Col. James Harvey had one wish for much of his Air Force career. He wanted the 332nd Fighter Group — the Tuskegee Airmen — to be recognized for winning the Air Force's first-ever aerial gunnery competition.

"We were the original 'Top Gun,'" he told AARP Studios. "Our competitors didn't think we were real. We were Black and flying this obsolete aircraft. We weren't supposed to win it."

Harvey was drafted into the Army in 1943 as an Army Air Corps engineer. Just a few years earlier, he'd seen a group of Curtiss P-40 Warhawks flying over his home in Pennsylvania, which planted the idea of flying one someday into his mind. So when the chance to apply to the Air Corps' Aviation Cadet Training Program came up, he jumped at it.

In October 1944, he graduated from the Tuskegee Flight Program and was commissioned a second lieutenant. Like many of the new Tuskegee Airmen, he was assigned to replace pilots in the 332nd fighting in Europe. Although Harvey never saw action during World War II, he and his fellow Black pilots continued serving.

The postwar Tuskegee Airmen made history just a few years later, but their accomplishment went unrecognized for decades afterward.

Despite what the movie "Top Gun" will tell you, the U.S. military's first real-world "Top Gun" program wasn't set up by the Navy. It was an Air Force program that first took place in 1949. Tuskegee Airmen Capt. Alva Temple, 1st Lt. Harry Stewart, 1st Lt. James H. Harvey III and alternate Halbert Alexander, competing in P-47N Thunderbolts, would win it.

In January 1949, the chief of staff of the Air Force put a call out to all USAF fighter groups to send their three top scorers to represent their group at the first Top Gun "weapons meet."

The airmen went to Las Vegas Air Force Base, now Nellis Air Force Base, and pilots competed in five events: aerial gunnery, dive bombing, skip bombing, rocket firing and panel strafing. Harvey called it the "highlight of my career."

Harvey had a reason to be proud of his team's achievements. Despite flying obsolete aircraft, they led the 10-day event almost every step of the way. Their competitors flew the P-51 Mustang and the P-82 Twin Mustang fighters.

"It didn't matter, though," Harvey said. "It's the skill of the pilot that determines what's going to happen. They were there to compete, and we were there to win."

The competition is now called "William Tell," and the winners of the annual event have their names added to the list of past winners in the Air Force Association's yearly almanac. For 46 years, the winner of the 1949 competition was listed as "unknown." It wasn't until 1995 that it finally listed the winner as the 332nd Fighter Group.

"When it was announced that we, the 332nd, had won the trophy, the room was quiet," Harvey recalled. "There was no applause or anything like that. Because we weren't supposed to win it. Little did I know, this was the last time the public would see the trophy for 55 years."

The trophy sat in storage at the National Museum of the United States Air Force at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio, for much of that time. Harvey went on to fight in the Korean War, becoming the first Black jet pilot in combat, flying 126 combat missions. He retired in 1965.

Historian Zellie Rainey Orr discovered the trophy and the story of the 332nd's epic "Top Gun" victory. In 2004, the trophy was finally put on display in the Air Force museum. Harvey's wish that Nellis Air Force Base would recognize the win took a few more years and intervention from AARP.

AARP's Wish of a Lifetime program seeks to change the way society views the values of older people by granting them one of their lifelong wishes. It learned about Harvey and looked into the true story. The result was that Nellis Air Force Base recognized the victory with a commemorative plaque posted there in January 2022, honoring the achievement of the Tuskegee Airmen.

"It proves that if you believe in something, and you stay at it, you'll finally get the recognition you deserve," said Harvey, who turned 98 in 2021. "This plaque, finally, after many years, will be at the top, number one."

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# Community

## Raleigh Native Achieves Scientific First In TB Research

Spelman College—MaKyra Wilson, C'2027, recently became the first person to engineer variants of AmiB2, a newly characterized gene involved in bacterial metabolism and cell-wall maintenance, and introduce them into a safer model bacterium used to study Tuberculosis. As a result, the DNA tools used in the discovery will be subsequently named after her and used to support future research.

Tuberculosis remains one of the world's deadliest infectious diseases, claiming approximately 1 million lives each year. According to Wilson, research like this is critical because Tuberculosis still has no definitive cure capable of overcoming many drug-resistant strains.

"Our work in the Fortune Lab represents one of the first steps toward understanding how metabolic genes such as AmiB2 influence bacterial survival and dissemination throughout the body," said Wilson, who aspires to become a physician-scientist. "This discovery provides a scientific foundation that may guide the development of future therapeutic strategies against resistant M. tuberculosis populations."

Wilson, a biology major and Ethel Waddell Githii Honors Scholar, made this discovery under the guidance of the Du Bois Scholars Program. Launched in 2024, the program seeks to honor and uplift academic excellence through research-based collaboration with Harvard




University and HBCUs. It is a fully funded nine-week internship at the Harvard Summer Undergraduate Research Village (HSURV) for rising juniors and seniors.

As a scholar, Wilson received hands-on mentorship from Harvard faculty through access to rigorous, cutting-edge research opportunities. At the conclusion of the Du Bois Scholars Program, Wilson presented her findings to the faculty, researchers, physicians, fellows and scholars at Harvard Medical School.

"MaKyra's work was important because we hypothesize that Mtb bacteria are evolving mutations in metabolic genes that allow them to spread through the body more efficiently and hide in tissues like lymph nodes," said Dr. Sarah Fortune, Wilson's mentor and John LaPorte Given Professor of Immunology and Infectious Diseases at Harvard. "By making these clinically relevant mutant strains, MaKyra accelerated our ability to understand Mtb dissemination."

In the future, Wilson aspires to pursue a joint MD/Ph.D to develop innovative, equitable approaches to patient care and medical practice.

"As a Spelman student, it has been a privilege to represent the College while contributing to groundbreaking research at Harvard," said Wilson. "I hope my experience can inspire other students to pursue opportunities in scientific research and medicine."

## Fuquay-Varina 7th Grader Makai Climbs to Top 15 in Nat'l Youth Athlete of the Year

FUQUAY-VARINA, N.C — Makai, a 12-year-old 7th grader from Fuquay-Varina, has advanced to the Top 15 in Russell Wilson's Youth Athlete of the Year competition, a national program that recognizes young athletes for making a difference both on and off the field. Top 10 finalists will be announced tonight at 8:00 PM.

Makai plays for a local club competing at the National 1 League level, one of the highest levels of youth club soccer in the country. Between practices, games, and travel with his team, he maintains straight-A honor roll grades and volunteers with local charities, a combination his family and community say sets him apart in the competition.

"I'm incredibly proud of how he juggles it all at such a young age," said Janel Woodard, Makai's mother. "What amazes me most is that he's always looking for new ways to get involved and give back. He's a thoughtful, respectful kid, and our whole community would love to see him go all the way."




The Youth Athlete of the Year competition is produced by Colossal in partnership with NFL quarterback Russell Wilson, and past winners have been featured in national campaigns, including advertising with 3BRAND appearing on CBS and in Sports Illustrated. Voting is open now and the public is encouraged to cast a vote for Makai.

Makai comes from a long lineage of Honduran soccer players. He enjoys being part of a team, working toward a common goal, and overcoming challenges together. One of his favorite parts of the game is the brotherhood he has built with his teammates through both the victories and the adversity. Most of all, he loves having fun while playing the sport he enjoys.



## NSBE Experience STEM Expo

**Saturday was an inspiring day at the NSBE Experience STEM Expo at NC State University's James B. Hunt Jr. Library. The event brought students, families, educators STEM professionals and community members together for an engaging afternoon focused on STEM.**

## For Durham's Black Community, Restoration Starts With the Land

**By Judaea Ingram**

*Special To The Carolinian*

DURHAM, N.C. — In a garden in North Durham, restoration means more than planting vegetables. It means reconnecting with the land, building community, sharing food and creating space for Black people to slow down and reconnect with themselves and one another.

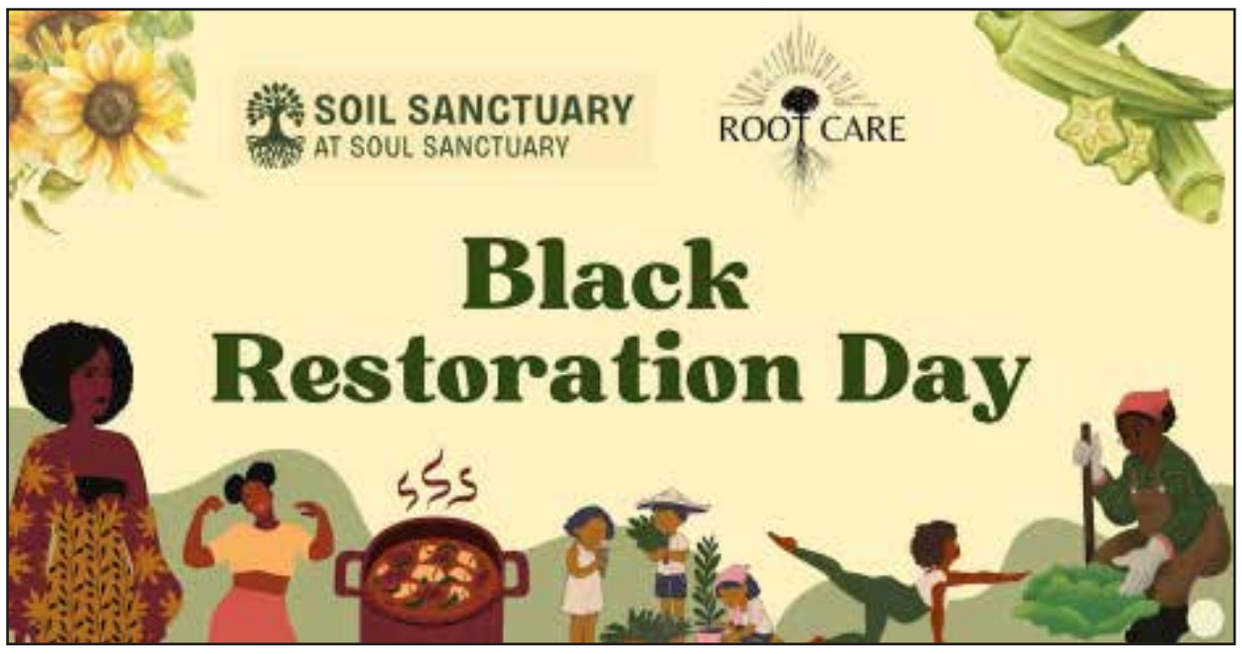
Those ideas came together Sept. 13 at Soul Sanctuary during Black Restoration Day, a community celebration centered around Soil Sanctuary, a garden collective in North Durham.

