



## SPORTS

The Firebirds swim team evens the playing field.



## COMMUNITY FOCUS

Martin Luther King Jr. Triangle events.

# The Triangle Tribune

THE TRIANGLE'S CHOICE FOR THE BLACK VOICE SINCE 1998

*"Serving Raleigh, Cary, Durham and Chapel Hill"*

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« 52 WEEKS OF BLACK BRILLIANCE »

## The 'Ball Method' found a cure for leprosy

Alice Augusta Ball was born in Seattle in 1892. She graduated from the University of Washington with two degrees: pharmaceutical chemistry in 1912 and pharmacy in 1914. On June 1, 1915, Ball was the first African American and the first woman to earn a Master of Science degree in chemistry from the University of Hawaii. Ball's college adviser, Dr. Harry Hollmann, assigned her a research project involving the effect of chaulmoogra oil on patients with Hansen disease, or more commonly known as leprosy. Her research developed a successful treatment. Unfortunately, Ball soon became ill after the discovery. She worked under immense pressure to produce injectable chaulmoogra oil. She returned to Seattle and died at the young age of 24 on Dec. 31, 1916. According to her

obituary, she suffered injuries from inhaling chlorine gas during a class demonstration in Honolulu. The "Ball Method" continued to be used for the treatment of Hansen disease as early as 1940 or as late as 1999 depending on medical journals. Ball never received recognition from the medical world for her groundbreaking work, the chairman of the University of Hawaii Chemistry Department took the credit instead. But Hollmann and author

Paul Wermager of "They Followed the Trade Winds: African Americans in Hawaii," fought to give Ball her due long after her death. In 2000, the university placed a dedication plaque on the campus in her honor, and Feb. 29, 2000, was declared "Alice Ball Day." In 2007, the UH Board of Regents posthumously presented her with its Medal of Distinction, and an Alice Augusta Ball Scholarship, endowed by Wermager, was established in her honor.



Alice Augusta Ball researched a cure for leprosy while earning her Master of Science degree in chemistry at the University of Hawaii in 1915.



Activists say there's still work to do after marching.

## Keeping Martin Luther King Jr.'s dream alive

By Freda Freeman  
CORRESPONDENT

Many see the Trump administration's efforts to eliminate diversity, equity, and inclusion programs, erode voting rights, and erase Black history in schools as setbacks to the gains made during the Civil Rights Movement. Economic reports show that African Americans are losing ground when it comes to jobs, housing, education and mental health services.

Was the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s work and subsequent death all for nothing? Almost 58 years after King's assassination, is his message of equal rights for all still relevant today?

Denise Hester, co-owner of M & M Real Estate Development and Consulting in Durham, said King's message is as relevant today as it was in the 1950s and '60s. "It was a message for humanity, wherever you fall on the spectrum of humanity, meaning race, gender, income, circum-

stance," she said. "King's words are universal, and they apply to everybody who is suffering under some type of injustice. His message is even more important, and we need to put it to work in our own lives and continue to struggle for justice, particularly when injustice is so rampant."

Hester said King's sacrifice should not be relegated to the past. "I think, as time passes and

Please see KING/2A

## How young people relate to Martin Luther King Jr.'s activism to today

By Kylie Marsh

*Kylie.marsh@triangletribune.com*

DURHAM - Over 40 years after being established as a national holiday, Americans young and old find Martin Luther King Jr. Day relevant to their lives.

Middle schoolers Ian Arcela (14), Elmer Martinez (13) and their friend Armando Romero-Campunur (13) discussed the significance of King's activism and the larger movement for social justice in their lives today.

"Back then, skin color was

very different," Martinez said. "It's important to remember how bad it was."

Beyond getting a long weekend, recent high-profile violence and controversy surrounding interactions between U.S. citizens and Immigration and Customs Enforcement were at the top of their minds.

"Back then, police would racially profile Black people a lot," Arcela said. "I feel like that's what ICE is doing to a lot to people that don't look nec-

essarily white." He said the day is a reminder that "we have to remember not to go back to those dark times."

Arcela said the protests against ICE showed a partnership and solidarity between the Latino community and the Black community. He said he took part in protests in October, when Customs and Border Patrol announced operations in North Carolina.

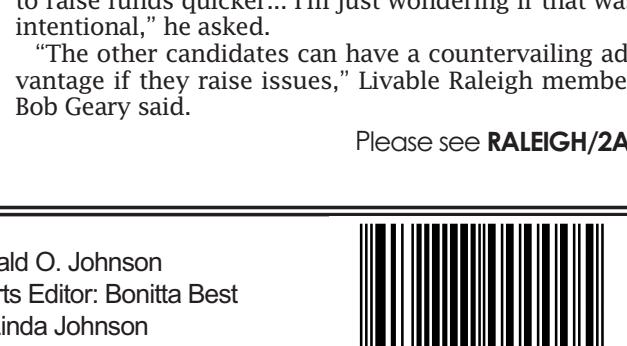
"A lot of African American

Please see YOUNG/2A

## COMMUNITY FOCUS



Martin Luther King Jr. Triangle events.



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# Keeping Martin Luther King Jr.'s dream alive

Continued from page 1A

the farther we are removed from Dr. King's life and assassination, you have to remember that he gave his life for the struggle of justice. How many of us are willing to do that? Before you dismiss him and say that was then, this is now, ask how many of us are willing to go down like that for what we believe in. With that in mind, I think he's a champion for justice still today," she said.

Raleigh activist Octavia Rainey said, "During the period of Dr. Martin Luther King, we didn't have any rights. Dr. King and others who worked with him realized this and went to work to get us our voter's rights, housing rights and civil rights. He led the charge, along with others, for our rights so that one day we'd be in a position to move forward.

"We have to carry on the torch, and that's our problem, we are not carrying on

the torch. On Jan. 19, you have all kind of marches, all kind of sermons, all across the state, but after the 19th, it's shut down. I'm disappointed we only look at one day to bring awareness, then we go back home."

Dionne Selby, owner and founder of the Black Chamber of Raleigh, added: "I don't think Dr. King died in vain. I do think the Trump administration has opened our eyes, or should have, to a lot of things that are being exposed as far as racist systems that have been used to oppress us. I also think it has exposed the ignorance in our own community - individuals that support Trump because you even hear a lot of Black people say that DEI was not necessary. We know that we are not fairly given the opportunity in these spaces. This just puts so much more emphasis on the work that we have to

do and now so much of the work that we are going to have to redo."

Raleigh historian and author Carmen Cauthen said one way for African Americans to move ahead is by voting in local elections: city council, county commission and boards of education. Cauthen said it is crucial that Black people know their history and exercise their right to vote to put people in office who represent their interests.

"I can't blame just white folk for Trump being elected. There has been a long period of time where we have not taught our history to our own people, to our young folks, and they have not seen the value of voting; it wasn't ingrained in them. It was ingrained in me that voting wasn't a choice. As long as people don't understand the risk they take by not following through on their choices, we will have these things," she said.



Left to right: Ian Arcela, Elmer Martinez and Armando Romero-Campunur.

