

The Triangle TRIBUNE

THE TRIANGLE'S CHOICE FOR THE BLACK VOICE

VOLUME 23 NO. 4

WEEK OF JANUARY 24, 2021

\$1.00

Raleigh Firebirds sign 2 to roster as season kicks off.



Students fight to remove SROs

By Courtney Napier
CORRESPONDENT

The Youth Justice Project, in partnership with the Southern Coalition for Social Justice, announced the launch of its #LiberateToEducate campaign. The YJP is a youth-led organization comprised of students from Durham Public Schools. The goal of the partnership is to create a more equitable and nurturing learning environment for Black and brown students and dismantling the school-to-prison pipeline.

Last week's press conference was conducted by YJP students' Valerie Ziegler, Sonia Green, Mari D. Nicolas Brown, Zora Deberry, and Sophie Yarwood. The SCSJ's lead counsel, Tyler Whittenberg, and communications director Michelle Rash were the facilitators. The students attend Jordan High, a school with a predominantly white student body, and Hillside High, a predominantly Black high school.

The students introduced the five demands that constitute the #LiberateToEducate campaign: remove police, end exclusionary discipline, liberate the school environment, implement culturally relevant curriculum, and establish mental health safe spaces with certified therapists and youth-led support groups that are available during and after school hours.

The YJP feels that the cost of maintaining a police presence in Durham Public Schools takes away from resources that could go to hiring more supportive staff — like counselors and nurses — as well as implementing restorative justice programs that would help deter students from the use of violence. "SROs are valued higher than school counselors," Ziegler shared. "You can see this by the fact that there are more arrests than suspensions in Durham County schools."

Of those interactions with school police, 86% of school-based complaints to the justice system are Black students, though they make up 44% of DPS's student body. When compared to the Latinx students making up 14% of delinquency complaints, and white students making up virtually none, it is clear to the YJP members that something needs to change.

One of the first questions the students were asked after their presentation was who would intervene in the event of a school shooting without an SRO on site? Several pointed to the data suggesting that SROs are not particularly

Please see **LIBERATE/2A**



Kamala Harris is sworn in as vice president by Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor as her husband Doug Emhoff holds the Bible.

Vice President Harris: A new chapter opens in US politics

By Kathleen Ronayne and Alexandra Jaffe
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Vice President Kamala Harris broke the barrier Wednesday that has kept men at the top ranks of American power for more than two centuries when she took the oath to hold the nation's second-highest office. Harris was sworn in as the first female U.S. vice president — and the first Black woman and per-

son of South Asian descent to hold the position — in front of the U.S. Capitol by Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor.

The moment was steeped in history and significance in more ways than one. She was escorted to the podium by Capitol Police Officer Eugene Goodman, the officer who single-handedly took on a mob of Trump supporters as they tried to breach the Senate floor during the Capitol insurrec-

tion that sought to overturn the election results. Harris was wearing clothes from two young, emerging Black designers — a deep purple dress and coat. After taking the oath of office, a beaming Harris hugged her husband, Douglas Emhoff, and gave President Joe Biden a first bump.

Her rise is historic in any context, another moment when a stubborn boundary falls away, expanding the idea

Please see **HARRIS/2A**

CHCCS new superintendent talks priorities, in-person schooling

By Katie Clark
CORRESPONDENT

CHAPEL HILL - Nyah Hamlett began her role as superintendent of Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools on Jan. 4. She joins the CHCCS community after working in public education in Virginia for over 15 years.

In a Jan. 15 media conversation, Hamlett announced that a school board meeting on whether students should return to in-person learning will be held Jan. 21. The meeting will discuss options for returning students pending coronavirus updates from public health sources, as well as sports teams participation and extracurricular activities.

Hamlett said she recognizes the benefits that in-person learning offers, such as increased socialization and access to additional services. When students do return to school, focus will be directed towards following the "three Ws": washing hands, waiting 6 feet apart and wearing a mask. "As a parent myself, I rec-



New Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools Superintendent Nyah Hamlett is sworn into her new position.

ognize how important it is to know that our students will return to in-person learning as quickly and as safely as possible," she said. "Our commitment is to provide an environment that is conducive to meeting the academic and social needs of our students, staff and families when it is safe to do so."

Hamlett expressed plans to begin her role as superintendent by focusing on four prin-

cipal areas: racial equity, school-based mental health and wellness, deeper learning and family engagement. These priorities will be the focus of her leadership even though students remain in an online-learning environment.

Of the four priorities, the racial equity focus will include conversations about anti-racist and culture-responsive equity and curriculum work. Hamlett

Please see **SUPERINTENDENT/2A**

Durham fast food workers strike on MLK birthday

Challenge Biden administration to raise minimum wage

By Bonitta Best

editor@triangletribune.com

DURHAM — Fast-food workers in Durham used Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday to make their voices heard for better wages. Striking McDonald's and other employees led a car caravan rally and protest on Roxboro Street demanding \$15 an hour minimum wage, which is more than double the \$7.25 current wage that hasn't changed in 10 years.

"We are striking on Martin Luther King's birthday because we are carrying on his fight—for fair pay, union rights and racial justice," said McDonald's worker Monteigo Wilson. "We demand a \$15 federal minimum wage. It's time to close the racial wage gap!"

Durham partnered with workers from Atlanta, Chicago, De-

Please see **STRIKE/2A**

NCAE wants tighter reins on virus

By Greg Childress
THE POLICY WATCH

With cases of COVID-19 infections surging and nearly 4,000 people in North Carolina hospitalized with the deadly virus, the N.C. Association of Educators has called on Gov. Roy Cooper to take stronger "executive action" to control the disease.

NCAE President Tamika Walker Kelly said in a letter to the governor that educators are concerned about the spike in infections. She asked Cooper to "make a difficult" decision to tighten COVID-19 restrictions to slow community spread so that schools can operate safely.

"It does not matter how fastidiously educators enforce masking and distancing mandates in the classroom if infection rates are in excess of 10 percent outside the classroom," Walker Kelly wrote. "Therefore, we request that you take immediate and significant executive action to again curb community spread of this virus until such time that infection rates are again under control."

Last week, the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services reported 5,098 new COVID-19 cases. That was down from the 6,851 cases. State health officials reported that 14.7% of COVID-19 tests were positive.

In late March, shortly after schools closed for in-person instruction, Cooper's "executive action" to slow the virus included a 30-day stay-at-home order requiring residents to remain in their homes to slow the spread of the virus. Residents could only leave homes to visit essential businesses, exercise outside or to help a family member. More recently, Cooper extended a modified Stay at Home Order for three weeks. Under that order, people must be home between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m. Cooper issued the order on Dec. 11. It was supposed to expire Jan. 8. It now expires Jan. 29.