The afternoon brought people together for garden tours, food, movement and opportunities to connect with the land. The event was designed as a family-friendly gathering for Black, African, Caribbean and diasporic communities.

At its core, the event asked a simple but significant question: What does restoration look like for Black communities?

For organizers, one answer can be found in the soil.

Soil Sanctuary is a garden space stewarded by Black women and nonbinary people. The space creates an opportunity for community members to engage with growing food and caring for the land while also creating connections that extend beyond the garden itself.




The emphasis on land carries particular weight in Black communities. For generations, Black Americans have had their relationships with land shaped by slavery, displacement, discriminatory housing policies and unequal access to property ownership. At the same time, agriculture, gardening and food traditions have remained important parts of Black cultural life.

Black Restoration Day placed those histories alongside a more present-day vision: creating spaces where Black people can gather, grow and restore.

The event also reflected a broader understanding of environmental justice. Environmental justice is often discussed through pollution, climate change and access to clean air and water. But for communities organizing around restoration, it can also mean having access to green spaces, healthy food and places where people can develop a relationship with the environment.

The North Carolina Environmental Justice Network, which listed the event, describes its work as supporting communities in addressing environmental justice and developing community-driven solutions.

That community-driven approach was visible in the structure of Black Restoration Day. Rather than treating environmental work as something separate from culture or community, the gathering connected the land with food, movement, family and collective care.

For participants, a garden can become more than a place to grow food. It can become a gathering place, an educational space and a way to pass knowledge between generations. That is particularly important as Durham continues to change.

The city has experienced significant growth and development, creating new opportunities while also raising questions about affordability, displacement and who gets to benefit from the city's growth.

Spaces such as Soil Sanctuary offer a different model of community development, one centered on relationships and collective stewardship rather than simply economic growth.

Black Restoration Day also highlighted the importance of rest. For communities that have historically carried the weight of racial discrimination and economic inequality, restoration can mean intentionally creating opportunities for joy, reflection and connection.

The event's focus on food and the land also creates an opportunity to think about where food comes from and who has access to growing it.

Gardening can reconnect people with traditions that have existed across generations while giving younger members of the community an opportunity to learn through participation. In that sense, restoration becomes both physical and cultural.

The Sept. 13 gathering was only one afternoon, but its larger message reaches beyond the event itself.

The work of restoring a community can happen in many forms. Sometimes it happens through advocacy. Sometimes through preserving history. And sometimes, it happens by putting hands in the soil, sharing a meal and creating a place where people feel connected.

For Durham's Black community, Soil Sanctuary represents one of those spaces. Black Restoration Day offered a reminder that caring for the land can also be a way of caring for one another.

## Garner Native Receives Book Scholarship



The Beta Lambda Sigma Philo Affiliate of Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc. awarded the Mamie S. Haywood Book Scholarship to Bethany Brown on June 12, 2026. Brown is the daughter of Ralph and Jacqueline Brown of Garner and graduated with honors from South Garner High School. She will attend North Carolina State University in Raleigh this fall through the Agricultural Institute. Brown plans to continue her education in the agricultural sciences as she works toward her goal of becoming a veterinarian. The scholarship recognizes her academic accomplishments and supports her as she begins the next chapter of her education.

## Youngest American Killed in Vietnam War

**By Jordan Meadows**

*Staff Writer*

Dan Bullock was 15 years old when he was killed in Vietnam on June 7, 1969, making the Goldsboro native the youngest American service member to die in the war.

Bullock was born Dec. 21, 1953, in Goldsboro and lived in North Carolina until he was about 12, when his mother died, and he moved to Brooklyn to live with his father.

Family members later said he'd talked about wanting to become a pilot, a police officer, a firefighter or a Marine. Unsatisfied with his living situation in New York and discouraged by the lack of opportunity he saw around him, Bullock went looking for a faster path forward—and told his father that enlisting seemed like the quickest way to get an education.

In September 1968, at 14 years old, Bullock walked into the Marine Corps recruiting station at Albee Square in downtown Brooklyn. At 5-foot-9 and roughly 160 pounds, he was big enough to pass for 18, and he had altered the year on his birth certificate from 1953 to 1949.

Recruiters never questioned it. He enlisted on Sept. 18, 1968, and his family found out only when he came home with the signed paperwork in his hand.

Bullock reported to Parris Island, South Carolina, assigned to Platoon 3039, and struggled through parts of the 13-week training regimen before fellow recruits helped pull him through. He graduated from boot camp on Dec. 10, 1968, eleven days before his 15th birthday.



Private First Class Bullock arrived in South Vietnam on May 18, 1969, assigned as a rifleman in 2nd Squad, 2nd Platoon, Fox Company, 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines, 1st Marine Division. His posting was An Hoa Combat Base in Quang Nam Province, a forward hub surrounded by some of the most contested terrain in the country. Bullock kept largely to himself, and while his fellow Marines didn't know his real age, several sensed something was different about him.

On the evening of June 6, Bullock had been assigned cleaning duty, but took another Marine's place on the night watch near the airstrip after that Marine was wounded. Shortly after midnight, North Vietnamese Army sappers breached the perimeter wire and launched a coordinated assault with rockets, mortars, and small arms. Accounts of exactly what happened next differ.

Fox Company accounts hold that sappers crawled beneath the wire and hurled a satchel charge through the firing slot of Bullock's bunker, an explosion that killed Bullock; other accounts describe Bullock being killed by small arms fire on the perimeter.

Bullock's company commander, Capt. Robert Kingrey, described the young Marine's actions during the attack in a letter home.

"Dan immediately realized that the attack was stronger than usual and that the ammunition supply was becoming depleted," Kingrey wrote. "He rushed to get more ammunition for his unit. He constantly exposed himself to enemy fire in order to keep the company supplied with the ammunition needed to hold off the attack."

Bullock had been in Vietnam for 21 days.

A week after his death, the New York Times broke the story of his real age, and the Defense Department subsequently confirmed Bullock was the youngest of the roughly 58,000 Americans killed during the war.

His remains were returned to Goldsboro and buried at Elmwood Cemetery with full military honors, but no headstone marked the grave. It stayed that way for 31 years, until television talk show host Sally Jessy Raphael learned of the unmarked plot in 2000 and purchased a headstone. NYPD officers, state troopers from four states, and two veteran motorcycle groups escorted a 600-mile caravan from Brooklyn to Goldsboro for the dedication ceremony.

In 2003, the New York City Council renamed a stretch of Lee Avenue in Brooklyn—the street where Bullock had lived—as PFC Dan Bullock Way.

North Carolina dedicated a state highway historical marker near his childhood home on West Ash Street in Goldsboro, and the entrance to Elmwood Cemetery in southwest Goldsboro was also named PFC Dan Bullock Way.

His name is inscribed on Panel 23W, Line 96 of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in Washington.

## POST DROUGHT GROWTH & CHALLENGES

*Continued from page 1*

Council member Christina Jones asked how the department distinguishes between noncompliance and simple growth when measuring increases in water usage, demand and irrigation.

"As we look forward, on the growth and future measurements on growth increases vs. non-compliance increases," Jones said.

Staff noted that treating water drawn from more stressed sources requires more chemicals and affects downstream users more heavily, and pointed to Cary as an example of a system that runs conservation campaigns even when its supply is adequate.

While newer developments trend less water-intensive—multifamily complexes and smaller lawns mean less seasonal irrigation, historically the driver of peak summer demand — data centers have emerged as a new kind of industrial demand. Unlike typical commercial users, which return most of their water to the municipal sewer system for treatment and reuse, data centers rely on evaporative cooling, permanently removing millions of gallons from the local ecosystem.

Raleigh Water received one proposal on June 30 for radio telemetry services covering preventative maintenance and emergency response for its Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition network, which remotely operates and collects data from water storage tanks, sewer pump stations and flood warning sites across the utility system. The system's vulnerabilities were underscored recently when a 30-inch water main break on N.C. 55 triggered system pressure advisories and boil water notices for tens of thousands of residents across Cary and Morrisville.

# Sports

# Aggie-Eagle Classic Delivers A Rivalry Like None Other

**By Judaea Ingram**

*Special To The Carolinian*

DURHAM, N.C. — Plez Lawrence had heard about the Aggie-Eagle rivalry. On Saturday, he finally experienced it.

The North Carolina Central University running back, playing in his first Aggie-Eagle Classic, delivered a performance worthy of the rivalry. Lawrence rushed for 210 yards and three touchdowns as NCCU defeated North Carolina A&T 30-22 in the 98th meeting between the two programs. But for Lawrence, his first experience with the rivalry was about more than his numbers.

"It's amazing, over 1,000 people here, biggest rivalry I have been a part of and you can feel it," Lawrence said. "You felt it the whole week. It was a great experience, just to experience this. I have never experienced this before."

Lawrence's performance helped the Eagles extend their winning streak against the Aggies to five games, but the path to victory was far from easy.

NCCU jumped out to a 10-0 lead before A&T answered. Lawrence later broke loose for a 73-yard touchdown run, helping the Eagles take a 23-14 lead into halftime.

Then the weather arrived.

A 1-hour, 41-minute rain delay interrupted the game, adding another layer of adversity to an already physical rivalry. Both teams also dealt with injuries as the game continued. A&T continued to push after play resumed, cutting NCCU's lead to eight points late in the fourth quarter. The Aggies eventually reached the Eagles' 5-yard line with seconds remaining, putting the outcome in doubt.

NCCU's defense responded with its biggest play of the afternoon. Defensive back Jakarri Martin II intercepted A&T quarterback Kevin White in the end zone to seal the victory.

For head coach Trei Oliver, the final defensive stand reflected the resilience his team showed throughout the afternoon. "The guys kept fighting," Oliver said. "That was a heck of a ball game and you know you face a lot of adversity with the rain delay, had a couple of guys injured, banged up. They made a couple of plays and we had our backs against the wall and our guys continued to fight."