## How young people relate to MLK's activism today

Continued from page 1A

people do support their close friends that are struggling with racial profiling," he said. "You don't just see Hispanic people standing up and speaking out you see Asians, African Ameri-

cans and everything."

The three agreed that the skate park, located downtown adjacent Durham's Central Park, is a welcoming and open space, one which a lot of young people don't have. They periodically dapped up

other skaters while speaking to The Tribune.

"I feel like the skate park is very open to everybody," said Martinez, adding that he and his friends have taken King's activism to heart.

# Raleigh election regulations go into effect in primaries

Continued from page 1A

Livable Raleigh is a nonprofit organization of 15 Raleigh residents invested in civic engagement. Last month, the group published the results of a poll of election issues conducted by Raleigh-based Public Policy Polling. The PPP surveyed 636 registered voters in Raleigh.

Highlighted among the survey results were questions of affordable housing, transit, civic engagement and campaign contributions.

Seventy percent of respondents said Raleigh isn't doing enough to provide affordable housing.

"The supply of affordable housing is completely inadequate, and people see it, people feel it, and they want something done about it," Geary said.

The question is whether municipalities can create regulations around affordable housing to developers.

"But Raleigh City Council is not under any obligation to approve a rezoning case," Geary explained.

Livable Raleigh has advocated for affordable housing, particularly for the city council to push harder for developers to include affordable units in their projects.

Seventy-three percent of respondents said Raleigh's bus and transit system is inadequate to support the growth of the city.

"I moved to Raleigh in 1987. We were talking about the problem then," Geary said.

"We haven't gained on it since then, we have lost ground steadily."



## King's Poor People's Campaign foretold America's affordability crisis

By Charlene Crowell  
SPECIAL TO THE TRIBUNE

As 2026 unfolds, affordability, which emerged as a critical issue last year, will become a more pressing concern for most people in America. A comment by a respondent to a recent student loan borrower survey by The Institute for College Access & Support summarized the complexity of the affordability problem for striving workers:

"With how the economy is, I can barely afford to live. I have to choose between rent, loans or putting food on the table. There's no help and it feels like [the] government doesn't care," said the consumer.

The feeling that economic realities are suffocating the aspirations of hard-working people provides a poignant backdrop leading to the Jan. 19 official celebrations to honor the life, leadership and contributions of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. This year's observance of the MLK holiday begs a key question: What would King do about an unsustainable economic crisis?

After riots in many urban areas in the summer of 1967, King planned the Poor People's Campaign, a multiracial effort to use mass civil disobedience as a constructive, rather than destructive, force.

On Dec. 7, 1967, he announced the economic justice effort at a news conference at Atlanta's Ebenezer Baptist Church.

Although the cities of Detroit and Newark are often noted as the worst hotbeds of the nation's summer riots in 1967, 158 riots erupted across America that year, resulting in 83 deaths and 17,000 arrests, according to a 2007 analysis of the landmark Kerner Commission report by The Journal of Economic History.

In the wake of King's April 1968 assassination, plans proceeded under the joint leadership of his widow, Coretta, and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference's Ralph Abernathy. Their collaborative efforts led to weeks of demonstrations on the National Mall and meetings with policymakers in Washington, D.C. The organizers demanded economic justice and inclusion for Americans of all backgrounds, including well-paying jobs with living wages, as well as financial rights and fairness, full employment, guaranteed annual income and more housing affordable to low-income people.

For King, the nation's lengthy and violent outrage was a clear signal that Black America would no longer tolerate its history of racial resentments and economic injustices. He also appealed for the Black community to cast aside class divisions.

But today, nearly 60 years later, many of the issues championed by the Poor People's campaign remain or have worsened. In late October, the D.C.-based Urban Institute released The American Affordability Tracker, which found that:

\* More than half of American families lack the resources to cover what it really costs to live securely in their community.

\* Since 2019, the average monthly cost of groceries has increased 32% while annual income increased 29%.

\* Since 2017, annual child care costs for two young children have risen by 40%, rents by 50%, home sale prices by 80%, and the lowest-priced Silver health care plan on the Affordable Care Act Marketplace has risen 41%.

The Trump administration's changes taking effect this month will add to the

ongoing financial challenges facing working people. Beginning Jan. 7, the administration started sending notices to millions of student loan borrowers who are in default - 270 days past due on their payments. Those who do not or are unable to begin regular repayments face having their paychecks garnished.

"At a time when families across the country are struggling with stagnant wages and an affordability crisis, this administration's decision to garnish wages from defaulted student loan borrowers is cruel, unnecessary and irresponsible," noted Persis Yu, deputy executive director and managing counsel with the Student Borrower Protection Center.

Further, if Congress does not enact spending bills for the current fiscal year by Jan. 30, another federal government shutdown will occur. Central to the budgeting crisis is whether to extend expired tax credits for the Affordable Care Act. Without these credits, many consumers will see their health insurance costs double or even triple.

While King's lifelong quest for civil rights and economic justice deserves an annual observance, his dream of a nation that fulfills its promises for all its people still needs a diligent and ongoing effort. Lawmakers should heed the concerns expressed by its people, especially when ample research documents how people are suffering.

"[T]here comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe nor politic, nor popular, but he must do it because conscience tells him it is right," King said.

Charlene Crowell is a senior fellow with the Center for Responsible Lending.

## BUSINESS BRIEFS



COURTESY

BurgerFi, a leading burger brand, has opened at 10831 Wakefield Commons Drive.

### BLACK CHAMBER

City of Raleigh is partnering with Black Chamber of Raleigh to host an information session on grants and resources for small businesses Jan. 20, 6-7:30 p.m., Raleigh Pathways Center, 900 S. Wilmington St. Register: [www.eventbrite.com](http://www.eventbrite.com).

### GRANT

City of Raleigh's Building Up-fit Grant is seeking new small business owners. Learn more by emailing

Carl.BrooksII@raleighnc.gov. Deadline: Feb. 1.

### OPENINGS:

\* H&H Bagels, a New York City bagel brand, opened its first location in the Triangle at 239 S. Estes Drive, Suite 101. Visit [www.hhbagels.com](http://www.hhbagels.com).

\* BurgerFi, a leading burger brand, has opened at 10831 Wakefield Commons Drive. Visit [www.BurgerFi.com](http://www.BurgerFi.com).

\* R.M. Ferguson Funeral Service's grand opening is Jan. 18, 2 p.m., 837 S.

Brightleaf Boulevard, Smithfield.

\* Tasty's Fusion Cuisines' soft opening is Jan. 19, 11 a.m. to 8 p.m., 11016 Capital Boulevard, Wake Forest.

\* East of Texas, a Tex-Mex barbecue restaurant, is coming to American Tobacco Campus this summer in the historic Reed Building. Visit [east-of-texas-wsnc.com](http://east-of-texas-wsnc.com).

Send business briefs to [info@triangletribune.com](mailto:info@triangletribune.com).

**The Triangle Tribune**  
**The Voice of the Black Community**



Bishop William Barber announces, "This Is Our Selma," a memorial march from Wilson to Raleigh next month.