Walker Kelly noted that the N.C. Nurses Association said in a letter to Cooper last week that hospitals and medical personnel are overwhelmed. "Despite clear guidance from your office, NC DHHS, and even the CDC [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention], compliance with the masking and distancing protocols is not working well enough to prevent rampant viral spread throughout our communities," Walker Kelly said.

She said schools can't wait

Please see **EDUCATORS/2A**

Index

News 1A Religion 5A
Classifieds 4A Sports 6A
Focus 8A

5007 South Park Drive

Suite 200-G

Durham, NC 27713

(919) 688-9408

© 2021 The Triangle Tribune

Publisher: Gerald O. Johnson
Managing Editor/Sports Editor: Bonitta Best
Advertising: Linda Johnson
info@triangletribune.com
www.triangletribune.com



Harris: A new chapter opens in US politics

Continued from page 1A of what's possible in American politics. But it's particularly meaningful because Harris is taking office at a moment when Americans are grappling over institutional racism and confronting a pandemic that has disproportionately devastated Black and brown communities.

Those close to Harris say she'll bring an important — and often missing — perspective to the debates on how to overcome the many hurdles facing the new administration. "In many folks' lifetimes, we experienced a segregated United States," said Lateefah Simon, a civil rights advocate and longtime Harris friend and mentee. "You will now have a Black woman who will walk into the White House not as a guest but as a second in command of the free world."

Harris — the child of immigrants, a stepmother of two and the wife of a Jewish man — "carries an intersectional story of so many Americans who are never seen and heard."

Harris, 56, moves into the vice presidency just four years after she first

came to Washington as a senator from California, where she'd served as attorney general and as San Francisco's district attorney. She had expected to work with a White House run by Hillary Clinton, but President Donald Trump's victory quickly scrambled the nation's capital and set the stage for the rise of a new class of Democratic stars.

After Harris' own presidential bid fizzled, her rise continued when Biden chose her as his running mate last August. Harris had been a close friend of Beau Biden, his elder son and a former Delaware attorney general who died in 2015 of cancer.

The inauguration activities included nods to her history-making rise and her personal story.

Harris used two Bibles to take the oath, one that belonged to Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, the late civil rights icon whom Harris often cites as inspiration, and Regina Shelton, who helped raise Harris during her childhood in the San Francisco Bay Area. The drumline from Harris' alma mater, Howard University, joined

the presidential escort.

After the ceremony, she and Emhoff escorted former Vice President Mike Pence and his wife, Karen Pence, out of the Capitol, a gesture that would normally be performed by the incoming and outgoing presidents, but Trump did not attend the inauguration. Harris, Pence and their spouses spoke for several minutes before the Pences departed.

To celebrate the occasion, the Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority, the nation's oldest sorority for Black women, which Harris joined at Howard University, declared Wednesday as Soror Kamala D. Harris Day. Members of the sorority watching the celebrations across the country were clad in pearls, as was Harris, and the sorority's pink and green colors. "There is a pride I can't put into words," said Elizabeth Shelby, a member of the sorority's Alpha Psi chapter, who watched the inauguration from her home in Nashville, Tennessee. "It is such a joy to see her rise to this place in our country. It is such a joy to know that she is one of us, that she represents us."

Educators want Cooper to tighten COVID restrictions

Continued from page 1A for the vaccine to slow the virus. "The ongoing vaccine distribution is a welcome development, but it will still be several months before a significant portion of our residents receive the immunization, and our schools simply cannot wait until that point," Walker Kelly said. "Your immediate action is necessary to save lives, and we implore you to do so."

Walker Kelly didn't ask Cooper to consider closing all schools to in-person instruction.

The Board of Education in Durham County has voted to close schools to in-person instruction for the remainder of the year in response to the surge in

fections. And school districts that planned to send children into school buildings this month following the holiday break are now reconsidering those decisions.

Walker Kelly said teachers are eager to reopen schools, but only when it's safe to do so. "The science and research around COVID safety has evolved significantly since last March, and it is clear that schools can be among the safest of places for both students and educators when proper masking, distancing, and sanitation protocols are in place, though this can only be the case when infections within the wider community are under con-

trol," Walker Kelly said.

Walker Kelly's letter comes a day after a team of Duke University and UNC-Chapel Hill researchers released a report showing a low-rate of in-school transmission of the virus. The researchers studied 11 school districts with nearly 100,000 students and staff for nine weeks. They found that secondary transmissions of the virus were rare.

"Through contact tracing, N.C. health department staff determined an additional 32 infections were acquired within schools," the researchers wrote. "No instances of child-to-adult transmission of SARS-CoV-2 were reported within schools."

Inaugural poet Amanda Gorman: 'Even as we grieved, we grew.'

By Hillel Italie
ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — In one of the inaugurations' most talked about moments, poet Amanda Gorman summoned images dire and triumphant Wednesday as she called out to the world "even as we grieved, we grew."

The 22-year-old Gorman referenced everything from Biblical scripture and "Hamilton," and at times echoed the oratory of John F. Kennedy and the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. With urgency and assertion she began by asking "Where can we find light/In this never-ending shade?" and used her own poetry and life story as an answer. The poem's very title, "The Hill We Climb," suggested both labor and transcendence.

"We did not feel prepared to be the heirs

Of such a terrifying hour,
But within it we've found the power

To author a new chapter,
To offer hope and laughter to ourselves."

It was an extraordinary task for Gorman, the youngest by far of the poets who have read at presidential inaugurations since Kennedy invited Robert Frost in 1961, with other predecessors including Maya Angelou and Elizabeth Alexander. Mindful of the past, she wore earrings and a caged bird ring — a tribute to Angelou's classic memoir "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings" — given to her by Orpah Winfrey, a close friend of



American poet Amanda Gorman reads a poem during the 59th Presidential Inauguration.

the late writer.

"I have never been prouder to see another young woman rise! Brava Brava, @TheAmandaGorman! Maya Angelou is cheering—and so am I," Winfrey tweeted. Gorman was also praised by "Hamilton" playwright Lin-Manuel Miranda, who tweeted "YES @TheAmandaGorman!!" Gorman, soon responded: "Thx @Lin-Manuel! Did you catch the 2 @Hamilton-Musical references in the inaugural poem? I couldn't help myself!"

Among the "Hamilton" inspirations in her poem: "History has its eyes on us," a variation of the "Hamilton" song "History Has Its Eyes On You."