**NC A&T defensive back Bryston Hughley (30) tackles NC Central quarterback Nelson Layne (15) during the first half. NC Central and NC A&T held the 98th annual Aggie-Eagle Classic in Durham NC on September 12, 2026. NC Central held off a tough A&T team to go to a 30-23 victory.**

That fight became especially important as A&T attempted to erase what had been a 16-point deficit. "We made a play when we had to and we won the game," Oliver said.

The victory continued a recent run of success for NCCU in the rivalry. The Eagles have now won five consecutive meetings against A&T, giving Oliver an undefeated record against the Aggies since taking over as NCCU's head coach.

For NCCU's players, however, preparation for the game began well before Saturday. Quarterback Nelson Layne, who made his first start in the rivalry, said the team understood the importance of the matchup throughout the week.

"We prepared and knew what was at stake," Layne said. "We know it is a rivalry, we know the intensity of the game, and we practiced that way."

The Aggie-Eagle Classic is one of the most established rivalries in HBCU football. The annual matchup brings together two of North Carolina's largest HBCUs and creates an atmosphere that extends beyond the players on the field.

For students and alumni, the game is an opportunity to represent their schools. For the athletes, it is a chance to participate in a tradition that predates their college careers. Lawrence was one of those athletes experiencing the tradition for the first time.

The Indiana State transfer quickly became one of the game's defining players. His 210 rushing yards marked NCCU's first 200-yard rushing performance since J'Mari Taylor ran for 206 yards against Howard in 2024.

But Lawrence's biggest takeaway from his first Aggie-Eagle Classic was not a statistic. It was the atmosphere.

"It's amazing," Lawrence said. "Biggest rivalry I have been a part of and you can feel it."

The feeling was not limited to game day. Lawrence said the intensity surrounding the matchup was noticeable throughout the week, giving him a new perspective on what the rivalry means to NCCU.

For a player experiencing the game for the first time, Saturday offered an introduction to one of the defining traditions of North Carolina HBCU football. And for the Eagles, it ended with another victory.




# Church

## Faith Leaders Call For 'Courage' To Combat Voter Confusion

NC NEWSLINE - One month before early in-person voting begins in North Carolina, civil rights leader and Repairers of the Breach President Bishop William Barber said voters should not fall victim to the confusion surrounding voting in the midterms.

The Trump administration asked the U.S. Supreme Court to approve the president's executive order restricting mail-in voting ahead of the midterm elections, directing the postal service to refuse to deliver mail ballots to certain voters. Late Monday, the high court kept in place a lower court's order blocking President Donald Trump's plan to place new restrictions on mail ballots ahead of the Nov. 3 elections.

Voting rights advocates remain concerned that Homeland Security and ICE may dissuade some individuals from showing up at the polls.

Trump has called voting by mail a "hoax," and he and Republican supporters claim more restrictions on it are needed to prevent election fraud in November. However, Trump himself regularly votes by mail, and study after study has found that mail-in voting fraud is extremely rare.

Barber, founder of the Moral Monday movement, told reporters at a Monday press conference at Raleigh's Martin Street Baptist Church this was all about creating confusion.

Trump won North Carolina in 2024 by 183,000 votes, but Barber said 1.2 million poor and low wage workers stayed on the sidelines and did not vote. If just 15% of the voters who didn't cast a ballot two years ago were mobilized to vote in the midterms, the entire outcome could shift, said Barber.

Barber said extremists trying to cling to power are trying to sow confusion into the election process, even as North Carolina absentee ballots are being mailed out, in hopes that some potential voters will become discouraged and decide not to vote.

"What they're doing is creating confusion where there has been no confusion. That's what's going on," said Barber. "It's not good for North Carolina. It's not good for democracy. And lastly, they're creating confusion that's so bad that they're hurting their own people."

Barber said the only way to push back against the confusion surrounding the mail-in voting rules and other changes is to vote early and, if possible, in person.

Barber and faith leaders announced in early August plans to mobilize 1,000 marches to the polls. Their goal is to engage with 5 million low-wage voters and at least 1 million Black men, particularly in the South. As of Monday, they had 320 marches organized in 23 states.

Rev. Dr. Hanna R. Broome said the country is facing a moral crisis when people in power try to make it harder for eligible voters to participate.

"You are telling somebody their voice is too much trouble to count," said Broome. "And here's what people behind these attacks are counting on – that no one will call it what it is. This is evil."

Broome said the best way to combat that strategy is to make a plan to vote, and volunteer to lead a local march to the polls.

"Anyone – your church, your organization, fraternity, sorority, lodge, barbershop, hair salon, or family reunion – can march or caravan to the polls," said Broome.

Barber said the hope is that five people can organize 50, and that 10 people might have the power to encourage 100 more to vote. He calls such visible demonstrations "conspicuous courage" that will inspire infrequent or anxious voters to cast a ballot this fall.

Even though early voting hours and Sunday voting hours may shift in some counties this fall, he said voters must remain determined and vote en masse.

"What we're not going to do is retreat," said Barber. "Don't you get weary. Know what side you're on. You're on the side of democracy."



## Meet William Kitchen

**By Linden Beckford Jr**

*Special To The Carolinian*



I had a very important interview with an important figure in our community. His name is William Kitchen He is a celebrated artist, producer and community advocate. He is also a man who had a basketball career.

William Kitchen is a native of Bronx, New York. He became involved in the Negro History Club, later renamed the African History Club. It was also during his youth that William got involved in playing basketball. He went on to play professionally.

Later in life, he contributed to shaping the careers of artists who have made it on the world stage.

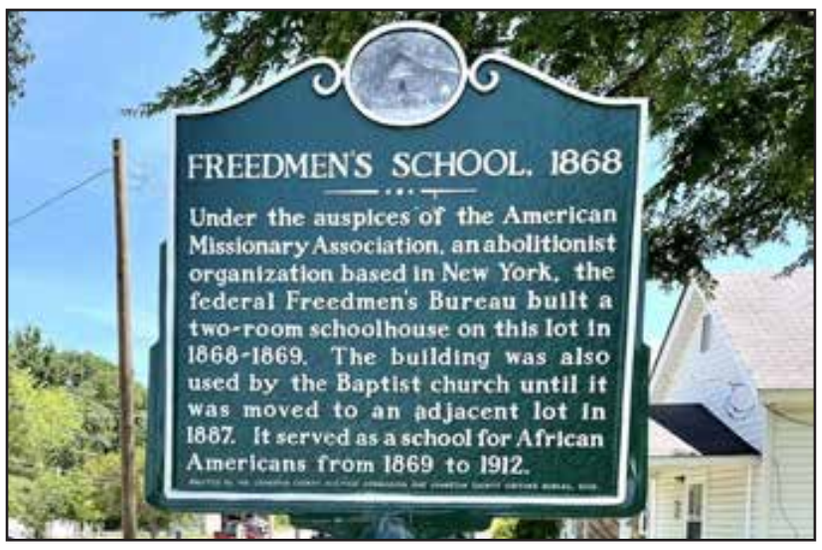
William Kitchen recently produced a video for the song, "We Love America". This is a tribute to true patriotism! Clearly, when you watch the video, there are things that should be noted. As African Americans, we need not be shamed and guilted about our American identity. Our blood,sweat,and tears are soaked in the soil of America. Contrary to what some people believe, we have a stake here in America.

Lastly, regardless of color, we are each other's countrymen. Going forward, we need to remember that. We need to thank Mr.William Kitchen for reminding us about that reality. In many ways, his song and video echo the sentiment of Curtis Mayfield & The Impressions and their 1968 song, "This Is My Country".

## Freedmen's Schoolhouse To Be Dedicated

The Historic Smithfield Foundation will hold a dedication and ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Freedmen's Schoolhouse on Friday, June 19. The ceremony will take place at 11 am in the sanctuary of First Missionary Baptist Church, 403 Caswell Street, Smithfield. A ribbon cutting and tours of the schoolhouse will follow.

Dr. Crystal R. Sanders, a Johnston County native and descendant of freedmen who attended the school, will be the keynote speaker. She is an award-winning American historian, author, and professor who specializes in 20th-century African American history, Black women's history, civil rights history, and the history of Black education. She currently serves as an Associate Professor of African American Studies at Emory University.




The Freedmen's Schoolhouse, located at 308 N. Fourth Street, was built by the federal Freedmen's Bureau in 1868-1869 under the auspices of the American Missionary Association and is the only freedmen's schoolhouse known to remain in North Carolina. The Historic Smithfield Foundation and the Johnston County Heritage Center have been collaborating for almost a decade to rehabilitate the building and interpret its history for the public. Private donations and a $250,000 grant from the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources have made the work possible.

## SERMON of the WEEK



**LEAVE IT IN THE HANDS OF THE LORD**
**By: Bishop William Eli Ratcliff**

The Lord led me to share the lyrics of a song that came from my family many years ago for the Sermon of the Week.

When I was the music coordinator and played the synthesizer and keyboards for the Mighty Golden Bells, we recorded an album, Rest Awhile, in 1986. But one song on that album wasn't released until the group's next album, Leave It in the Hands of the Lord, in 1997. My late cousin, Marvin Sanders, led the song with his gifted falsetto voice, and his brother, Louis Sanders, finished it with his powerful lead voice, which earned him the name "The General." However, I believe someone needs to read these lyrics, and I pray they will help them today.

Marvin – When trouble gets you down, and your enemies all around, you just leave it:

Background: IN THE HANDS OF THE LORD

Leader: Hmmm hmm...When you're all alone, and it seems like your friends don't care, you just leave it:

Background: IN THE HANDS OF THE LORD

Leader: Ohooo...yes, when there's trouble on every hand, and it seems like you just can't stand, all you have to do is call on Jesus, let Him come in and take control of your life; you just leave it, leave it...that's all you have to do today...Please, please...leave it in the hands, leave it:

Background: IN THE HANDS OF THE LORD

Leader: When friends put you down, and there's no loved ones all around, you just leave it:

Background: IN THE HANDS OF THE LORD

Leader: Oh yeah...When you're down on your sick bed, and the doctor walks away and shakes his head, you just leave it, leave it:

Background: IN THE HANDS OF THE LORD

Leader: Oh Oh yes...When you're down to your last dime, and it seems like you, you're running out of time, all you got to do is call on Jesus, let Him come in and take control of your life. You just leave it, leave it, you just leave it, that's all you have to do today, please.....