## NC Bishop Barber promotes Selma-like march for justice

By Clayton Henkel  
NC NEWSLINE

RALEIGH — "We've got to turn this around," Bishop William J. Barber II choked back emotion as he reflected on the untimely death of Renee Nicole Good, the 37-year-old mother who was fatally shot by a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officer in Minneapolis.

"My God, they're killing mothers. And the grossest image that I've seen in a long time; you have an [airbag] covered with blood and baby dolls in the dashboard," said Barber in recalling his reaction to seeing the videos of Good's shooting which have been widely circulated on social media.

"The question in this moment is what kind of systems, what kind of attitudes create the atmosphere that can gin somebody up to the point that they would shoot a woman, a mother, at point blank range?" Barber asked.

The Department of Homeland Security and President Donald Trump maintain the ICE agent was acting in "self-defense."

Barber did not see it that way. "Because the spirit of hate has been unleashed. If it's not turned around, it could destroy us all," he warned.

Barber's remarks came as a coalition of North Carolina religious and advocacy organizations held a press conference to announce, "This Is Our Selma," a memorial march from Wilson to Raleigh in mid-February.

Barber said North Carolinians are tired of hate and tired of regressive policies that threaten Medicaid, restrict voting rights and instill fear in immigrant communities.

The coalition includes Repairers of the Breach, Indivisible, the North Carolina Council of Churches, the North Carolina Poor People's Campaign and the Union of Southern Service Workers.

Organizers say the need for a massive march became even more apparent after legislative leaders decided last fall to redraw North Carolina's congressional districts at the request of President Donald Trump to favor Republicans in the U.S. House ahead of the 2026 midterm elections.

Critics have argued the new map undermines the voting power of the state's rural Black voters in the 1st congressional district, which has been represented by Black lawmakers for decades.

The 1st district seat, held by U.S. Rep. Don Davis, was North Carolina's only competitive House seat. The Cook Political Report notes that race is no longer a toss-up. The seat leans Re-

publican.

"That's the only reason people do all this tricky redistricting and try to block voting rights is because they have considered that they cannot win in a fair fight," said Barber, calling the new map blatant and racist.

Dennis Gaddy, executive director of the North Carolina Community Success Initiative, said he was moved by a sign in the chapel that read, "We won't be diluted, we won't be dismissed." Gaddy said his nonprofit represents thousands of people who have at one time or another found themselves entangled with the criminal justice system and are turning their lives around.

"And there are people now who are eligible to vote that don't know it, and they need to be empowered to go to the polls," he said. "That's one of the things we'll be doing along this movement."

In-person, early voting for the March 2026 primaries begins Feb. 12, and the group hopes the march will put a spotlight on that opportunity to be heard.

The Moral March gets underway Feb. 11 at Saint James Christian Church in Wilson and culminates Feb. 14 with a Time to Love Forward mobilization and march in downtown Raleigh.

## Claudette Colvin, who refused to move seats on a bus, dies at 86

By Kimberly Chandler  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MONTGOMERY, Ala. — Claudette Colvin, whose 1955 arrest for refusing to give up her seat on a segregated Montgomery bus helped spark the modern civil rights movement, has died. She was 86.

Her death was announced Tuesday by the Claudette Colvin Legacy Foundation. Ashley D. Roseboro of the organization confirmed she died of natural causes in Texas.

Colvin, at age 15, was arrested nine months before Rosa Parks gained international fame for also refusing to give up her seat on a segregated bus.

Colvin had boarded the bus on March 2, 1955, on her way home from high school. The first rows were reserved for white passengers. Colvin sat in the rear with other Black passengers. When the white section became full, the bus driver ordered Black passengers to relinquish their seats to white passengers. Colvin refused.

"My mindset was on free-

dom," Colvin said in 2021 of her refusal to give up her seat. "So, I was not going to move that day," she said. "I told them that history had me glued to the seat."



At the time of Colvin's arrest, frustration was mounting over how Black people were treated on the city bus system. Another Black teenager, Mary Louise Smith, was arrested and fined that October for refusing to give up her seat to a white passenger.

It was the arrest of Parks, who was a local NAACP activist, on Dec. 1, 1955, that became the final catalyst for the yearlong Montgomery Bus Boycott. The boycott propelled the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. into the national limelight and is considered the start of the modern civil rights

movement.

Colvin was one of the four plaintiffs in the landmark lawsuit that outlawed racial segregation on Montgomery's buses. Her death comes just over a month after Montgomery celebrated the 70th anniversary of the Bus Boycott.

Montgomery Mayor Steven Reed said Colvin's action "helped lay the legal and moral foundation for the movement that would change America."

Colvin was never as well-known as Parks, and Reed said her bravery "was too often overlooked."

"Claudette Colvin's life reminds us that movements are built not only by those whose names are most familiar, but by those whose courage comes early, quietly, and at great personal cost," Reed said. "Her legacy challenges us to tell the full truth of our history and to honor every voice that helped bend the arc toward justice."

Colvin in 2021 filed a petition to have her court record expunged. A judge granted the request.

"When I think about why I'm seeking to have my name cleared by the state, it is because I believe if that happened it would show the generation growing up now that progress is possible, and things do get better," Colvin said at the time. "It will inspire them to make the world better."

## NC Justice Anita Earls reveals breast cancer diagnosis, will stay in race

By Clayton Henkel

NC NEWSLINE

North Carolina Supreme Court Justice Anita Earls last week that she was diagnosed with breast cancer late last year.

"I had surgery over the holidays and will continue a course of treatment to address this disease," said Earls in a video released on social media.

Earls told supporters the diagnosis will not impact her ability to continue to serve on the court or campaign.

"We are not slowing down. We are not losing focus. This is just a bump in the road on the way to a win this November," she said. "And we all know courageous women who have experienced breast cancer and treated it successfully, including some of our most brilliant political leaders here in North Carolina."

Earls said she is fortunate the disease was discovered early during a routine mammogram, and it's because of that early detection her prognosis is positive. "I know it can be easy to put off doctor's appointments, but I encourage every woman to get regularly screened for breast cancer," Earls said.

State representative Sarah Stevens, R-Surry, is



Senate Democratic Leader Sydney Batch, D-Wake, during a press conference last April.

The Senate did not advance Batch's bill after its introduction. In the N.C. House, Rep. Howard Penny Jr., R-Harnett, encouraged lawmakers to support a companion bill for better breast imaging, noting he had also been treated for breast cancer. House Bill 297 passed the House with Penny's help, only to stall in the Senate.

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services data indicates over 13,000 women in our state are diagnosed with breast cancer annually.

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Pastor Darryl Baker and his wife Patrice (left) helped Charles and Brandy Fraley restore their marriage.

## Restored marriage is result of church plant's efforts to save marriages

By Erin Roach  
BAPTIST PRESS

PICKERINGTON, Ohio — Charles Fraley had walked away from God long ago, and he had even moved out of his house and left his wife and 6-year-old son behind when God drew Brandy Fraley to a marriage class at Change City Church in Pickerington, Ohio.