Gorman, a native and resident of Los Angeles and the country's first National Youth Poet Laureate, told The Associated Press last week that she planned to

combine a message of hope for President Joseph Biden's inaugural without ignoring "the evidence of discord and division." She had completed a little more than half of "The Hill We Climb" before Jan. 6 and the siege of the U.S. Capitol by supporters of then-President Donald Trump.

"That day gave me a second wave of energy to finish the poem," Gorman told the AP. She had said that she would not mention Jan. 6 specifically, but her reference was unmistakable:

"We've seen a force that would shatter our nation rather than share it,

Would destroy our country if it meant delaying democracy.

And this effort very nearly succeeded.

But while democracy can be periodically delayed, It can never be permanently defeated."



McDonald's workers at store on Roxboro Street.

Durham fast-food workers strike on MLK Day

Continued from page 1A

troit, Houston and others for the joint rally.

Numerous reports state that raising the minimum wage to \$15 an hour, which would boost pay for more than 23 million Americans, is among the most powerful tools to raise the standard of living for the nation's poorest workers, reduce the racial and gender wage gap, and rebuild the economy in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

King was visiting Memphis, Tennessee, to support striking sanitation workers demanding high pay and safer working conditions when he was assassinated 50 years ago. New President Joe Biden made the \$15 wage a central promise of his campaign. "I just turned 54 years old. I have been working all my life. Ten dollars an hour is the most I've ever been paid," said Rita Blalock, a Raleigh McDonald's worker who earns \$10 an hour after working at the restaurant for 10 years. "It's time for the whole country to get \$15 or better. And after that, we're going to keep fighting for our union rights."

Durham students launch campaign to 'liberate the school system'

Continued from page 1A

effective at stopping school shootings. "By the time the police need to get involved, it's already too late," Wittenberg said.

Wittenberg believes that the goal should be meeting the needs of a student before they feel it necessary to resort to violence, and this cannot happen through arrests and suspensions. "The whole point of this comprehensive platform is that by implementing these things are far less likely to have that happen."

The #LiberateToEducate plan not only addresses disparities in discipline, but it also seeks to change disparities in access to advanced classes and lessons on Black and Indigenous histories. Durham Public Schools employ "academic tracking," a practice that separates students into streams of classes in accordance to their perceived academic capability.

The issue with academic tracking is that it takes the freedom of choice away from students and puts them at the mercy of an administrator's perception of their aptitude.

Mari D. stated, "We need to build a curriculum that ushers students towards AP classes, and we need to systematically support students by providing them with the materials that they need in order to succeed in school."

"I am an AP student, and I had to fight just to get into those classes," added Brown. "I was never encouraged by my teachers



Jordan High student Nicholas Brown discusses the destructive role SROs play in Durham schools.

to take these classes like they encouraged my white counterparts. My school counselors tried to discourage me taking AP classes because they felt that they were too difficult for me or that I was mentally incapable of handling the pressure of the course."

Brown went on to describe white students having a much different experience — being encouraged by teachers and administrators to take AP classes, even while they were struggling to keep up with the less rigorous Honors-level classes.

The group came up with the platform and the list of demands on their own and based on their experiences as students. Several who presented expressed that they wished teachers and administrators had a better understanding of the difficulties of being a marginalized student, and how they contributed to the challenging experiences.

"We came up with the #LiberateToEducate campaign based on our daily experiences, our daily lives," Brown said. "Many of our teachers and administrators believe that these issues are new. But these, in fact, are the issues we've been dealing with since we stepped foot into a school. Our parents dealt with some of these issues. Even our grandparents dealt with some of these issues."

While they have a realistic perspective on how much change can be accomplished before they graduate, they are hopeful the campaign will play a critical role in making DPS a place where all students feel safe, supported, and seen.

"We know that, eventually, whether it comes with us or whether it comes with future generations, we will liberate the public school system," Brown said.

CHCCS superintendent talks priorities, in-person

Continued from page 1A

said this will include culturally relevant training for teachers. She hopes this work will close opportunity and achievement gaps in CHCCS and plans to fill an equity leadership role that is vacant.

"Equity is really something that has to support and be the foundation of our work," she said. "I hope to model for others that equity is more than just naming inequities or changing words and symbols."

School-based mental health and wellness will focus on the residual impact of the pandemic, she

said. This includes a comprehensive program for students and families, with a focus on wellness throughout the pandemic and access to mental health providers.

CHCCS Executive Director of Community Relations Jeff Nash, who hosted the media conversation, discussed the dedication CHCCS will have towards communicating COVID-19 updates regarding online and in-person learning with the refugee and non-English speaking communities.

This includes wireless internet support, translated messages and personalized phone call

updates for certain populations in the community.

"We are putting out our information in about nine different languages," Nash said. "We have seen an uptick in reaching folks, but also in being able to listen to their questions and comments."

Hamlett was selected for the superintendent role out of 36 applicants. "I come here to Chapel Hill excited and equipped with the tools that I think are needed to lead this school district and this community, and I am so honored and pleased to be able to do that," she said.

A third of U.S. families face a different kind of poverty

STAFF REPORTS

DURHAM — Before the pandemic, one-third of U.S. households with children were already "net worth poor," lacking enough financial resources to sustain their families for three months at a poverty level, finds new research from Duke University.

In 2019, 57% of Black families and 50% of Latino families with children were poor in terms of net worth. By comparison, the rate for white families was 24%.

"These 'net worth poor' households have no assets to withstand a sudden economic loss, like we have seen with COVID-19," said Christina Gibson-Davis, co-author of the study and professor of public policy and sociology at Duke University's Center for Child and Family Policy. "Their savings are virtually nil, and they have no financial cushion to provide the basics for their children."

The study is among the first to consider family poverty in terms of assets,

not income. Using 1989-2019 data from the Survey of Consumer Finances, researchers analyzed net worth and income data from more than 19,000 U.S. households with children under age 18.

Among households with children, net worth poverty has been steadily rising over the past 30 years, the authors found. In 2019, a two-parent, two-child household was deemed to be net-worth poor if they had less than \$6,500 in assets, or less than one-fourth of the federal poverty line.

Families in that category — those with perilously low levels of net worth — outnumbered families who were poor based on income. "Uncovering this aspect of poverty, which hinges on wealth, is game-changing," said Lisa Genetian, co-author of the study and associate professor of early learning policy studies at Duke's Sanford School of Public Policy.

"Most policies focus on

income and families meeting their day-to-day needs," Genetian said. "These efforts are important. But our findings suggest that they are not helping families increase savings that help set children up for success."

Notably, Black and Latino families were twice as likely to experience net worth poverty than to have poverty-level incomes. "Reducing one kind of poverty isn't helpful if another one is taking its place," said Lisa Keister, study co-author and a Duke professor of sociology. "Being net worth poor likely limits parents' abilities to invest in their kids and shapes how they think about their kids' future."