Background: IN THE HANDS OF THE LORD

Leader - Louis 'The General' Sanders: That's all you have to do now.

Background: You just leave it

Leader: When you're burdened down

Background: You just leave it.

Leader: If no food is on the table

Background: You just leave it

Leader: If the doctor walks away and shakes his head

Background: You just leave it

Leader: That's all you have to do now

Background: You just leave it

Leader: You just leave it, leave it, in the hands of the Lord!

Yeah! Yeah! Yeah! Yeah Yeah!

## Practical Biblical Principles

**HAVE YOU MET CHRIST?**
**READ: GALATIANS 2:14-21**

By John L. Caldwell, Pastor
New Jerusalem Baptist Cathedral

Saint Paul's religious life started when he was a young man in Tarsus. His parents and religious leaders in the community saw a religious gift in Saul and recommended that he be sent to Jerusalem for further religious training. Young Saul, born a Jew, went to Jerusalem, which was considered the Jewish religious capital of that day. He was taught by Gamaliel, known to be the greatest Jewish Rabbi in the Jewish world.

Saul grew up to be one of the top religious Jews of his day (Galatians 1:14). Saul also became a Pharisee. He became the best Jew of all Jews, so to speak. No one would argue with him for saying so (Philippians 3:4-6).

When Saul was about forty, he decided he would not only teach his rigid brand of Judaism but would persecute and even kill people who believed in a heretical rabbi from Nazareth-Jesus.

For all its worth Saul tried to destroy this troubling sect of believers going against his teachings, as his religious ego gave him the orders to overpower it and destroy it. We speak here of the up and coming "Good News of the Gospel."

It was obvious Saul had yet to meet Jesus. He had only heard of Him and the nature of what Jesus was teaching-the Kingdom of Heaven theology. Something which Saul never did during His religious training under the great Gamaliel. In short, Saul knew nothing of this new Gospel which was growing like wildfire in and around the region of Jerusalem.

Questions: What was your life like before you met Christ? What was your main interest in life before Christ came knocking at your door? What was your attitude about the Church before your heart stepped in the door and you sat down in the pew? What was your reaction when you started hearing the New Testament Gospel? In short, when did you meet Christ?

How did you meet Him? Did you meet Christ at a revival, a restaurant, a shopping center, through a friend, on vacation, at a night club you were forbidden to go to? Did you meet Him in church after having gone to many Sunday worship services OR Bible study? Did you get to know Jesus while in prison? How did you get to know the Man?

Did you have a run-in with trouble before you met Him? Did sickness or an accident open your eyes to Him before you met Him? The question is still on the table, do you know the Man?

God hides from no one. He is always in our lives. It is our sins which keep Him hidden from our eyes. Yet His eye is always on us, the sparrow, and I know He watches me.

Moses met God at a burning bush in the Sinai desert. Peter truly met Jesus as he ate fish with Him on the Galilean beach. Saul met Jesus on the main dusty road to Damascus. The right-side thief met Jesus on the cross. One thing these individuals had in common was the fact that none of them met Christ in church. Christ has a reputation of meeting individuals anywhere. There is no boundary or object which can keep Jesus from meeting with you.

There is an old black gospel song which lyrics raises the question, Do you know the Man? It goes like this: "I know a man from Galilee, if you are in sin, He will set you free. The Son of Abraham, stone hued out the mountain, meek and humble Lamb. Oh, do you know the Man? - He brought me out. He brought me through there is no secret what God can do. From sinking sand, He lifted me, I give Him the glory 'cause He set me free. King of Kings, Lord of Lords, Almighty God-Do you know the Man."

Hear the question today, church. Do you know the Man, or do you just know "of" Him? There are many people in church today which hear of Christ but not really know Him- personally. What kind of marriage would it be if couples didn't know each other personally? More importantly, intimately.

Yes, if we are to know Jesus, we must know Him intimately. Divorce in marriage comes from couples not creating the opportunities to know each other by frank and truthful communication with each other. When one side of the marriage never learns you can't remain independent from the other. The same is true when it comes to meeting and bonding with Jesus Christ.

It took Saul some three years to really know Christ after he first met Him on that old dusty Damascus Road. This is when Christ first introduced Himself to Saul. A bright light shown from heaven knocked Saul from His donkey on the road blinding him. Then Saul heard a voice saying, "Saul, Saul why do you kick against the pricks-Why are you persecuting Me?

Saul asked the Lord the two most important questions anyone could ask of Jesus. "Who are you? ... And what do you want me to do? Jesus said, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. One of the reasons Saul immediately recognized it was Jesus was the fact that Jesus called his name twice and spoke to Him in the Hebrew language (Acts 24:14). Paul was instantly convicted and realized that "Jesus was real." Saul, blinded, was then led into Damascus with a changed agenda which was not of his own, but one which Jesus gave him. Saul was soon baptized and given his sight by the man servant, Ananias, who laid hands on him (Acts 9: 10-12). Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus. Then Saul spent several years in the Sinai desert getting his spiritual download from Christ before he returned to the Jerusalem area preaching the New Testament gospel. Like little David by himself, out in the open field with his father's sheep, Saul got to know Jesus while being isolated in the Arabian desert. Church, Do you know the Man, Jesus today?

# Classifieds

## DURHAM COUNTY

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**
**File No: 26E001079-310**

Having qualified as Public Administrator of the Estate of RICHARD M. ALLEN, SR., deceased, of 114 Laurel Avenue, 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 December 18, 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 17th day of September, 2026.
Jeffrey L. Austin
Public Administrator of the Estate of Richard M. Allen, Sr.
c/o Law Office of Jeffrey L. Austin, PLLC
500 Westover Dr. #32043
Sanford, NC 27330
9/17, 9/24, 10/1, and 10/8/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**
**File No: 26E001080-310**

Having qualified as Public Administrator of the Estate of JAMES MICHAEL DAVIS, deceased, of 901 Wood Chapel Lane, Durham County, Durham, NC 27703, 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 December 18, 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 17th day of September, 2026.
Jeffrey L. Austin
Public Administrator of the Estate of James Michael Davis
c/o Law Office of Jeffrey L. Austin, PLLC
500 Westover Dr. #32043
Sanford, NC 27330
9/17, 9/24, 10/1, and 10/8/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**
**File No: 26E000549-310**

ALL PERSONS, firms and corporations having claims against DAVID LEE HARRISON, deceased, of DURHAM COUNTY, NC, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before December 17, 2026 or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors
of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment.

This is the 17th day of September 2026.
Carl D. Harrison, David D. Harrison/ Administrators of the Estate,
c/o MONROE JENKINS, PA
PO Box 12534
Durham, North Carolina 27709
9/17, 9/24, 10/1, and 10/8/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**
**In the General Court of Justice,**
**Superior Court Division**
**Before the Clerk**
**File No: 26E001098-310**

Having qualified as CO-EXECUTORS of the Estate of FRANCES OLIVIA GARRETT, deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 17th day of December, 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 17th day of September, 2026.
Frederick Wayne Garrett, Co-Executor
316 Olive Branch Rd.
Durham, NC 27703
Janet G. Bennett, Co-Executor
712 E. Enon Rd.
Oxford, NC 27565
Tommy D. Garrett, Co-Executor
3606 E. Greer St.
Durham, NC 27704
9/17, 9/24, 10/1, and 10/8/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
**NOTICE TO CREDITORS AND DEBTORS OF Judy Frances Cosler**

All persons, firms and corporations having claims against JUDY FRANCES COSLER, late of Durham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit them to Heather Batt as Executor of the decedent's estate on or before December 19, 2026, c/o Janet B. Witchger, Attorney at Law, 1414 Raleigh Rd., Ste. 203, Chapel Hill, NC 27517, or be barred from their recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment to the above-named Executor.

This the 17th day of September 2026.
Heather Batt, Executor
c/o Janet B. Witchger, Atty.
TrustCounsel
1414 Raleigh Rd., Ste. 203
Chapel Hill, NC 27517
9/17, 9/24, 10/1, and 10/8/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**
**File No: 26E001104-310**

THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 8th day of September 2026, as Executor of the ESTATE OF NELSON LUTHER HOWER, III, 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 18th day of December 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 17th day of September 2026.
EMILY KATE HOWER
EXECUTOR
ESTATE OF NELSON LUTHER HOWER, III
c/o Jennifer Dalman, Attorney
Walker Lambe, PLLC
240 Leigh Farm Rd, Ste 100
Durham, North Carolina 27707
9/17, 9/24, 10/1, and 10/8/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**
**In the General Court of Justice,**
**Superior Court Division**
**Before the Clerk**
**File No: 26E001096-310**

Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of DAPHINE JEAN BRADSHER A/K/A DAPHINE NORWOOD BRADSHER, deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 17th day of December, 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 17th day of September, 2026.
LaJean Cris Bradsher, Executor
2194 Lauren Mill Drive
Oxford, NC 27565
9/17, 9/24, 10/1, and 10/8/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**
**File No: 26E000691-310**

Having qualified as Executor of the Estate of KIRSTEN KAY KLUMP, deceased, of 205 Rosaline Lane, Durham, Durham County, NC, the undersigned does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the estate of said decedent to exhibit them to the undersigned c/o Trusts and Estates Law Group, 4141 Parklake Avenue, Suite 310, Raleigh, NC 27612, on or before the 17th day of December, 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 17th day of September, 2026.
Bradley S. Klump, Executor
Estate of Kirsten Kay Klump, Deceased
c/o Trusts and Estates Law Group
4141 Parklake Avenue, Suite 310
Raleigh, NC 27612
9/17, 9/24, 10/1, and 10/8/2026
**Estate of Leonard Edward Gethers, Durham County Estate**
**File No. 26E001121-310:**

All persons, firms and corporations having claims against LEONARD EDWARD GETHERS, deceased, of Durham, N.C., are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before December 21, 2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This the 17th day of September 2026.
Lauren Elizabeth Gethers, Administrator
C/O Elizabeth Boyette, Boyette Law, PLLC
4509 Creedmoor Road
Suite 201
Raleigh, NC 27612
9/17, 9/24, 10/1, and 10/8/2026
DURHAM COUNTY
**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**
**In the General Court of Justice,**
**Superior Court Division**
**Before the Clerk**
**File No: 25E001016-310**