With her marriage all but officially ended, she tearfully told Pastor Darryl Baker and his wife Patrice what was happening. "I had seen Change City on a Facebook ad," Brandy told Baptist Press. She had been looking for a new church earlier this year after being out of church for a while, and she desperately needed God's intervention in her marriage.

Charles, a veteran and the grandson of a pastor, agreed to meet with Baker simply to get Brandy to stop mentioning it. "He listened to my story, and he shared some things about his life with me, which actually made me feel a little better," Charles said.

Even so, the husband was determined to get out of his marriage. "I was angry. I was confused. I was bitter. I was just lost. I was a ship with no rudder," he said. "While this was going on, I just had no peace. One day, I was in my son's room looking at his toys and his bed and everything, and I realized something was really wrong with me and I didn't know how to fix it."

For the first time in years, he prayed. Later that day, he heard a voice telling him to go home. Though he didn't understand and didn't want to go home, he obeyed.

The couple started going to counseling and to the marriage classes at Change City, and they began to slowly rebuild their relationship, Charles said. "I have to be completely honest. I can't give any credit to anyone but God because I know where my mind was," he said. "There was nothing that no man could say to me or do to me to change my course."

The marriage classes

helped the couple learn to have healthy arguments and how to bring everything back to God, Brandy said. Though they had premarital counseling and had a church background before, they "still didn't understand what God's calling for us as husband and wife was until we took that marriage class and learned it."

Baker sees the change in Charles and Brandy and says their lives have made a 180-degree turn from when he met them only a few months ago. "It's like a totally different couple, and they both serve in the church now."

If people can learn what God's Word says, they can apply it to marriage, parenting, finances and other areas of life that present challenges, Baker said.

"When you feel you have absolutely nothing, you do have something. You have God. I had to learn again that I'm not alone in this world and read His Word and see what it says," Brandy said.

The marriage classes

### AROUND THE TRIANGLE

**RALEIGH**  
**CHILD CARE**  
Compassionate Early Learning Center is hosting an open house Jan. 18, noon, Compassionate Baptist Church, 2310 Compassionate Drive. Contact: Carolyn Dove at 919-630-3744.

**HOME SHOW**  
Downtown Raleigh Home Show runs Jan. 23-25, Raleigh Convention Center. Visit [www.raleighspringshow.com](http://www.raleighspringshow.com).

**ANNIVERSARY**  
Buffalo Soldiers Greater NC Chapter's 30th year anniversary celebration is Jan. 23-25, Raleigh Marriott Crabtree Valley Hotel, 4543 Marriott Drive.

**CONSIGNMENT**  
Kids Exchange Consignment Sale is Jan. 23-25, NC State Fairgrounds, 1025 Blue Ridge Road.

**ASTRONOMY**  
Astronomy Days is Jan. 24-25, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., N.C. Museum of Natural Sciences, 11 W. Jones St.

**CARS! CARS! CARS!**  
Cars and Coffee Raleigh's "The Off Road Car SHOW!" is Jan. 25, 9 a.m. to noon, Food Bank of NC, 1920 Capital Boulevard.

**SPOKEN WORD**  
United Arts of Wake County has selected 12 finalists for its High School Spoken Word Contest. A reception is Jan. 28, 6 p.m.,

NC Museum of Art, where the winners will be announced. The public is invited. Visit [unitedarts.org](http://unitedarts.org). Deadline: Jan. 24.

**APEX**  
**DONATIONS**  
Dress for Success clothing donation is Jan. 22-25, 104 W. Chatham St. Receive a discount on your purchases.

**DURHAM**  
**CONFERENCE**  
N.C. Budget & Tax Center's Economy For All 2025 conference is Jan. 22, 5-8 p.m., Durham Convention Center. Tickets: [ncbudget.org/econ4all](http://ncbudget.org/econ4all).

**ROUNDTABLE**  
The next Community Luncheon Roundtable is Jan. 22, noon, Elizabeth Street United Methodist Church, 1209 N. Elizabeth St. Open to the public.

**CANDIDATES**  
Meet the Candidates hosted by DCABP is Jan. 22, 6-8 p.m., Providence 1898, 411 W. Chapel Hill St.

**GARDENING**  
The next class in the Hatie Meadows Gardening School is Jan. 24, 10 a.m. to noon, Stanford L. Warren Library, 1201 Fayetteville St. The theme is "Seed Starting."

**TRAFFICKING**  
A seminar on human trafficking is Jan. 31, 10 a.m. to noon, White Rock Baptist, Fayetteville Street.

**R S V P**  
[globalmissions@white-rockbaptistchurch.org](mailto:globalmissions@white-rockbaptistchurch.org). Deadline: Jan. 24.

**SUMMIT**  
Durham's Partnership for Children's annual Parent Summit for families of rising kindergartners is Jan. 24, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., KIPP Charter, 1107 Holloway St. Contact: [mildrianrie@dpcf.net](mailto:mildrianrie@dpcf.net).

**CELEBRATION**  
The Carolina Theatre celebrates 100 years Jan. 31 with all-day activities. Visit [www.carolinatheatre.org](http://www.carolinatheatre.org).

**CHAPEL HILL**  
**LECTURE**  
Harvard Divinity School professor Ahmad Greene-Hayes is the guest speaker at the 2026 African Diaspora Lecture Jan. 29, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Stone Center Hitchcock Room, 150 South St. Tickets: [unc.edu](http://unc.edu).

**MISC.**  
**SCHOLARSHIPS:**  
\* Perry Scholarship Fund honors veterans living in Wake, Durham or Chatham counties. Submit a nomination at [www.perryscholarshipfund.com](http://www.perryscholarshipfund.com). Deadline: Jan. 31.

\* Marian Anderson Legacy Scholarship is accepting applications for undergraduate and graduate students studying music. Visit [www.dar.org/](http://www.dar.org/). Deadline: Jan. 31.

\* These details can help you understand what's driving your energy costs," Harper said. "Because after rent, utilities are typically your next biggest expense."

## What every woman should know about her sexual health

STATEPOINT

A woman's sexual and reproductive health needs evolve throughout her life. What's important at age 25 may look very different at 55. But are women talking about their experiences?

Mayne Pharma is committed to breaking stigmas and unabashedly encourages informed conversations. This framework guides women as they discuss and seek to understand their sexual and reproductive health needs throughout their lives.

\* **20s and 30s: Building the Foundation:** In these years, women should explore various contraception options and find the right fit for their lifestyle and family planning needs. Today's methods offer safe and effective choices, including both short-term and long-acting birth control solutions. A dialogue with one's health care provider can help women better understand the benefits of each option available.

Women should prioritize preventive care by performing breast self-examinations at home and by making regular visits with their primary care physician and gynecologist for screenings and further education. Open communication with health care providers is essential for addressing sexual health issues, and to tailor treatments (if needed) that best fit a woman's health and lifestyle goals.

\* **40s: Recognizing Change:** For most women, their 40s is when they begin experiencing hormonal shifts due to the onset of perimenopause. Symptoms of perimenopause are wide-ranging



and can include everything from irregular periods and low libido to changes in mood and even muscle and joint pain. Women should discuss their symptoms with their health care providers to understand what medical and nonmedical interventions are best for them to help manage symptoms.