The new research appears in the *Journal of Marriage and Family*. "Even before the pandemic, many families with children were in a precarious situation," Gibson-Davis said. "Things are not going to get better in the wake of COVID-19."



North Carolina COVID-19 cases skyrocket; hospitals near capacity

By Nadia Ramlagan
N.C. NEWS SERVICE

RALEIGH — North Carolina health officials are sounding the alarm on the rapid spread of COVID-19.

So far, at least 84 of the state's 100 counties are in the "red zone," indicating the highest level of viral spread. Hospitals are seeing a surge in new COVID patients while struggling with a shortage of health care staff.

Dr. Mandy Cohen, Department of Health and Human Services Secretary, said the situation is concerning. "Many hospitals have stopped non-urgent procedures to free up staff, or have opened additional COVID units," she said. "The situation is so critical that last week, the federal government said that if

you were with people that you don't live with, you should assume you'd become infected with COVID and you're a danger to others."

Cohen recently issued a directive calling on North Carolinians to stay home and limit public interactions to essential activities, such as going to school or work, caring for family members or buying food.

While the state has begun implementing its vaccination plan, Cohen noted supplies are extremely limited. Under the plan, health care workers, long-term care staff and residents, people over 65, and frontline essential workers have first access.

"We are moving forward with facilitating large vaccination events starting next

week, and we continue to onboard additional vaccine providers, starting with our federally qualified health centers," Cohen outlined.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, around 300,000 North Carolinians have been vaccinated so far.

Cohen added despite all that's happened during the 10 months North Carolina has battled the pandemic, she's most worried about the next few weeks.

"We continue to set new records," she said. "Our tests that are positive remain in the double digits. And, most worrisome, every day we see new record highs of people hospitalized with COVID-19 and record high of those needing intensive care."

Michele Ghee named CEO of EBONY & JET

PR NEWSWIRE

LOS ANGELES — Bridgeman Sports & Media has installed Michele Ghee as CEO of iconic brands EBONY & JET. This historically rooted brand celebrates 75 years of chronicling Black life in America.



Ghee

With that, it now embarks on its future with Ghee boldly holding the reins.

"Everything we say will come through the lens of Black journalists," Ghee said. "We will ensure there is a safe space for Black journalism to thrive. I'm a little Black girl from Oakland, California. I'm not apologizing for any of it. Our voices matter. We are history in the making!"

This titan of industry understands the privilege and

responsibility of stepping into a leadership role within the culturally embedded Ebony and Jet brands. "Mr. Johnson was a visionary who operated with courage. He made a commitment to the Black American journey and, in the process, he left an unforgettable legacy," said Ghee.

Ghee says EBONY and JET will hold true to those simple fundamental principles of documenting stories of Black culture as it raises the brands' profile to reach a global community. "Our brands' main responsibility will be to focus completely on what our beloved audience wants and needs with bold informed editorial, brilliant content, and the opportunity to connect with like-minded people," she said. "Paying homage to Mr. Johnson's legacy means that my team will carve out and create our

own path. We will not succumb to the status quo."

New owner Eden Bridgeman states: "We are honored to have Michele Ghee at the helm to steward these iconic brands. With a proven track record over a storied career thus far and a passion to bring her life experiences to EBONY and JET, we are excited at the future she will create. The next chapter of EBONY and JET's history will be told for generations to come, and having her continue to authentically document, innovate, and uplift the culture will be keys to our success."

Ghee has worked in the media and entertainment space for over a quarter of a century. While at BET, she created and ran the first and only network for black women: BETHer. She resides in New Jersey with her husband Tony and two kids.

Can Biden close the racial wealth gap that Obama couldn't

By Dedrick Asante-Muhammad and Tyler Bond

OTHERWORDS.ORG

Twelve years ago, the inauguration of America's first Black president had many Americans believing that a future free of racial discrimination and inequality was finally within reach.

This year, as Obama's former vice president Joe Biden takes office amid a surge in far-right violence, it's clear we have a long way to go — not just to build a safer country for all of us but to close the vast racial wealth divide.

Despite Obama's historic victory, his administration made little to no progress in bridging this divide. During his presidency, median Black wealth never returned to even its modest \$10,700 from before the Great Recession. By 2013, it had dropped to just \$1,700 even as white wealth rebounded.

In fact, the racial wealth divide in the latter half of the Obama presidency was the largest it's been in the last 30 years. Income inequality remained virtually unchanged, too. In 2007, Black Americans earned about 60% as much as whites. By 2016, that had fallen to 58%.

In the aftermath of the Great Recession, homeownership — the key source of wealth for most middle-class families — decreased for most Americans. But new Black homeowners were hit hardest, driving the Black homeownership rate down from 49% to just 44%, nearly 30 percentage points lower than the rate for white Americans.

Of course, the failure to bridge racial economic inequality is not unique to the Obama presidency.

Whether under Trump, Clinton or either Bush, there has been little to no progress in bridging the economic divide for African Americans in wealth, homeownership, and income.

This lack of progress should be a wake-up call: bold action is necessary. That's why we're calling on President Biden to announce a White House Office of Racial Economic Equity on his first day.

This office should develop a government-wide audit to rigorously assess all significant economic policies and programs for how they affect racial inequality. This office should also issue a public report with actionable reforms and legislative proposals for Congress.

Biden's inauguration falls just two days after Martin Luther King Jr. Day. It was almost 60 years ago, in the famous "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," that King bemoaned that moderation was the "Negro's great stumbling block in the stride toward freedom."

He was right. In the 21st century, we have seen Black progress go from a "stride toward freedom" to being stuck in economic

apartheid. Moderate reforms by Democrats — along with often open hostility from Republicans — have corresponded with decades of failure in addressing racial economic inequality.

Biden will be the 45th white man to take the presidency. Unlike Obama, or his own vice president Kamala Harris, Biden's inauguration will not make history. Still, he has the opportunity to do what the Obama administration and every other administration has failed to do over the last 40 years.

Opening a White House Office of Racial Economic Equity should be a first step in steering the country toward greater opportunity and financial security for African Americans. It is way past due to finally "Build Back Better" for Black America.

Dedrick Asante-Muhammad is the chief of race, wealth, and community at the National Community Reinvestment Coalition and an associate fellow of the Institute for Policy Studies. Tyler Bond is an intern at the NCR. This op-ed was distributed by OtherWords.org.

FIND CERTAINTY IN UNCERTAIN TIMES.