Having qualified as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of BETTY HARRINGTON, deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 17th day of December, 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 17th day of September, 2026.
Mike Wills, Administrator, c/o Richard F. Prentis, Jr., 4 Consultant Pl., Durham, NC 27707.
9/17, 9/24, 10/1, and 10/8/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**
**In the General Court of Justice,**
**Superior Court Division**
**Before the Clerk**
**File No: 26E000895-310**

Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of MARK ROBERT MCGRATH, deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 10th day of December, 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 10th day of September, 2026.
Robert F. McGrath, Executor
1230 Trillium Circle, Apt. G
Raleigh, NC 27606
9/10, 9/17, 9/24, and 10/1/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**
**In the General Court of Justice,**
**Superior Court Division**
**Before the Clerk**
**File No: 26E000829-310**

Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of MARION MILES, deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 10th day of December, 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 10th day of September, 2026.
John Erick Miles, Executor
c/o Floyd B. McKissick, III, Esq.
McKissick & McKissick
835 N Mangum Street
Durham, NC 27701
9/10, 9/17, 9/24, and 10/1/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**
**In the General Court of Justice,**
**Superior Court Division**
**Before the Clerk**
**File No: 26E001085-310**

Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of EDITH C. HEATHERLY, deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 10th day of December, 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 10th day of September, 2026.
Charlotte Sinclaire, Executor
c/o Robert N. Crosswhite, Attorney
239 E. Broad Street
Statesville NC 28677
9/10, 9/17, 9/24, and 10/1/2026
DURHAM COUNTY
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
**NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION**
**In The General Court Of Justice**
**District Court Division**
**File No.: 26CV001593-310**
**SYLVIE T. MBIOLA, PLAINTIFF VS. JABARIO N. HARRIS and LASHANDA R. SCARBOROUGH, DEFENDANTS**

TO: JABARIO N. HARRIS

Take notice that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above entitled action. The nature of the relief sought is as follows:

Complaint for Property Damage, Loss of Use as a result of a Motor Vehicle Accident on July 12, 2025 on Duke Street in Durham, NC.

You are required to make defense to such pleading not later than October 20, 2026 and upon your failure to do so the party seeking service against you will apply to the Court for the relief sought.

This the 10th day of September, 2026.
Robert T. Perry
N.C. State Bar #11051
PERRY, PERRY & PERRY, P.A.
Attorneys for Plaintiff
601 Fayetteville Street, Suite 300
Post Office Drawer 2051
Durham, North Carolina 27702
Telephone: (919) 683-8685
9/10, 9/17, and 9/24/2026
DURHAM COUNTY
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
**NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION**
**In The General Court Of Justice**
**District Court Division**
**File No.: 26CV001593-310**
**SYLVIE T. MBIOLA, PLAINTIFF VS. JABARIO N. HARRIS and LASHANDA R. SCARBOROUGH, DEFENDANTS**

TO: LASHANDA R. SCARBOROUGH

Take notice that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above entitled action. The nature of the relief sought is as follows:

Complaint for Property Damage, Loss of Use as a result of a Motor Vehicle Accident on July 12, 2025 on Duke Street in Durham, NC.

You are required to make defense to such pleading not later than October 20, 2026 and upon your failure to do so the party seeking service against you will apply to the Court for the relief sought.

This the 10th day of September, 2026.
Robert T. Perry
N.C. State Bar #11051
PERRY, PERRY & PERRY, P.A.
Attorneys for Plaintiff
601 Fayetteville Street, Suite 300
Post Office Drawer 2051
Durham, North Carolina 27702
Telephone: (919) 683-8685
9/10, 9/17, and 9/24/2026
DURHAM COUNTY
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**
**In the General Court of Justice,**
**Superior Court Division**
**Before the Clerk**
**File No: 26E001048-310**

Having qualified as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of MARIANA AYAD MANSI BEKHEIT, deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 3rd day of December, 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 3rd day of September, 2026.
Youssef Bekheit, Administrator
1510 Autumn Ridge Drive
Durham, NC 27712
9/3, 9/10, 9/17, and 9/24/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**
**In the General Court of Justice,**
**Superior Court Division**
**Before the Clerk**
**File No: 26E001073-310**

Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of ALEISE GYANT, deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 3rd day of December, 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 3rd day of September, 2026.
Collin Thomas, Executor
4110 Durhams Crossing
Cincinnati, OH 45245
9/3, 9/10, 9/17, and 9/24/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**
**File No: 24E001967-310**

Having qualified as Administrator of the Estate of PEGGY ANNE RICHARDSON, deceased, of 321 E Carver Street, Durham County, Durham, NC 27704, 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 December 4, 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 3rd day of September, 2026.
Jennifer Shannon Richardson
Administrator of the Estate of Peggy Anne Richardson
c/o Law Office of Jeffrey L. Austin, PLLC
500 Westover Dr. #32043
Sanford, NC 27330
FOR PUBLICATION: The Carolinian
9/3, 9/10, 9/17 and 9/24/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**
**In the General Court of Justice,**
**Superior Court Division**
**Before the Clerk**
**File No: 26E001002-310**

Having qualified as CO-ADMINISTRATORS of the Estate of CHARLES LAMBERT AUTRY, deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 3rd day of December, 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 3rd day of September, 2026.
Jennifer Ferrer and Brenda Penelope Autry-McAllister, Co-Administrators of the Estate of Charles Lambert Autry
Seth M. Gerringer, Attorney
Deal Law, PLLC
1153 Huffman Mill Road
Burlington, NC 27215
9/3, 9/10, 9/17, and 9/24/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**
**File Number 26E001047-310**

ALL PERSONS, firms and corporations having claims against HELEN L. HILDERMAN a/k/a HELEN LONG HILDERMAN, deceased, of Durham County, N.C., are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before 12-3-2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This 9-3-2026.

Jennifer W. Sosensky, Executor of the Estate of Helen L. Hilderman a/k/a Helen Long Hilderman c/o Lori M. Bernstein, Attorney at Law
2726 Croasdaile Dr. Suite 202
Durham, North Carolina 27705
For Publication: 9-3, 9-10, 9-17, 9-24-2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**
**In the General Court of Justice,**
**Superior Court Division**
**Before the Clerk**
**File No: 26E001035-310**

Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of LAURA ANN BRACEY, deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 3rd day of December, 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 3rd day of September, 2026.
Ryan Matthew Cahela, Executor
1113 Banyon Grove Loop
Cary, NC 27513
9/3, 9/10, 9/17, and 9/24/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**
**In the General Court of Justice,**
**Superior Court Division**
**Before the Clerk**
**File No: 26E000613-310**

Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of BRYAN LEIGH SELLARS, deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 28th day of November, 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 27th day of August, 2026.
Gladys Denise Hobbs, Executor
11 Sparger Spring Ln.
Durham, NC 27705
8/27, 9/3, 9/10 and 9/17/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**

Having qualified as Administrator of the Estate of NATHAN BERNARD CURRY, deceased, this is to notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the Estate of Nathan Bernard Curry to present them to the undersigned on or before the 28th day of November 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons, firms, and corporations indebted to said Estate, please make immediate payment.

This the 27th day of August, 2026.
Delores Leathers Curry,
Administrator Attorney for the Estate of Nathan Bernard Curry c/o John W. Perry
Post Office Drawer 2051
Durham, North Carolina 27702
Telephone: (919) 683-8685
8/27, 9/3, 9/10 and 9/17/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF DURHAM
**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**

THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 6th day of August 2026, as Executor of the ESTATE OF JOHN CALHOUN MARLOWE, JR. aka JOHN C. MARLOWE, JR., 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 28th day of November 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 27th day of August.
John C. Marlowe III
EXECUTOR
ESTATE OF JOHN CALHOUN MARLOWE, JR.
c/o Shirley Diefenbach, Attorney
Walker Lambe, PLLC
Post Office Box 51549
8/27, 9/3, 9/10 and 9/17/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF DURHAM
**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**

THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 21st day of August, 2026, as Administrator CTA of the ESTATE OF MORRY WAYNE SPITZER, 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 30th day of November, 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 27th day of August,
MADELINE SELTMAN
ADMINISTRATOR CTA
ESTATE OF MORRY WAYNE SPITZER
c/o Jennifer Dalman, Attorney
Walker Lambe, PLLC
240 Leigh Farm Rd, Ste 100
Durham, North Carolina 27707
8/27, 9/3, 9/10 and 9/17/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**
**File No: 26E000905-310**

Having qualified as Executor of the Estate of JOHN B. MODRAK (also known as JOHN BRUCE MODRAK), deceased, of 4119 Edenton Lane, Durham County, Durham, NC 27707, 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 November 28, 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 27th day of August, 2026.
Susan P. Modrak
Executor of the Estate of John B. Modrak c/o Law Office of Jeffrey L. Austin, PLLC
500 Westover Dr. #32043
Sanford, NC 27330
8/27, 9/3, 9/10 and 9/17/2026

**PAYING CASH AND BUYING ALL OLD RAP MUSIC CASSETTE TAPES AND MIXTAPES. CALL MARVIN 919-268-7476.**

# Classifieds

## ORANGE COUNTY

NORTH CAROLINA
ORANGE COUNTY
**NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION**
**In The General Court Of Justice**
**District Court Division**
**FILE NO. 26CV001727-670**
DAVID ISAAC HICKERSON, Plaintiff, Vs. BRITTANY ANNE BEAL, Defendant.

To Brittany Anne Beal, the above named Defendant:

Take Notice that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above-entitled action. The nature of the relief being sought is as follows: The Plaintiff is seeking primary custody of the minor child, Dev Isaac Hickerson, with supervised and conditioned visitation by the Defendant.

You are required to file an answer to the Complaint within forty (40) days after the date of first publication of this Notice, exclusive of such date, said deadline being the 20th day of October, 2026; and upon your failure to do so, the party seeking relief against you will apply to the Court for the relief sought in the Complaint.

The address of the Clerk of Superior Court of Orange County is:

Clerk of Superior Court of Orange County
106 E Margaret Ln,
Hillsborough, NC 27278

The name and contact information of Plaintiff's attorney is as follows:

Robert N. Jennings
Jennings Law
P.O. Box 1015
Graham, NC 27253
(919) 563-2550
Fax: (919) 563-2500
rob@JLawNC.com

This the 10th day of September, 2026.