Despite the onset of perimenopause during this time, women must remain proactive about their reproductive health as they are fertile until menopause and may become pregnant. They should also continue with all recommended screenings, including mammograms.

\* **50s and Beyond: Navigating Menopause and Post-Menopausal Health:** The average age of menopause in the United States, according to the National Institute on Aging, is 52. This stage often brings noticeable changes, such as hot flashes, sleep disturbances, and shifts in mood or sexual comfort that can affect daily life and overall well-being. Another common symptom of menopause is vulvar and vaginal atrophy, which can cause pain during sex and vaginal

discomfort. While these changes are a natural part of aging, they don't need to be ignored or endured in silence; women should openly discuss these symptoms with their health care providers.

Fortunately, safe and effective treatment options exist that address menopause symptoms while treating their underlying causes, providing lasting relief. From hormone therapy and nonhormonal medications to simple lifestyle adjustments, women have more tools than ever to support their comfort and health. Talking openly with a health care provider is the best way to identify the right path forward to ensure individual needs are met.

Women's sexual health and aging is much more than symptom management. Maintaining bone strength, supporting cardiovascular health, and staying active can all help women feel strong and vibrant in their post menopause years. With the right care and resources, menopause can be seen as a new phase of life, one that emphasizes confidence, comfort and overall well-being.

## How apartment renters can cut energy costs, save

STATEPOINT

With economic uncertainty and soaring housing prices putting homeownership out of reach for many Americans, apartment living is on the rise. But if you're a first-time renter, one often-overlooked aspect of apartment life may come as a surprise: the energy bill.

While you may expect to pay for electricity or gas usage inside your unit, you might not realize you could also be footing the bill for energy used elsewhere in the building.

In apartment complexes, your energy costs may also include a share of the cost of heating and cooling common spaces such as lobbies, hallways, fitness centers and recreational rooms," said Timothy J. Harper, president and CEO of Nationwide Energy Partners, a Columbus-based company that specializes in energy management for multi-family communities. "You might not always be aware of it because it's sometimes baked into your rent or utility bill and not called out separately."

Harper advises that whether you're apartment hunting or already settled in, it's wise to ask a few key questions: Are utilities individually metered? Do you pay the energy provider directly or is it bundled into your rent? Does your building use a third-party service that also offers tools to monitor and reduce your usage?

"These details can help you understand what's driving your energy costs," Harper said. "Because after rent, utilities are typically your next biggest expense."



While as a renter you may not have the authority to install new appliances or upgrade insulation, there are several simple strategies that can make a noticeable difference in monthly bills:

\* **Adjust the thermostat:** If your unit allows it, slightly adjusting your thermostat - lower in winter, higher in summer - can significantly cut energy use. Portable fans or space heaters can sometimes be more efficient than relying solely on central systems, as long as they're used safely.

\* **Seal the leaks:** Older units can suffer from drafty windows and doors. Removable weather stripping and draft stoppers - available at most hardware stores - can provide inexpensive insulation and reduce heating or cooling loss.

\* **Use curtains wisely:** Blackout or thermal curtains can help regulate indoor temperature. Keep them closed on hot days to block out sun and open them during winter daylight hours to naturally warm your space.

\* **Cut "vampire" power:** Even turned-off electronics can drain power. Smart plugs allow you to cut elec-

tricity to devices like TVs, chargers and game consoles when they're not in use.

\* **Switch to LED lighting:** Energy-efficient LED bulbs use up to 80% less energy and last longer than traditional incandescent bulbs. They're an easy upgrade with long-term savings.

\* **Adopt smart appliance habits:** Run laundry machines during off-peak hours, typically late at night or early morning, if your building uses time-of-use pricing. Also, avoid overcrowding your refrigerator, which can reduce airflow and force it to use more energy.

\* **Ask about energy audits:** Some apartment communities offer energy audits that identify inefficiencies throughout the building that can be addressed to reduce waste, or third-party reports that provide historical data on average energy usage and cost by unit so people shopping for, or living in, those units know what's typical.

"The key to saving on your apartment energy bill is understanding how your specific building operates and making small changes to optimize your personal energy use," Harper said.

# Division play means playtime is over for CIAA

The meat of the CIAA basketball season begins this weekend with the start of divisional play.

With St. Augustine's permanently out of the conference, the league is even at 12 teams: six in the North and six in the South. Er go, division titles mean something again.

Winston-Salem State women are the talk of the town. First-year coach Tierra Terry has revitalized a program that won

16 games in the previous two seasons combined. The Rams already have 14 wins and are off to their best start in program history.

**BONITA BEST** Terry had success during her

five-year reign at Virginia Union, compiling a 60-51 overall record. She guided the Panthers to a 21-9 record last season, including an appearance in the inaugural Black College Invitational Championship in Charlotte. VUU lost back-to-back games to Clark Atlanta and Livingstone, but it didn't sway the Rams from making a move.

WSSU's only loss this season is a blowout to North Carolina A&T in its season opener. Its quality nonconference wins are against Concord University, Barton College, Lees-McRae and Francis Marion - all with winning records so critics can't accuse the coaches of padding the schedule.

The Rams are undefeated against the North at 5-0, with Fayetteville State and Claflin a game behind in second place. The Broncos, the two-time defending champs, have the second-best overall record at 11-2.

Divisional play is going to be brutal. The South has been the stronger of the two divisions thus far. Three of the six Northern teams are .500 or better, while four Southern teams are.

Lincoln (Pa.) and Elizabeth City State, the 2022 and 2023 CIAA women's champions, respectively, are a combined 0-9 in the conference, quite a comedown by two programs at the top of the ladder just a couple of seasons ago.

WSSU still has skeptics despite its record. The next month and a half will answer it all, beginning with this weekend's game at Shaw.

## Virginia Union - and everyone else?

After losing their season opener to a tough Millersville off, the Panthers reeled off 14 straight wins until a loss at Fayetteville State.

The ONE win that sticks out among all others was against nationally ranked West Liberty.

WLU is the CIAA's nemesis in postseason play. The NCAA Regional is almost always on its campus in West Virginia, and no - repeat NO - CIAA team has ever beaten West Liberty in the tournament.

Union's upset victory has raised spirits and hopes that a tournament win is possible.

Although the Panthers have gotten most of the early spotlight, Claflin has the best conference record (5-1) by a half-game.

CU has finished either first or second in the South the last three seasons but keeps coming up short come tournament time.

However, the Panthers can claim a championship title after defeating Virginia Union in the Black College Invitational Championship.

How many times have we seen a team end the season on a winning streak and carry it into the next season. Time will tell, but if the other Southern teams don't pick up the pace, it will be another Claflin-FSU race to the finish line again.

# The Triangle Tribune Sports

January 18-24, 2026 | 6A



PHOTO: JOHN McCANN

Members of the Firebirds swim team outside the Pullen Aquatic Center in Raleigh.

## Firebirds filling swimming pools, leveling playing fields

By John McCann  
CORRESPONDENT

RALEIGH — When in so-called Rome, you're supposed to do like the Romans.

So, when all Judah Hall was seeing as a budding swimmer were white kids, it made sense to him to act like them.