When faced with times like these, anxiety about the future can easily take hold. It's why WUNC is committed to providing fact-based news that helps keep you informed and eases fear of the unknown. For North Carolinians who seek to make sense of their current world, WUNC is the trusted source they can always rely on.

wunc 91.5
NORTH CAROLINA PUBLIC RADIO

wunc.org



BIBLE STUDY

God cares for His people

LIFEWAY CHRISTIAN RESOURCES

Bible passages: Psalm 68:1-6, 19-20, 34-35**Discussion questions:**

* How do you think God sees people? Why?

* When have you felt God standing up for you? How did that affect you?

* Why is it important to know God cares for His people?

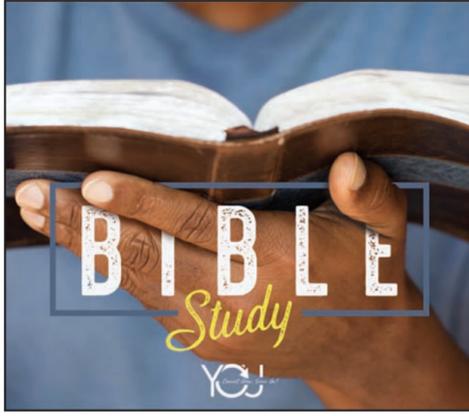
Food for thought:

Personality tests have always been popular. For example, the Enneagram has drawn people's interest recently. There are others but each of them serves one purpose: to help us know ourselves better.

Personality tests also remind us that everyone is different. After all, we serve a creative God who gives each of us a unique approach to life. But it's easy to take that for granted. We forget about the things that make us special, so we miss out on God's artistic display.

Read Psalm 68:1-3. Based on these verses, God basically sees two kinds of people: either we're His children or we're not. Now, He loves everyone, even those who reject Him; but His sense of justice compels Him to respond differently to each group.

That's the picture in Psalm 68. This ancient hymn from David reminds us that God has demon-



strated His power in marvelous ways through the ages. In fact, He still reveals His omnipotence through us. During a mission trip to Haiti a few years ago, some teens on our team helped install solar panels on a guest house. Why? Because in Haiti, reliable power is important. If the electricity doesn't stay on, ministry gets interrupted. But these solar panels generate their own power, so the work can continue without a problem.

Power is a big deal in so many ways. We need electrical power to keep our lights on, but we also need God's power to live out His plan for our lives each day. Thankfully, we serve a God who is all-powerful. He

meets every need.

His power takes the form of wrath on those who deny Him. David said that when God rises up to judge His enemies, they scatter. They flee in fear and confusion. They may have bragged about standing up to Him, but their arrogance melts like wax in the hot sun.

In contrast, David said the righteous are glad. While God corrects His kids when they stray, He also stands by them and protects them. He comforts them and meets their needs. The wicked run in terror, but the godly have nothing to fear when God arises.

For additional downloadable teaching resources, visit LifeWay.com/YOU.

MOVIE REVIEW



NICOLA GOODE/WARNER BROS.

Rami Malek, from left, Jared Leto and Denzel Washington in a scene from "The Little Things."

Washington, Malek and Leto face off in 'The Little Things'

By Lindsey Bahr

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Denzel Washington has played some iconic cops over the years, but he doesn't get hung up on things like that.

For him, it's all about the script. So when John Lee Hancock came to him with "The Little Things," a 1990-set crime drama about law enforcement and obsession, he was intrigued. The part was for Joe Deacon, who left city duties for the country after a grueling case years ago but gets pulled back in to help with a new serial killer.

"There's an old saying, 'If it ain't on the page, it ain't on the stage,'" Washington said. "And this was on the page first."

Then Hancock told him who he wanted for the other leads: Rami Malek for his unlikely counterpart, Sergeant Jim Baxter, and Jared Leto for the certainly suspicious but maybe not guilty loner Albert Sparma. "I'm like, OK, let me REREAD it," Washington laughed. "It wasn't hard for me at all. It's like, 'OK, when do we start?'"

"The Little Things," which opens in theaters and on HBO Max on Jan. 29, is one of Malek's first big roles after his "Bohemian Rhapsody" awards sweep, where he first crossed paths with Washington. Hancock loved the energy it brought to their first encounter on camera.

"It was like they were smelling each other.

They're feeling each other out. It just was electric because they hadn't been in a room together and hadn't been buddy-buddy," Hancock said. "It was Albert Sparma and Joe Deacon."

Washington agreed and liked that it kept it fresh. "At the end of the day, it is still acting," Washington added.

Although Malek may be almost 40 and Leto almost 50, Washington, at 66, refers to them as young actors and "the next generation."

And he was just as excited to observe the two at work as they were to work with him. For one scene, where Malek's character is interrogating Leto's, Washington decided to sit behind the glass and watch. "I wish I'd had some popcorn!" Washington said. "It was like I was watching a boxing match."

His dedication, which included gaining and losing 40 pounds, astounded Malek.

"I appreciated that he was always there," Malek said. "We got really excited after that scene in particular. We were in that moment part of a trio of something special."

Hancock said it wasn't about managing the three actors as much as it was just getting out of their way. All of them, he said, brought their A-game, even if their methods at arriving there were different. Washington, a longtime boxer, lives by the logic that "you

stay ready so you don't have to get ready." He was sure he could trust his co-stars to do the same for what would be a tough and fast-moving shoot.

"Both of these actors are Academy Award winners like myself. We're all three world champions, if you will. So you know you're getting in the ring with two world champions," Washington said. "It wakes you up."

"The Little Things" is the end of a long chapter for Hancock, who wrote it in 1993. The script was popular but never got off the ground for various reasons. Steven Spielberg, Warren Beatty and Danny DeVito were just a few big names who'd find themselves attached to direct at various points over the years.

Hancock's producer brought it up again a few years ago. By that time, Hancock himself was an established commercial director with credits like "The Blind Side," "The Rookie" and "Saving Mr. Banks," and they thought it was the right moment to give it another shot. Although what was once a cutting-edge look at policing in transition, 25 years on was now a period piece.

"It would have saved us a lot of money to make it contemporary," Hancock laughed. "But I liked the idea that this was pre-DNA 1990. Investigations were harder. Everything was harder. You had to take rolls of quarters for payphones."

Seeing beyond this life

By David Jeremiah

SPECIAL TO THE TRIBUNE

EL CAJON, Calif. - King Solomon ruled the nation of Israel in peace for 39 years during the mid-10th century B.C. At that time, the borders of Israel extended from the Euphrates River to the edge of Egypt. Solomon had more than 40,000 horses and 12,000 charioteers in his possession. Each day 10 oxen, 20 head of cattle, and 100 sheep were slaughtered just to feed his household and his servants. He amassed the greatest aggregation of gold and silver that had ever been accumulated in ancient times. He built great structures and wrote timeless works of literature.