JENNINGS LAW
By: Robert N. Jennings,
Attorney for Plaintiff
NC State Bar No. 31612
9/10, 9/17, and 9/24/2026

## 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: 26E001811-910**
Having qualified as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of EVELYN VERNELL HINTON, deceased, late of Wake County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 17th day of December, 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 17th day of September, 2026.
Vivian Beatrice Logan,
Administrator
5408 Kincross Ct.
Raleigh, NC 27610
9/17, 9/24, 10/1, and 10/8/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY
**NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION**
**In The General Court Of Justice**
**District Court Division**
**File No. 26CV023452-910**
MICHAEL OAKLEY and EVA OAKLEY, Plaintiff v.
MEQUINTA OAKLEY and UNKNOWN FATHER, Defendants

TO: MEQUINTA OAKLEY AND THE UNKNOWN FATHER OF THE MINOR CHILD

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 custody of the minor child.

You are required to make defense to such pleading not later than forty (40) days after the first date of publication of this notice. Upon your failure to do so, the Plaintiff will apply to the Court for the relief sought.

This the 17th day of September, 2026.
Michael Oakley, Plaintiff
Eva Oakley, Plaintiff
2301 Catfish Creek Ct
Raleigh, NC 27604
9/17, 9/24, and 10/1/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY
**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**
**In the General Court of Justice,**
**Superior Court Division**
**Before the Clerk**
**File No: 25E003697-910**
Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of MARIE BIRDSALL PALMER A/K/A MARIE B. PALMER, deceased, late of Wake County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 10th day of December, 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 10th day of September, 2026.
Desiree Glascoe, Executor
3705 Del Mar Drive
Woodbridge, Virginia 22193
9/10, 9/17, 9/24, and 10/1/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**
Having qualified as Personal Representative of the Estate of LINDA GAIL FISH, deceased, 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 at: 300 PINEHURST AVENUE, SOUTHERN PINES, NORTH CAROLINA 28387, on or before the 17th day of DECEMBER, 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 10th day of September, 2026.
STEPHANIE FISH JENKINS
PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE
FOR THE ESTATE OF
LINDA GAIL FISH
JAMES H. JENKINS
Thigpen and Jenkins, L.L.P.
Attorney for Estate
300 Pinehurst Avenue
Southern Pines, North Carolina 28387
9/10, 9/17, 9/24, and 10/1/2026
NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION: NORTH CAROLINA, WAKE COUNTY. In the General Court of Justice, District Court Division, File#26SP000446-910 [Adoption Proceeding]
TO: UNKNOWN FATHER. TAKE NOTICE that a Petition for Adoption was filed on 2/24/26, with the Clerk of Superior Court for Wake County, Raleigh, NC, in the above-referenced special proceeding. The Petition relates to a male child, Z.J.G., conceived in or about April 2019 and born to Keniesia Gee on 1/1/2020, in Raleigh, NC. You are required to make defense to such pleading with the Wake County Clerk of Court no later than10/21/26, which is 40 days from the first publication of this notice to participate in and receive further notice of this proceeding. IN THE EVENT YOU FAIL TO RESPOND, THE CLERK OF SUPERIOR COURT WILL ENTER AN ORDER ALLOWING THE ADOPTION TO PROCEED WITHOUT YOUR CONSENT. Any parental rights that you may have will be terminated upon the entry of the decree of adoption. This, the 10th day of September, 2026. Ashley Treible, Attorney for Petitioners, P.O. Box 58058, Raleigh, NC, 27658, 919-794-7511, ext. 9. The Carolinian 9/10, 9/17, 9/24, 2026.
NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION NORTH CAROLINA COUNTY OF WAKE
In the General Court of Justice, District Court Division, File No: 26CV019460-910 [CHILD CUSTODY PROCEEDING] ARACELI GOMEZ HERNANDEZ, Plaintiff v. JOSE MANUEL MALDONADO GUZMAN, Defendant. To Defendant, father of minors born on 9/4/12 and 7/28/14. TAKE NOTICE that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above-entitled action. A hearing date of 11/18/2026 has been scheduled. The relief sought against you is an award of legal custody of the children to Plaintiff. You are required to make defense with the Wake County Clerk of Court no later than 10/21/2026. Upon your failure to do so, the party seeking relief against you will apply to the Court for the relief sought. This, the 10th day of September 2026. Katherine Moye, Attorney for Plaintiff, P.O. Box 58058, Raleigh, NC, 27658, 919/794-7511, The Carolinian, 9/10, 9/17, 9/24,2026.
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY
**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**
**In the General Court of Justice,**
**Superior Court Division**
**Before the Clerk**
**File No: 26E001920-910**
Having qualified as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of LISA BALDWIN LEWIS, deceased, late of Wake County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 3rd day of December, 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 3rd day of September, 2026.
Michele L. Lee, Administrator
5056 Audreystone Dr.
Cary, NC 27518
9/3, 9/10, 9/17, and 9/24/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY
**IN THE GENERAL COURT OF JUSTICE**
**DISTRICT COURT DIVISION**
**FILE NO. 25CV011744-910**
**CRYSTAL E. WHITE, Plaintiff, v. MONTREAL L. WHITE, Defendant.**
**NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION**
TO: MONTREAL L. WHITE

TAKE NOTICE that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above-entitled action.

The nature of the relief being sought is an Absolute Divorce.

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

This the 3rd day of September, 2026.
Crystal E. White, Plaintiff
108 Elmridge Dr.
Knightdale, NC 27545
9/3, 9/10 and 9/17/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY
**IN THE GENERAL COURT OF JUSTICE**
**DISTRICT COURT DIVISION**
**FILE NO. 26CV012332-910**
**ZHAHE'M SMITH, Plaintiff, v. MADISON A. JAMES, Defendant.**
**NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION**
TO: MADISON A. JAMES

TAKE NOTICE that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above-entitled action.

The nature of the relief being sought is child custody.

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

This the 3rd day of September, 2026.
Zhahe'm Smith, Plaintiff
1904 Southgate Dr.
Raleigh, NC 27610
9/3, 9/10 and 9/17/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY
**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**
**In the General Court of Justice,**
**Superior Court Division**
**Before the Clerk**
**File No.: 26E000286-910**
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 27th day of March, 2026, as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of VINH THU TAN, 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 26th day of November, 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 27th day of August, 2026.
Maomei Wang, Administrator
c/o Law Office of Fiona Wang, PLLC
135 Parkway Office Ct., Suite 205
Cary, NC 27518
8/27, 9/3, 9/10 and 9/17/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY
**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**
**In the General Court of Justice,**
**Superior Court Division**
**Before the Clerk**
**File No.: 25E001270-910**
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 15th day of May, 2026, as CO-ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of WILLIAM LEE WRIGHT, 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 26th day of November, 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 27th day of August, 2026.
James Wright Easter
Co-Administrator
3624 Sweet Birch Drive
Greensboro, NC 27406
Patricia Wright, Co-Administrator
753 Fawn Road
Ayden, NC 28613
8/27, 9/3, 9/10 and 9/17/2026

## FORECLOSURE

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
**In The General Court Of Justice**
**Superior Court Division**
**Before The Clerk**
**26SP000749-310**
**In The Matter Of The Foreclosure Of The Deed Of Trust Executed By Nova Rtp Iii, Llc, Recorded On February 14, 2022, In Book 9614, Page 294, In The Durham County Registry.**
**NOTICE OF SALE**

Under and by virtue of the power and authority contained in the Deed of Trust executed by Nova RTP III, LLC ("Grantor") on February 11, 2022, and recorded on February 14, 2022, in Book 9614, Page 294, of the Durham County Registry ("Deed of Trust"), and because of default in the payment of the indebtedness secured by the Deed of Trust (referred to as the "Note"), and pursuant to the Order of the Clerk of Superior Court for Durham County, North Carolina, entered in this foreclosure proceeding, the undersigned, Ryan J. Adams, appointed Substitute Trustee by instrument recorded on June 24, 2026, in Book 10572, Page 704, in the Durham County Registry, will expose for sale at public auction to the highest bidder for cash, that certain tract or parcel of property located in Durham County, North Carolina (including any fixtures and improvements thereon) as more particularly described as follows:

BEING all of Lot 2 shown on the plat of MINOR SUBDIVISION PROPERTY OF VICKERS LAND COMPANY, LLC, dated December 18, 2002, by Riley Surveying, P.A., and recorded in Plat Book 157, Page 311 Durham County Registry, to which plat reference is hereby expressly made for a more particular description of the same.

Property Address: 2680 NC 55 Hwy, Durham, North Carolina

The record owner of the above-described property, as reflected by the records in the Durham County Register of Deeds not more than ten (10) days prior to the posting of this notice is Nova RTP III, LLC.

The above-described real property, improvements and fixtures will be sold subject to any and all superior mortgages, deeds of trust and liens, including, without limitation, the lien of all unpaid ad valorem taxes and assessments, as well as easements, conditions, restrictions and other matters of record filed prior to the Deed of Trust.

The above-described property will be sold "AS IS, WHERE IS." The property is not being sold subject or together with any subordinate rights or interests. Neither the Substitute Trustee, nor the holder of the Note secured by the Deed of Trust being foreclosed, nor the officers, members, managers, directors, attorneys, employees, agents or authorized representatives of either the Substitute Trustee or the holder of the Note make any representation or warranty relating to the title or any physical, environmental, health or safety conditions existing in, on, at or relating to the property being sold, and any and all responsibilities or liabilities arising out of or in any way relating to any such conditions expressly are disclaimed.

Pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 45-21.10 and the terms of the Deed of Trust, any successful bidder may be required to deposit with the Substitute Trustee immediately upon conclusion of the sale a cash deposit or certified check not to exceed the greater of five percent (5%) of the amount of the bid or $750.00. Any successful bidder shall be required to tender the full balance purchase price so bid in cash or certified check at the time the Substitute Trustee tenders to the successful bidder a deed for the property or attempts to tender such deed, and should said successful bidder fail to pay the full balance purchase price so bid at that time, the successful bidder shall remain liable on the bid as provided in N.C. Gen. Stat. § 45-21.30 (d) and (e).

Please be advised that an order for possession of the property may be issued pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat § 45-21.29 in favor of the purchaser and against the party or parties in possession by the clerk of the superior court of the county in which the property is sold.