"When I was on the pool

deck, I was basically the only Black boy on the pool deck besides maybe one other kid. That was it. And that definitely made me feel a little out of place, a little uncomfortable, because that made me decide, 'Yeah, maybe if I start acting white, they'll accept me,'" Hall said. "I wasn't being myself. And, you know, that definitely affected me. I felt

left out." It's why he dove in years later to help his big sister, Zion, coach The Firebirds swim team she was shaping to curate warmer, more welcoming waters for youth, particularly those identifying as Black, Indigenous and people of color like 10-year-old Taylor McFarlane.

The Firebirds squad is an affiliate of USA Swimming,

the national governing body for swimming in the United States. Zion Hall, 21, said as best as she can tell, she is the youngest Black female head coach affiliated with USA Swimming in North Carolina. Affiliates report their own demographics, so USA Swimming is unable to confirm that,

Please see FIREBIRDS/7A

## COLLEGE CORNER

### NCCU off to best start since 2018-19

Winston-Salem State women are showing no signs of slowing down.

The Rams won their 14th straight game Tuesday for their best start in program history. The previous record was 12 straight wins in the 1997-98 season.

First-year coach and alumna Tierra Terry has a lock on the women's coach of the year award. But, then again, coaches can be petty.

**WOMEN**  
**N.C. Central (0-3 MEAC, 3-13)**  
The Eagles last two conference losses have been by a combined eight points: a one-point heartbreaker at Morgan State and a seven-point defeat at Coppin



N.C. Central men are off to their best conference start since the 2018-19 season.

### Professional softball team makes Durham its home

DURHAM SPORTS COMMISSION

DURHAM — The Athletes Unlimited Softball League today announced Durham as the home of the Carolina Blaze, North Carolina's newest women's professional sports property. The Blaze will host their games at Smith Family Stadium on Duke's campus.

The Carolinas have produced generations of elite softball talent, and Durham sits at the heart of that tradition. With a strong youth pipeline and a deep appreciation for high-level competition, the region offers an ideal home for the Blaze.

Smith Family Stadium provides a premier venue where the Blaze can connect with fans who value the growth and development of women's sports. With former Duke standouts Ana Gold and Jala

Wright on the roster, the Blaze reflect the pride and passion of Carolina softball.

The team will be led by General Manager Dana Sorensen, who has a history of success in softball as both a leader at Sorensen Elite and a player at Stanford University, alongside head coach Kara Dill, the current coach at UT-Arlington and a familiar face in Blaze history, having served as associate head coach in the inaugural season. In addition to Gold and Wright, the Blaze's roster also features veteran outfielder Baylee Klingler, catcher Kayla Kowalik and pitcher Keilani Ricketts amid a lineup of world-class athletes.

The Blaze will join the Chicago Bandits, Oklahoma City Spark, Portland Cascade, Texas Volts and Utah Talons in the six-team league, which begins play

on June 9. The full 2026 schedule and roster can be found below. Fans can become Founding Season Ticket Members beginning today at 12:00 p.m. ET. Group tickets for all games are also available. Single game tickets will be available at a later date.

The AUSL's inaugural season in 2025 featured a touring model that brought games to 12 locations across the country. Today's announcement marks a major milestone as AUSL transitions to a city-based professional softball league. After evaluating numerous potential markets against a comprehensive set of criteria, each AUSL host city was ultimately selected for its authentic connection to softball, demonstrated support for women's sports, access to professional-caliber facil-

ties and ability to serve as a long-term home for professional teams. Together, these markets reflect the nationwide resonance of softball and AUSL's commitment to building a league rooted in community, culture, and competitive excellence.

"The Carolinas have produced generations of elite softball talent, and Durham represents the heart of that tradition," AUSL Commissioner Kim Ng said. "Playing at Smith Family Stadium allows us to connect the Blaze to a region that values competition, development, and the continued growth of women's sports."

"We're excited to open up our facilities to this incredible league," said Bob Weiseman, Duke deputy director of athletics. "We hope this inspires the next generation of athletes."



Judah Hall earned four first-place finishes in his collegiate debut at Lenoir-Rhyne University earlier this month.

## Firebirds filling swimming pools, leveling field

**Continued from page 6A**  
said Nikki Warner, the organization's senior director of communications.

If not for The Firebirds, Taylor's probably not on a swim team, said Shanta McFarlane, her mama. "It was very hard to find a swim team to fit our needs where she's represented, where she can feel like she fits in," Shanta McFarlane said.

"There's always somebody to encourage you," Taylor said.

It's the Black pride for Amaya Durandis: "Being in the first woman-run, African-American swim team, it feels really nice. It really does."

Amaya is 9. She gets it, said Shelley Willingham, the chief revenue officer for The Diversity Movement, a Workplace Options Company.

"When a 9-year-old can see herself in her coach and already understand why that matters, she's not learning representation theory, she's learning she doesn't have to edit herself to matter," Willingham said. "That's what shifts. Not talent. Not work ethic. Just the removal of an invisible weight most people don't even realize they're carrying until someone finally takes it off their shoulders."

**CHANGING LANES**  
In 2023, Zion Hall was on a Raleigh swim team whose coach decided to change lanes. "That kind of left the swim team without a coach, and so the team got shut down. But the kids didn't want to separate because, you know, there's no other team that was like us," Zion Hall said. "They were all first-generation swimmers. We needed a new place to go, and I was the only one with a coaching license at the time."

Likeminded individuals came together that year and established a non-profit entity called Champion's Coaching Inc. ... Eventually, we went from just paying for lane space and providing resources for these kids to doing things like lessons and water-safety talks and stuff like that. And eventually, back in 2024 September, we became the first Black-woman branded USA Swimming team in the Triangle. We became official then."

The Firebirds are official all right. By providing inclusive space for young swimmers, Judah Hall was able to develop and earn a spot on the swim team at Lenoir-Rhyne University. He made his collegiate swimming debut on Jan. 10, earning four first-place finishes. He'd tell you

those results wouldn't have been possible had he kept faking it before joining The Firebirds. "It's helped me realize my potential," he said. "As I got older, and I started to find more and more Black swimmers like me, I was like, 'Oh, there's more of us? Like, I'm not the only one!'"

**FINDING FREEDOM**  
Willingham said the inner winner was in him the whole time. "That Firebirds swimmer didn't get more talented when he switched teams. He got free," Willingham said. "Free from code-switching, from performing a version of himself that made everyone else comfortable, from the exhausting work of fitting in. That energy he was spending on assimilation went into his stroke instead."

"My previous team, they didn't really understand what talent I really had. But the Firebirds really understood — well, my sister understood because, you know, she has been my sister ever since I was born," Judah Hall said. "When nobody else was there, she was there. She's the one who coached me through things."

(Read the entire article on our website.)



## NCCU men off to best conference start in 7 years

**Continued from page 6A**  
Smith.

**N.C. A&T**  
Sophomore Victorya White and junior Savannah Burgin have made the Junior Team USA, the first time any A&T bowler has made the Youth National Team.