No one was as rich, wise and powerful as Solomon. But did his accomplishments and wealth satisfy him? In Ecclesiastes he wrote, "I hated life.... [it] was distressing to me, for all is vanity and grasping for the wind" (Ecclesiastes 2:17, NIV). The key theme of Ecclesiastes is the despair one feels when accumulating temporal success without finding eternal security. That is a warning for us all.

What about you and me? Are we living primarily for this world, or do we see beyond this life? Let's take a quick temporal versus eternal test. As honestly as possible, answer these questions:

* Do I have the same excitement about my mansion in heaven as I have for fixing up my house on earth?

* What proportion of my time is spent keeping up with friends via social media compared to the time I hold them up in prayer?

* Am I more excited about spending 90% of my income on my own purposes or about the 10% I'm able to give to the Lord?

* Am I as diligent in studying God's Word as I am in reading the latest gossip on the internet?

* Do I fall asleep thinking about the problems of earth or the promises of heaven?

How did you do? While taking care of temporal things is important, it should pale in comparison to the investments made in eternity. It's great to keep our bodies healthy and looking fit, but remember 1 Timothy 4:8:

"Bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come."

It's great to invest funds for retirement. But remember 1 Timothy 6:17-19: "Command those who are rich in this present age not to ... trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. Let them do good, that they be rich in good works ... storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life."

It's great to focus our energy on the goals and projects of every day, but don't forget Colossians 3:1-3: "Seek those things which are above, where Christ is,

sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth."

As followers of the One seated in heavenly places, we have an obligation to help others look toward glory. We can never take our houses or trophies with us into eternity. Our most prized possessions will be boxed up and forgotten. Those trinkets we've collected may end up in a flea market. Our money may be dispersed to others. But our lives can point others to heaven. Our funds can help others hear the Gospel. Our words of witness can make a heaven-or-hell difference in the lives of those to whom the Lord leads us. Our church involvement can contribute to an eternal cause.

When we know we are heaven bound - our loved ones over there, our investments over there, our Savior over there, our affections over there - only then are we truly happy over here.

"If you read history," observed C. S. Lewis, "you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were precisely those who thought most of the next."

That's what it means to see beyond this world. That's what happens when we live with an eternal purpose in mind.

David Jeremiah is the founder and host of Turning Point for God and senior pastor of Shadow Mountain Community Church.

AROUND THE TRIANGLE

RALEIGH**POP-UP**

The Big Pop Up drive-thru giveaway is Jan. 26, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., PNC Arena. First-come, first-served basis. Additional volunteers are needed. Call (919) 790-5757.

MEETING

Raleigh District C will host a virtual community meeting Jan. 27, 6:30 p.m. on Zoom.

SYMPOSIUM

2021 Black Lens Symposium is Jan. 30, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., virtually. Visit www.eventbrite.com.

CHAMBER

Raleigh Chamber will host its next virtual Business After Hours Feb. 8, 4:30-5:30 p.m. RSVP by Feb. 1 to

raleighchamber.org.

DURHAM
TRIBUTE

A virtual tribute to Herbie Hancock featuring Howard McNair is Jan. 24, 6 p.m. Visit www.hayti.org.

CELEBRATION

The Rev. Annette Love will receive a Duke Chapel's Humanitarian Service Award in a virtual ceremony Jan. 24, 2 p.m.

POLITICS

Several sororities will kick off a virtual Women Career Series beginning Jan. 30 at 11:30 a.m. Email Hppzpublicity@gmail.com.

CHAPEL HILL**PLAY**

Author/playwright Mike Wiley will perform "Blood Done Sign My Name" Jan.

25-Feb. 7 virtually. Visit tickets.playmakersrep.org.

BREAKFAST

Legislative Breakfast on Mental Health is Jan. 30, 9-11:30 a.m. Visit legislative-breakfasttmh.org.

MISC.**SCHOLARSHIPS:**

* African American students can now apply for Dominion Energy's Educational Equity Scholarships. Visit www.dominionenergy.com/EquityScholarships. Deadline: Jan. 25.

* Durham-based Pocket Prep is launching a scholarship program for Black students pursuing professional certifications. Visit www.pocketprep.com/scholarship/. Deadline: Jan. 31.

THE BAKE

Sweet Potato Creme Brûlée is easy to make

By Paris Brown

NNPA NEWSWIRE

Today is finally the day where I take on creme brûlée, one of the fanciest desserts of all. I've wanted to make it for a long time with my own twist, but I just never got around to it.

So, I put my foot down and said, "Today's the day, no more procrastinating!" Until I realized I don't know how to make it different than the rest. But my mom made a suggestion that changed the game: sweet potato creme brûlée.

Since I couldn't find a sweet potato creme brûlée recipe, I took a pumpkin creme brûlée recipe and tweaked it. Then boom! A fantastic sweet potato creme brûlée recipe that's easy and fun to make. Not to mention the fact that it's delicious!

Ingredients:

* 12 ounces heavy whipping cream
* 2 roasted sweet potatoes, mashed and cooled
* ¾-cup sugar
* 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
* 3 large egg yolks
* Nutmeg to taste
* Cinnamon to taste
* Additional sugar for topping

Instructions:

Preheat oven to 325 degrees F. In a mixing bowl, whisk egg yolks and one-



half cup of the sugar. Add heavy whipping cream, mashed sweet potato, vanilla, and one-fourth cup sugar to a saucepan. Heat over medium heat and bring to a simmer, stirring often.

Remove about one-third cup of the sweet potato mixture and add it slowly to the egg yolk mixture, whisking continuously. Keeping the whisk moving quickly keeps the eggs from scrambling. Add the rest while stirring. Add

spices. Add ramekins to a baking dish, then carefully place the mixture into ramekins. Add hot water into the baking dish about half-an-inch high. Be careful not to get any water into the ramekins! Bake for 42-45 minutes until the edges are set, and the middle is jiggly. Let stand for an hour, then place in the fridge for at least four hours. Cover the tops with sugar and place in a broiler until caramelized. Enjoy!!

JC Smith to host HBCU Esports Expo



Johnson C. Smith
Sports Information

Sponsored by CodeBoxx, the 2021 ASCEND HBCU Esports Conference and Career Expo will be hosted virtually on Feb. 5, from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

The expo will feature a stellar line-up of speakers representing a myriad of leading for-profit and non-profit corporations within the esports and gaming ecosystem, including multi-media personality, host, and producer Erin Ashley Simon; Polycade's CEO Tyler Bushnell; Riot Games' Alex Francois; and more.