Further, be advised that any person who occupies the property pursuant to a rental agreement entered into or renewed on or after October 1, 2007, may after receiving the notice of sale, terminate the rental agreement upon 10 days rental notice to the landlord. Upon termination of such rental agreement, the tenant is liable for rent due under the rental agreement prorated to the effective date of the termination.

The sale will be held open for ten (10) days for upset bid as required by law.

DATE OF SALE: September 25, 2026
HOUR OF SALE: 10:00 a.m.
PLACE OF SALE: Durham County Courthouse
510 S. Dillard Street
Durham, NC 27701

This the 4th day of September, 2026.
ADAMS, HOWELL, SIZEMORE & ADAMS, P.A.
By: /s/ Ryan J. Adams
Ryan J. Adams
N.C. State Bar No.: 27687
1600 Glenwood Ave., Suite 101
Raleigh, North Carolina 27608
Telephone: (919) 900-4700
Facsimile: (919) 839-2230
Email: ryan.adams@adamshowell.com
Substitute Trustee
September 10 & 17, 2026

# How NC Communities Marked 9/11

**By Jordan Meadows**
*Staff Writer*


(Photo: Tre Spencer/NC Newsline)

North Carolina communities marked the 25th anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks this week with a series of memorial ceremonies, stair climbs, service projects and permanent dedications spanning from Raleigh to Fayetteville.

At Chavis Park in Raleigh on Friday, Gov. Josh Stein reflected on the sense of national unity that followed the attacks.

"We cannot forget our feelings that day," Stein said. "We cannot forget the feelings the days after when we came together as a country."

Dozens gathered at the park, including Raleigh Fire Department Lt. James Jones, a volunteer fire department when the attacks unfolded.

Apex Fire Chief Tim Herman urged attendees to remember the victims as individuals rather than statistics.

"They were people who had families waiting for them. They were people who had served together for years," Herman said. "They were not numbers. Members of companies. Brothers and sisters. Mothers and fathers. Sons and daughters."

Nearly 3,000 people died in the attacks nationwide, including six Duke University alumni and hundreds of first responders.

Stein spent much of the week moving between ceremonies across the Triangle. On Thursday, he ordered state flags lowered in observance of Patriot Day and issued a statement tying the anniversary to the nation's 250th year.

"This year, during America's 250th year, we cherish what it means to be an American: to love freedom, justice, security, democracy, and peace," Stein said. "Let us honor the memories of our heroes: the brave passengers of Flight 93, the firefighters who rushed toward danger as people ran for their lives, and the neighbors who helped their neighbors through unthinkable tragedy. And let us remember that there is more that unites than divides us. America is strongest when we stand together."

Stein attended the North Carolina National Guard's memorial ceremony Friday morning at Joint Force Headquarters in Raleigh before joining the City of Raleigh and the nonprofit Activate Good for a day of service and remembrance.

At the Guard ceremony, Stein specifically recognized Greensboro native Sandy Bradshaw, a flight attendant aboard United Flight 93 who helped fight back against hijackers before the plane crashed near Shanksville, Pennsylvania, and John Cerqueira, then a recent North Carolina State University graduate who helped carry a woman in a wheelchair down 68 flights of stairs in the World Trade Center's North Tower. The ceremony also honored the 30 North Carolina National Guard members killed in direct combat operations over the past 25 years, whose photos and names were displayed on memorial boards.

In Chapel Hill, UNC Army ROTC hosted a public memorial stair climb at 6 a.m. at Kenan Memorial Stadium, with participants climbing 2,071 stairs — the equivalent of the World Trade Center towers' 110 floors — in tribute to the 2,977 victims and the first responders who served that day. Organizers said the physical challenge was intended to give younger generations a more tangible understanding of the sacrifice firefighters made climbing the towers on Sept. 11.

Fuquay-Varina held its own remembrance ceremony at 8:30 a.m. at the Fuquay-Varina Arts Center, and Clayton hosted a public ceremony at 9 a.m. at Municipal Park featuring an honor guard, a bell tolling and 423 small flags representing the 343 firefighters, 72 law enforcement officers and eight emergency medical personnel killed in the attacks.

In Raleigh, roughly 1,000 volunteers gathered at NC State for the inaugural Raleigh meal-packing event tied to 9/11 Day, packing an estimated 226,000 meals, which will be distributed by the Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina.

In Fayetteville, members of the Fort Bragg military community gathered Friday morning at the U.S. Army Airborne & Special Operations Museum for a remembrance ceremony featuring moments of silence, the national anthem, a performance by an All-American band and a wreath-laying honoring the 2,977 people killed on Sept. 11. Krystal Huff, an attendee, reflected on the aftermath of the attacks.

Chief William Lehmann, now chief of emergency medical services at Fort Bragg, was working as a paramedic with the New York City Fire Department on the day of the attacks and said the memory of colleagues lost that day remains raw.

# Politics & Election News

## Appeals Court Hears Challenge to NC Ballot "Selfie" Ban

**By Jordan Meadows**
*Staff Writer*

A federal appeals panel heard oral arguments on Tuesday in a Wake County woman's challenge to North Carolina's ban on "ballot selfies," weighing whether the state's restrictions on photographing marked ballots violate the First Amendment.

Susan Hogarth, a Raleigh native and the 2024 Libertarian candidate for state Senate District 13, sued members of the Wake County Board of Elections and the State Board of Elections in federal court after posting a selfie with her completed primary ballot on X in March 2024.

The State Board of Elections sent her a letter roughly two weeks later warning that the post violated state law and demanding she take it down; under North Carolina statute, photographing a voted ballot is a Class 1 misdemeanor punishable by up to 120 days in jail and a fine.

Represented by the Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression (FIRE), Hogarth argues the law criminalizes core political speech protected by the First Amendment. She has said she posts the photos partly



to promote Libertarian candidates, partly to encourage voting generally, and partly to protest the law itself.

The case has already produced one skirmish inside a polling place: Armed with an October 2024 court order from U.S. District Judge Louise Flanagan, she was allowed to photograph her ballot alone without fear of prosecution. Hogarth took several ballot selfies during early voting that October, including photos of both sides of her marked ballot and of herself holding it up inside the booth.

According to court filings, a Wake County election official stationed about 10 feet away approached her as she took her final photo and told her, "You cannot take a picture of your ballot; you need to delete that, please."
Hogarth told the official a court order protected her; the official asked her to wait, stepped away to call the county elections board, and returned roughly two and a half minutes later to confirm she was in the clear.

Hogarth's attorneys have said the confrontation left her "uncomfortable and anxious" despite the court order, and argued in filings that the interaction would chill an ordinary voter from taking or sharing similar photos.

Flanagan ultimately ruled against Hogarth in March, upholding the five state statutes that make up the ballot selfie ban in a 15-page order. She found the state's interest in preventing vote-buying and voter coercion justified the restriction even without documented instances of ballot selfies being used in such schemes.

"Common sense and logic support the proposition that photographs of voted ballots or voters, taken within voting booths, create opportunities for abuse through vote-buying and coercion," Flanagan wrote, adding that defendants were not required to "adduce specific factual evidence that the statutes advanced its interests."

At Tuesday's argument, FIRE attorney Jeff Zeman told the three-judge panel that the law reaches well beyond polling place conduct.

"The only thing North Carolina's ballot selfie ban does is criminalize otherwise lawful speech," Zeman said, noting the restriction also bars voters from photographing a completed absentee ballot in the privacy of their own home.

He argued the ban amounts to unconstitutional content-based regulation that fails strict scrutiny, the most exacting standard of judicial review, because the state has never shown the law actually prevents the vote-buying or coercion schemes it claims to target.
"This is speech about the election; not part of the election," Zeman said. "Expression about elections and referenda is the type of speech indispensable to decision-making in a democracy, and thus at the heart of the First Amendment's protection."

Deputy Solicitor General Thad Eagles, representing the State Board of Elections, its investigator and Executive Director Sam Hayes, countered that the law protects the secrecy of the ballot rather than the content of anyone's speech.

"North Carolinians are free and encouraged to tell everyone they want who they voted for and why in any number of different ways," he said. "The state's concern is not with the message here. It's not about the communication; it's about the probative effect of a picture of a marked ballot."

The state's legal briefs have also raised a more pointed hypothetical, arguing the law protects voters who might otherwise face covert pressure—including "a person experiencing domestic violence who, though not explicitly threatened, fears what will happen if their abuser learns that they voted against the abuser's preferred candidate."

U.S. Circuit Judge A. Marvin Quattlebaum Jr., a Trump appointee, pressed Eagles on whether the law's reach outside polling places changes the constitutional analysis, noting the case for restricting absentee ballot photography is less clear-cut.

"There does seem to be ways these statutes apply outside of the polling place," Quattlebaum said, asking directly, "Is the ballot itself a forum?"
Eagles maintained that allowing widespread ballot-photo sharing could pressure voters away from voting their genuine conscience. U.S. Circuit Judges Allison Rushing, also a Trump appointee, and DeAndrea Gist Benjamin, a Biden appointee, rounded out the panel, which did not indicate when it would rule.

Courts have struck down comparable ballot-selfie bans in at least six states, including New Hampshire, Georgia, Indiana and Colorado, while more than a dozen states, including North Carolina, still enforce some version of the restriction.

North Carolina became the first state in the country to begin mailing absentee ballots for the November midterms, meaning the outcome of Hogarth's appeal could still shape what voters are allowed to do with their ballots before Election Day.

## Unpacking The Reality Of Sexual Exploitation, Trafficking

**By Jheri Hardaway**
*Staff Writer*

In August, a 12-year-old girl was taken during an overnight sleepover at a friend's house by 38-year-old Daniel Francis Gear, the uncle of her friend. Harnett County Sheriff Wayne Coats stated that automated Flock cameras along U.S. Highway 421 helped investigators track Gear's truck to a wooded area near Erwin. North Carolina Senate Candidate Michael Whatley has been widely criticized for his political associations with convicted sex offenders, resulting in a major campaign controversy. Just this past week in Pawleys Island, South Carolina, a local pastor faced a crowd of angry parents to answer questions about how a 70-year-old registered sex offender was allowed to volunteer at the church's school. Headlines warning of child exploitation and sex crimes seem more prevalent than ever. Between congressional hearings with social media executives and daily alerts about digital predators, a pressing question echoes across living rooms and church pews alike: Are our communities facing an unprecedented epidemic, or are we simply waking up to a horror that was always there?