"I am so proud of both," A&T coach Kim Terrell-Kearney said. "Being the first to represent A&T on the Junior Team USA is such an accomplishment. I am a proud coach today."

**MEN**  
**N.C. Central (3-0 MEAC, 7-1)**

The tough nonconference schedule is paying off for the Eagles.

NCCU is undefeated and tied for first place with UMES heading into this weekend's game against Howard.

Bowie State, which had won just two conference games, held off the Bears late in the game to leave with a 49-45 win. Shaw's Leasia Matthew scored a game-high 22 points, and Ashara Spruill pulled down 15 boards in the loss.

It doesn't get any easier this weekend with the roarin' Rams coming to Spaulding for the start of division play. Shaw heads to Charlotte next Wednesday to take on Johnson C.

OK, we left to watch that embarrassing Pittsburgh-Houston NFL game. While we were away, the Bulldogs rallied from seven down with less than a minute to play in the 70-69 loss. BSU's Jaiden McGhee and Shaw's Dreveon Scott couldn't be stopped, with 27 points and 26 points, respectively. The men play the Rams and Golden Bulls after the women.

**Morgan State**  
Everything isn't all about the NBA. There's money to be had overseas for HBCU players, too.

Several former Morgan State players are continuing their careers in other countries.

\* Malik Miller: Groningen team in the Netherlands.

\* Myles Douglas: Zubry Bialystok in Poland. Douglas is averaging 18 points and 4.8 rebounds per game.

\* DeWayne Jackson, Lebanon

\* Stanley Davis Jr., North Macedonian

\* Lewis Djonkam, Romania

\* Kameron Hobbs, North Macedonian

\* Lagio Grantsa, Iceland

\* Phil Carr, Brazil

\* Will Thomas, Ireland

\* Keith McGee, Cameroon

**The Best in HBCU Sports**  
[triangletribune.com](http://triangletribune.com)

**KEMET**  
**MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. ACTIVITY SHEET**

Hi Everyone! My time machine, "Sankofa 82" and I took a trip back in time to visit the legendary social and political activist and American Baptist Minister Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. We landed on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial as Dr. King was speaking... "I Have a Dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal."

**WHO SAID IT?!**

As Dr. King began his "I Have a Dream" speech on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, someone near shouted out to him. Which one of these three remarkable women [Rosa Parks, civil rights activist; Coretta Scott King, wife of Dr. King; or Mahalia Jackson, gospel singer] shouted the following: "go head Martin, tell them about your dream, TELL THEM ABOUT YOUR DREAM MARTIN!"

Write her name here: \_\_\_\_\_

**I HAVE A DREAM...**

Submit your own "I Have a Dream" thoughts to [KEMETCOMIC.COM](http://KEMETCOMIC.COM) and get published in an upcoming activity sheet!

### FILL IN THE BLANK

Complete the sentence with the correct word(s). [Coretta Scott King, "I Have a Dream", Nobel Peace Prize, Mahatma Gandhi, Bernice]

The \_\_\_\_\_ was won by Dr. King in 1964.

Dr. King was married to \_\_\_\_\_.

Dr. King modeled his non-violent peaceful approach after \_\_\_\_\_.

In birth order, Dr. King's children's names are Yolanda, Martin III, Dexter and \_\_\_\_\_.

**I HAVE A DREAM...**

[www.KEMETCOMIC.com](http://www.KEMETCOMIC.com)

### FAIR OR UNFAIR?

This is an activity dealing with equality. Mark the statement as **J** for just or **U** for unjust.

\_\_\_\_\_ A group of people gang up on you.

Male and female workers doing the same job and receiving the same pay.

\_\_\_\_\_ All children should have an equal opportunity to learn and develop skills.

\_\_\_\_\_ A company refuses to hire Black people because of their race.

### ONE MINUTE MADNESS!

In one minute, unscramble all the words that show non-violence. The first letter is in **bold**.

Imca \_\_\_\_\_

qilutnra \_\_\_\_\_

wal - dingbia \_\_\_\_\_

blaepaeac \_\_\_\_\_

**KEMET**  
© 2021 by Joe Young

I TRAVELED THROUGH TIME AND OBSERVED THE LIFE OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. THROUGH HIM I REALIZED TO BECOME GREAT AND LEAVE A LEGACY OF LOVE...

...YOU DON'T DO IT BY BEING SUPER RICH OR EVEN BEING THE BEST AT YOUR CRAFT. YOU BECOME GREAT AND LEAVE A LEGACY OF LOVE BY...

...BECOMING A SERVANT OF PEOPLE!

WHO SAID IT? Mahalia Jackson  
FILL IN THE BLANK Nobel Peace Prize  
Coretta Scott King  
Mahatma Gandhi  
Bernice  
I Have a Dream  
ONE MINUTE MADNESS ANSWERS  
FAIR OR UNFAIR ANSWERS  
U. J. U.

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., 1/18/26, #238

[WWW.JOEYOUNG.ORG](http://WWW.JOEYOUNG.ORG)

KEMET ACTIVITY SHEETS © 2026 BY JOE YOUNG



## KNIGHTDALE

\* Jan. 19, 2 p.m. - MLK Day Interfaith Community Program, First and Main, 315 N. First Avenue

## GARNER

\* Jan. 18, 3:15-5:30 p.m. - MLK Celebration and Unity Walk, Garner Performing Arts Center, 117 Avery St.

## RALEIGH

\* Jan. 18, 3-6 p.m. - "When Community Gathers" unity celebration of music, dance and art, Top Greene African American Cultural Center, 401 MLK Jr. Boulevard.

\* Jan. 19, 10 a.m. - Feed the Homeless, sponsored by Eva and Esther's Kitchen and iRise Foundation, Oak City Cares, 1430 S. Wil-

## mington St.

\* Jan. 19, noon to 3 p.m. - King Day: A Celebration, John Chavis Memorial Park, 505 MLK Jr. Boulevard.

## APEX

\* Jan. 16-19, 6:30-8:30 p.m. - MLK Jr. Commemoration Weekend, Apex Senior Center, 63 Hunter St. Visit [www.apexnc.org/MLK](http://www.apexnc.org/MLK).

## CARY

\* Jan. 18, 3:30 p.m. - Annual MLK Interfaith Service, Christ the King Lutheran Church, 600 Walnut St.

## DURHAM

\* Jan. 19, 10 a.m. to noon - MLK Jr. Family Day of Service, Family Life Center at Lyon Park, 1309 Halley St. Help pack 30,000 meals.

\* Jan. 19, 1-4 p.m. - 15th Annual Dream Big Book Drive giveaway, Boxyard RTP.

\* Jan. 19, 1-4 p.m. - Book Harvest's Dream Big Book Drive and Community Celebration, Boxyard RTP, 900 Park Offices Drive.

\* Jan. 19, 1:30 p.m. - discussion on health care, affordable housing and community empowerment, First Presbyterian Church, 305 E. Main St.

\* Jan. 19, 6 p.m. - Annual religious service, Orange Grove Missionary Baptist, 505 East End Avenue.

\* Jan. 27, 11 a.m. - Durham City-County MLK Jr. Day Employee Observance, First Presbyterian Church, 305 E. Main St.