The ASCEND HBCU Esports Conference and Career Expo will also feature a pitch competition for esports and gaming entrepreneurs, which will boast prominent judges such as serial entrepreneur and investor Steve MacDonald and tech revolutionary Angel Rich, founder of the Wealth Factory, a start-up that designs and builds financial literacy and workforce development games.

Although the focus of the expo is to enable HBCU students, faculty, staff, and constituents from across the nation to ASCEND (Accessing Sources to Catalyze Esports/Gaming Needs & Address Diversity) by providing them with opportunities to gain insight into the esports and gaming industries through their interaction with industry executives, all are welcome.

The event is also designed to include the Latinx community, which faces many of the same socioeconomic challenges as the Black community and represents a significant percentage of students enrolled at HBCUs.

"We are proud to put the CodeBoxx community at work for the ASCEND HBCU Esports Conference and Career Expo because we know that cognitive potential is evenly distributed in our world, but opportunities are not. CodeBoxx exists to tilt the scale back to balance," said Nicolas Genest, CEO of CodeBoxx Technology Corporation.

Thanks to support from GAME Credits, the world's first gaming cryptocurrency, this digital event will be hosted in Decentraland.

"This marks a historic first with an esports event of this size being hosted in a decentralized metaverse and may well open the door for more esports companies to adopt the virtual world," added Jason Cassidy, CEO of GAME Credits. This event will introduce attendees to blockchain technology and cryptocurrency. Blockchain and cryptocurrency are evolving the future of tech, and it is imperative that HBCUs keep the Black community involved in that future.

Register for the ASCEND HBCU Esports Conference and Career Expo at eventbrite.com.

Sports

WWW.TRIANGLETRIBUNE.COM

The Triangle
TRIBUNE

SUNDAY, JANUARY 24, 2021 - PAGE 6A

Raleigh Firebirds gear up for third season



The Raleigh Firebirds has added two new faces to their roster. Daquan Lilly and Dedric Byrd both signed contracts on media day.

COLLEGE CORNER



Maryland Eastern Shore women's bowling

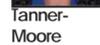


Norfolk State new women's and men's tennis coach.

CIAA Tournament is readying for its virtual close-up

The CIAA announced the events for its virtual tournament week next month. The theme is "CIAA Virtual Vibe: Tournament Edition."

Comedians B. Simoe, Darren Brand and Burpie will host the experience that includes an Old School/New School DJ Battle and the CIAA Esports Tournament. Then there's the usual concerts and celebrity appearances.



Tanner-Moore

"Despite no in-person activity or games being played, this is a great opportunity to expand our reach beyond the 150,000-plus fans that annually convene in our host city during tournament week, and expose new audiences to the legacy and rich tradition of this conference while introducing the many elements that embody the CIAA Tournament experience and highlighting the

cultural impact it has on our community as a whole," Commissioner Jacqie McWilliams said.

Space is limited. Visit www.ciaatournament.org.

From one rival to another
Shaw associate head women's coach Ebony Tanner-Moore has been named St. Augustine's new head women's basketball coach. She replaces Montel Jones, who resigned for personal reasons in November.

"I am ready for the opportunity to turn the program around," the Garner native said.

Tanner-Moore, who also was Shaw's recruiting coordinator, was an assistant at Division I programs Richmond and Hartford.

"It is very exciting to hire someone that embraces the opportunity to build something special here at St. Aug's," said interim athletic director David Bowser.

Pause
North Carolina A&T men

will not be coming to Durham this weekend. The Aggies and Eagles were supposed to play a doubleheader on Saturday and Sunday, but the games have been postponed due to - well, you know.

The Eagles next scheduled contest is Feb. 1 at Howard. That means they will have gone the entire month of January without playing a game.

The women are set to travel to Norfolk State this weekend for back-to-back games. But we'll see.

Hampton men's basketball also has paused all activities due to a positive COVID test among team members.

Hello. Goodbye.
Maryland Eastern Shore women's bowling coach Kayla Bandy is saying goodbye after eight seasons.

Bandy led the Lady Hawks to four MEAC championships and three NCAA Tournament appearances. She

Please see CIAA/7A

HBCU FOOTBALL



Bailey

Shaw's Moses in senior bowl

By Bonitta Best
editor@triangletribune.com

Former Shaw tight end Keivonta Moses showcased his skills last weekend in the SPIRAL Tropical Bowl in Orlando, Florida. The game highlighted top collegiate senior football players.

Moses started two seasons for the Bears. He led the team with 37 receptions for 510 yards and nine touchdowns in his senior year.

Aggie Pride

North Carolina A&T alumnus Brad Holmes has been hired as the Detroit Lions' executive vice president and general manager. Holmes will oversee football operations and report directly to team owner Sheila Ford Hamp and president Rod Wood.

The Tampa, Florida, native leaves the Los Angeles Rams after 18 seasons.

"Throughout our search for a new general manager, Brad was someone who stood out immediately," Wood said in a statement. "His abilities as a critical thinker, along with his extensive experience implementing technology and analytics into his approach to scouting, were among the many decisive qualities Brad displayed in our time getting to know him."

From Bear to Jet

Ex-Morgan State wide receiver Manasseh Bailey has signed a reserve/future deal with the New York Jets.

Bailey signed an undrafted free agent contract with the Philadelphia Eagles last May. He was cut after training camp and later signed on to the San Diego Chargers' practice squad.

Bailey was converted from a linebacker to a wide receiver in his sophomore season. He finished his career with 73 receptions for 1,369 yards and 14 touchdowns in 22 games.

SWAC honors

Alcorn State star quarterback Felix Harper and Jackson State linebacker Keonte Hampton were named SWAC preseason offensive player and defensive player of the year, respectively.

Harper threw for 2,387 yards and 29 touchdowns, and led the Braves to a SWAC championship and an appearance in the 2019 Celebration Bowl.

Hampton amassed 106 tackles, 13 tackles for loss, 4.5 sacks and one forced fumble in his sophomore season.

Alcorn and Southern were picked to win their respective divisions and meet again in the SWAC Championship Game.

SWAC East

1. Alcorn State
2. Alabama A&M
3. Alabama State
4. Jackson State
5. Mississippi Valley State

SWAC West

1. Southern
2. Grambling State
3. Prairie View A&M
4. Arkansas-Pine Bluff
5. Texas Southern

CIAA tourney close-up

Continued from page 6A

recorded a .686 career winning percentage, and coached 11 All-Americans, three MEAC bowlers of the year, three rookies of the year and 15 All-MEAC performers. Bandy is leaving to focus on a new business venture. The MEAC canceled women's bowling due to COVID-19.