The answer is not simple, but it is slightly sobering. Criminologists, child advocates, and public health researchers emphasize that while physical, contact abuse is an ancient




trauma finally being addressed after centuries of silence, the internet has created an entirely new, industrialized crisis that targets our youth where youth live: online.

For generations, society operated under a convenient illusion: that predatory harm was a rare anomaly confined to dark alleys and strangers. In reality, historical records and retrospective adult insights reveal that in-person abuse was widespread throughout human history.
It was largely sustained not by lack of frequency, but by silence and institutional cover-ups in schools, families, religious bodies, legal frameworks that ignored domestic violence, and a culture that placed the burden of shame on the victim rather than the perpetrator. Social media has given folks an outlet to share their experiences, old and new, causing darkness to be brought to light and the public having to reckon with painful and disturbing information that has plagued some people for years.

The apparent "explosion" of reported sexual assaults beginning in the late 20th century was not a sudden surge in abusive behavior, but the result of a cultural awakening. During the era of chattel slavery, there was no such thing as sexual abuse of African Americans. Since Blacks were considered property, abuse was as normal to the perpetrators as the sunrise. Times have changed. During the "Me Too" era, the passage of mandatory reporting laws, the rise of specialized trauma care, mental health services, and investigative journalism dismantled the wall of denial and shame.

Decades of public health data, including studies from the Crimes Against Children Research Center and the CDC, suggest that in-person sexual victimization in the United States has actually plateaued or slightly declined from peak reporting eras in the 1990s. Greater community vigilance, background checks, and youth education have begun to work as meaningful defenses.

While community awareness has strengthened protections in physical spaces, technology has unlocked an unmonitored back door into our children's bedrooms. Experts agree we face an unprecedented crisis is in online child sexual exploitation and abuse (CSAE). In the early 2010s, the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) processed approximately one million reports annually through its CyberTipline. Today, that number has surged into tens of millions. While improved automated detection flags more material, the raw volume circulating globally represents a genuine, compounding crisis.

The dangers have rapidly outpaced traditional safety advice. For example, Organized Sextortion where coordinated cyber syndicates deliberately targeting adolescents, frequently teenage boys, using fake profiles on popular social platforms, coercing them into sending compromising images, and then demanding money under threat of exposure. Physical borders once offered a measure of geographical protection. Today, bad actors can groom minors from across the street or across the globe via direct messaging, gaming platforms, and encrypted chat apps. The rapid advancement of artificial intelligence tools that generate deepfakes and non-consensual imagery creates modern vulnerabilities that existing statutes were never written to govern. Understanding the distinction between historical abuse and modern digital exploitation is essential for effective prevention.

Physical abuse remains an intimate, interpersonal trauma that demands transparent institutions, open family communication, and communities that believe children and victims when they speak. Digital exploitation, by contrast, requires systemic accountability, holding tech corporations responsible for platform design, equipping law enforcement with modern forensic tools, and teaching young people digital literacy and boundary-setting.

We are not witnessing a sudden breakdown in human nature; rather, the age-old impulse to exploit the vulnerable has been handed high-speed broadband and pocket computers. Protecting the next generation requires recognizing the hard truths of the past while confronting the digital realities of the present.

## Adams Co-Signs Letter Requesting DOJ/FBI Probe Into Black Hangings

**By Cash Michaels**
*Contributing Writer*

North Carolina Congresswoman Alma Adams (D-NC-12) is a primary co-signer of a Sept. 8th letter by Massachusetts Democratic Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley and approximately 60 other members of Congress, to U.S. Attorney General Todd Blanche and FBI Director Kash Patel, requesting an investigation into a troubling "series of deaths" by hanging of Black people across the country in recent weeks. The deaths " raise significant suspicion of foul play even the role of lynching in our nation's history," their letter stated.

"Therefore, we write to urgently demand a thorough, transparent, and comprehensive federal investigation into every hanging death of a Black individual across the United States.," the letter continued.

The official congressional request for a federal investigation is particularly
important to North Carolina given a tragic mid-August incident in downtown Raleigh where the body of a 32-year-old Black man was found hanging from a tree in a parking lot. Raleigh police later determined from cameras in the area that the victim actually committed suicide.

Reportedly, the victim's mother described her son as struggling with mental problems that likely led to the suicide. There was no evidence of a criminal act involved, authorities said.



REP. ALMA ADAMS



REP. AYANNA PRESSLEY

Still, a federal investigation would confirm that local police finding.

Then, there is the August 26th death by hanging in Roanoke Rapids of Demetrius Eugene Fleming, 38, and father of nine. At press time, local authorities were still investigating. Fleming's body was found in his home. His obituary called him a man who was close to his church, and was fond of music.

Rep. Adams "...has expressed deep concern regarding the recent incidents of Black hangings, labeling them as acts of racial violence and a stark reminder of America's history of racism. She emphasizes the need for justice and accountability in addressing these heinous acts."

"The growing number of Black people found hanging in public is a national crisis," Rep. Pressley's letter continued. "A recent report documented more than 70 modern-day lynchings in the United States between 2000 and 2025. In 2026 alone, there have already been at least 10 reported hangings of Black people. They were as young as 18 years old and lived in different parts of the country, including Mississippi, Michigan, and New York. Each of their deaths should be treated with the utmost seriousness and investigated without bias by the Department of Justice (DOJ) and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)."

"We know there is a long history of neglecting to prevent or investigate deaths of Black individuals," Pressley's congressional letter continued. "For decades, the DOJ and FBI ignored widespread lynchings which motivated more killings. Inaction by the federal government is tantamount to complicity. This is part of the legacy of racial terror in the United States, and this neglect has long-term consequences. Not only are innocent lives lost, but lynching inflicts deep traumatic and psychological wounds on family members, neighbors, and the entire Black community."

Rep. Presley reminded both AG Blanche and Director Patel that her's was not just a simple request from several concerned members of Congress, but in fact, federal law.

"Congress enacted the Emmett Till Antilynching Act in 2022 to ensure the DOJ and FBI are empowered to fully investigate suspicious deaths and hold individuals accountable. It is incumbent upon you to do just that. At a minimum, each federal investigation, with permission of the decedents' families, should include an independent autopsy, an audit of local and state law enforcement investigations, review of physical and testimonial evidence, and a final report submitted to Congress explaining the agency's findings. Additionally, there must be robust data collection that tracks the hanging deaths of Black people in a transparent and systematic manner."

Rep. Presley concluded her letter with, "We would appreciate the opportunity for our offices to connect with your teams at regular, scheduled intervals to share updates, feedback, and concerns from the broader community, as appropriate."

At press time, there was no response from either DOJ or the FBI to Rep. Pressley's request for a federal investigation into recent Black hanging incidents.

## A Different Voice

By Dorothy Shaw Thompson



**9/11 TRIUMPHS AND TRAGEDIES**

Last week, I spent some time pondering and considering 9/11. I remember walking by the den in my house, where Brad was watching television, and stopping in shock as I saw footage of planes flying into the World Trade Center. I was on my way to a breakfast meeting. I pulled myself away from the TV screen and drove to my meeting. I had the radio on for music, but every station was reporting the same thing: America was under attack. It was eerie. It was quiet. There were no horns honking, and everybody seemed to be driving slower and more cautiously.

When I got to the meeting, the few coworkers who had gotten there early were silently looking at the screen in horror. As others came in, they did the same. When we finally started talking, we agreed that we couldn't focus on the task at hand, so we might as well go into the worksite. Initially, I couldn't remember if schools closed that day, but I Googled it and found that, here, they didn't. So I guess we went on with some semblance of the day, meetings and whatever. This was 25 years ago, and we still have not made peace with the Middle East. Osama bin Laden is dead. Qaddafi is dead. Saddam Hussein is dead. Hundreds died when the towers fell, and thousands more died in the aftermath from illnesses connected to being near the rubble. Yet still, we haven't learned.

So many sacrificed their lives and lost family members. The stories of courage and strength from those who fought back on the planes are phenomenal. Stories have been told, and books have been written. There are messages from many who have passed on, as well as premonitions about what was going to happen from them and from people who were close to them. I had a premonition about this as well. Brad and I had planned a trip to Boston in October, but about two weeks before 9/11, I told Brad to cancel the tickets because I had an ominous feeling. I got a feeling about Boston and a plane. Now, immediately, our trip wasn't planned for that time period, and we would have been flying from Raleigh-Durham to Boston. Yet, I trusted the feeling I got. The best explanation I have is that to have known beforehand means this was supposed to be. I am a believer that God knows what we need to grow and become better, both as individuals and as countries.

Yet Rudy Giuliani told Mamdani that he shouldn't go to the memorial services. Mamdani was 9 years old on 9/11. Surely, the former mayor didn't think Mamdani plotted 9/11, and obviously he wasn't one of the pilots, because he'd be dead. The present mayor responded by releasing 170,000 pages that reportedly showed that Giuliani's administration worked to hide information about the toxic quality of the air because of the goal of getting people back to work. In other words, once again, money was prioritized. The love of money is...

Trump had to weigh in, too. He made claims about being at Ground Zero and about firefighters. A Facebook cartoon even suggested that the firefighters were Barney and Fred from *The Flintstones*. His ego wouldn't let him attend the memorial because he wasn't allowed to speak. All the other presidents were there. People, we must vote. We must vote to put people in office who care for us.

Those who died that day, or those who died later because of the toxins, deserve our remembrance, our respect, and a change of heart from us. They were children. They were women who may have had abortions. They were gay people. They were people of all races. Tragedies have a way of teaching us to love unconditionally, to empathize, to have compassion, to support healthcare for all, and to believe that everyone deserves to eat, to live, and to have a home. We are to learn that God loves others as much as He loves us. Because someone chooses to be Muslim, does it threaten our Christianity? If we're true believers, it shouldn't.

Let's face it. The world discovered Jesus because He was crucified. Martin and Malcolm were not fully honored by the masses until they were assassinated. What is it about death? Does it remind us that one day we are going to leave here, too? It doesn't have to be this way. But until we understand the messages that come from tragedies, they are going to continue to be in our faces. And, well, maybe they should be if that's the only way we can learn.

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