## SCHOOL NEWS



BILL BAMBERGER

## American, born 1956, Jorden, 2023, pigment inkjet print.

This spring, student photographers and storytellers from Durham School of the Arts will be featured in a new exhibition at the Ackland Art Museum in Chapel Hill.

"Bill Bamberger: Boys Will Be Men" highlights portraits and audio reflections created with DSA students, sharing honest, personal

perspectives on identity, masculinity and growing up. These students didn't just pose for photos. They helped shape the project, shared their stories and made their voices heard.

Durham-based photographer and educator Bamberger worked closely with more than 250 DSA students over two years, crea-

ting space for teens to speak and be seen as individuals.

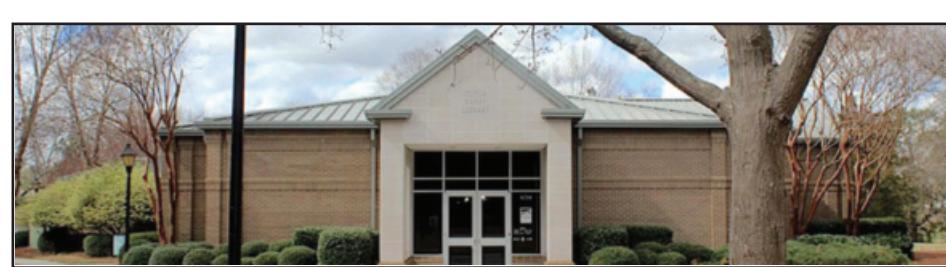
The exhibition will be free and open to the public from Jan. 30 through April 12 and will include special programs celebrating DSA students throughout the spring. Learn more and check upcoming programs at [ackland.org](http://ackland.org)

## Poetry Jam Throwdown

Every third Friday of the month, a free poetry jam and creative writing networking session for writers and orators will be held at Five Points Center for Active Adults, 2000 Noble Road. Ages 18 and up. Call 919-996-4730 for more information



COURTESY



WAKE COUNTY

Olivia Raney Local History Library.

## Wake County announces updates to library bond projects

STAFF REPORTS

endum allocated \$142 million for five new libraries, one expansion and eight renovations.

Following recent planning discussions, staff recommended repurposing \$26 million originally designated for a major renovation of the Library Administration Building. That project will instead be incorporated into a broader redevelopment plan for the Wake County Office Park, freeing funds for additional library improvements.

## Here's what residents can expect

\* Expansion of Green Road Community Library. Originally slated for a renovation only, the library will now be expanded from 8,000 to 12,000 square feet to provide additional space and resources for the growing community. It is expected to open in 2030.

Green Road Community Library is at 4101 Green Road.

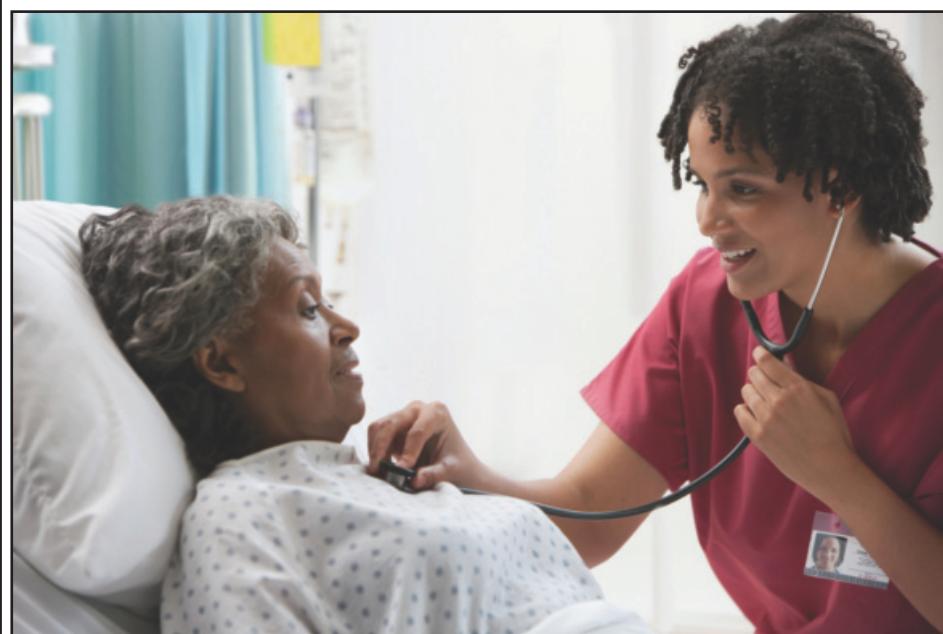
\* Replacement of Olivia Raney Local History Library. This update aligns with future campus renovations and opens opportunities for potential affordable housing development on the site. Completion is scheduled for 2033. Olivia Raney Local History Library is currently at 4016 Carya Drive in Raleigh.

\* Larger Community Library Branches. New branches will increase in size from 12,000 to 14,000 square feet, creating room for dedicated programming spaces and more flexible uses. New community libraries are planned for Rolesville, the Apex Friendship area, Wendell and Athens Drive.

Residents can learn about the status of all bond projects at [wake.gov/LibraryBond24](http://wake.gov/LibraryBond24).

The original bond refer-

## HBCU NEWS



## N.C. CENTRAL

North Carolina Central's nursing program delivered an outstanding 96% passage rate on the NCLEX professional exam for calendar year 2025, besting all other nursing programs at historically Black universities in North Carolina. These results include a 100% passage rate for the December 2025 cohort of accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) students, marking the second consecutive year of perfect results for this program. Graduates of a nursing program are not allowed to practice their profession until they pass the NCLEX.

Yolanda M. VanRiel, Ph.D., RN, leads the department and also serves as chair of the National League for Nursing, a professional organization that focuses on excellence in nursing education.

"These results affirm the

strength of our faculty, the resilience of our students and the intentionality and consistency of our curriculum," VanRiel said. "A 96% NCLEX pass rate for the year 2025 reflects more than academic success, it signals readiness to lead, to serve and to respond to the evolving health needs of society. NCCU nursing graduates enter the workforce prepared to deliver high-quality, compassionate and responsive care to all. Wherever they practice, they will be catalysts for improved health outcomes, trusted advocates for those most in need and leaders who uplift the communities they serve."

NCCU and its partners have invested heavily in initiatives to improve preparation for the NCLEX, including providing tutors, test-taking strategy consultants and a diagnostic exam to signal the optimal conditions for each stu-

dent to take the NCLEX. In 2025, the nursing department expanded the immersive clinical experiences offered to students with the launch of an immersive interactive room that allows students to engage in virtual medical training experiences. NCCU's nursing program is the first at a university in North Carolina to adopt this technology.

This new space builds on the introduction of virtual reality equipment (headgear and handheld controls) to the program in 2024.

"NCCU nursing graduates are entering clinical settings and the workforce with sharper judgment, greater confidence and readiness to practice. This readiness is what sets them apart and contributes to us being at the top," said Mohammad W. Ahmed, Ph.D., NCCU College of Health and Sciences dean.

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