New tennis coach

Norfolk State has hired Larry Holmes as its new head women's and men's tennis coach. (No, not THAT Larry Holmes.) Holmes was a volunteer assistant at Virginia Tech last season.

Canceled

The MEAC has canceled its indoor track & field championships scheduled for next month. Six of 11 programs have opted out of the season. Conference policy says a championship must be canceled if less than 50% of teams are participating. The remaining indoor programs can still compete and qualify for the NCAA championships.

Jordan High graduate picked No. 3 in draft



Congratulations to Jordan High School alumna Brianna Pinto for being drafted in the 2021 National Women's Soccer League. Pinto, a junior midfielder for UNC's soccer team, was the No. 3 overall pick by Sky Blue FC.

Leadership at FBS institutions continues to lack diversity

By Lois Elfman

DIVERSE ISSUES IN EDUCATION

"The 2020 DI Football Bowl Series College Racial and Gender Report Card: The Lack of Diversity within Collegiate Athletic Leadership Continues" made clear that despite some improvement over the past year in racial and gender categories, the 130 FBS institutions continue to show underrepresentation of women and people of color in campus leadership positions. FBS schools received a B- for racial hiring practices and an F for gender hiring practices. This resulted in an overall grade of D+.

For the report card, the leadership positions examined include college and university presidents and chancellors, athletic directors and faculty athletic representatives as well as head football coaches and assistant coaches. The report indicates that white people hold 327 (82%) of the 399 campus leadership positions reported in the study.

"If there are no people of color or women at the top decision-making positions, then they are going to be less aware and less sensitive to the need to include candidates of color as an ongoing priority," said Richard E. Lapchick, director of The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport and lead author of the report.

"Those leaders, particularly presidents, chancellors and athletic directors, have to have that consciousness in mind. The reason we keep doing this report is we want to show that the lack of diverse

leadership in the highest ranks of colleges and universities results in the small number of coaches of color and staff within athletic departments."

Three additional women were hired as athletic directors in 2020, which is a 2.3% increase over 2019, but men still hold 118 of the 130 AD positions at FBS schools. African American men made up only 10% of head football coaches while African American student-athletes were 48.5% of the players. Overall, 61.6% of football student-athletes were men of color.

On the positive, the number of women in the faculty athletic representative position increased to a record high 40.3%, which led to a grade of B+ for gender. The number of people of color in this position received a grade of B. There was an increase in the number of presidents or chancellors of color, which led to a grade of B.

The report noted that the overrepresentation of white males at FBS institutions impacts the opportunities, or lack thereof, for women and people of color.

"I don't think we see a lack of women because there are not qualified women," said Sherryta D. Freeman, director of athletics at Lafayette College. "It's more so in the eyes of the hiring managers a lack of confidence...that women can oversee football or that women can be able to oversee the head football coach. That's definitely not true."

"We've done the work; we've prepared ourselves. It's just a matter of being hired by someone who believes in you. ... Leadership is not based on gender."

Freeman spent a decade

at Temple University, where she rose to senior associate athletic director. She said there needs to be women in leadership positions across an athletic department so women can be positioned and exposed to football programs at a high level of detail, as she was at Temple. She said she received mentorship and sponsorship throughout her career, which have been crucial, and she now mentors others.

Lapchick has spoken to several conferences about racism in American sport. For the first time, he was asked to do a conference-specific race and gender report card, which came from the West Coast Conference. He worked together with the conference to create and implement something they're calling the Russell Rule, akin to the NFL's Rooney Rule that requires teams to interview ethnic minority candidates for head coaching and senior leadership positions.

"I've been asking the NCAA to do this since 2007, and they've always said it's not possible," said Lapchick. "It's now on the agenda of their Board of Directors meeting because their diversity, equity and inclusion committee proposed they consider the Russell Rule as the model policy for college sport. If that happens, we're going to see a breakthrough."

"What else is happening this year is the whole issue of athlete activism," he continued. "Student-athletes, while they focus on racism in society, are going to turn inward and look at their own athletic departments and put pressure there so that those departments will understand they really have to have a diverse pool of candidates."

Falcons name Saints' Terry Fontenot as GM

By Charles Odum

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ATLANTA — The Atlanta Falcons on Tuesday named Terry Fontenot the team's first Black general manager, and team owner Arthur Blank said it's the kind of hire that will eventually also create more opportunities for NFL minority coaches.

The 40-year-old Fontenot joins Atlanta following 18 seasons with NFC South rival New Orleans.

Fontenot helped build a consistent winner as the Saints' vice president and assistant general manager in charge of pro personnel. The Falcons fired general manager Thomas Dimitroff and coach Dan Quinn following a 0-5 start this season, which led to a 4-12 finish, Atlanta's third consecutive losing season. The Falcons signed Tennessee Titans offensive coordinator Arthur Smith as their head coach on Saturday, a day after agreeing to terms.

Fontenot joins Detroit's Brad Holmes as newly hired Blank GMs in the league. Falcons owner Arthur Blank said he anticipates the league will hire more minority head coaches and GMs in the future, if not this year. "In my opinion, I think the diversity of the pool of candidates for both the general managers and the head coaches this year was excellent and I also think for coordinators," Blank said Tuesday. "I think what you'll see there were a number of coordinators that were diverse candidates that I think will prob-

ably not get opportunities this year but will definitely be getting opportunities in the future."

Smith is one of five new head coaches hired. Of the five, only the New York Jets' Robert Saleh, the first Muslim American coach in NFL history, is a minority coach. Blank said the additions of such GMs as Fontenot will help pave the way for more diversity in coaching hires.

"That's really important, because we haven't had that diversity at the general manager position," Blank said. "... I think these young men and other men in the future will have the opportunity to be part of the hiring cycle for other coaches. I think that will certainly help the issue of looking at diverse candidates in a fair and balanced way."

Atlanta held a virtual interview with Fontenot on Jan. 6, but could not meet with him in person while New Orleans was in the playoffs. The Saints were eliminated in Sunday's 30-20 loss to Tampa Bay, clearing the way for Atlanta to hire Fontenot. Fontenot's three children wore newly purchased Falcons gear at his virtual news conference. The new GM acknowledged he had to shop for a new red tie for the event.

For almost two decades, Fontenot only shopped for the Saints' gold and black colors. He became emotional when discussing the role Saints GM Mickey Loomis played in his life. Fontenot was hired by New Orleans as a marketing intern. He moved to the scouting department and worked his way up from intern to pro scout before he was hired as assistant GM.

"Eighteen years ago Mickey Loomis pulled in a

22-year old kid," Fontenot said before pausing to gather his emotions. "... And he really gave me the opportunity of a lifetime."

Fontenot credited Loomis with contributions to "not just my professional growth but my personal growth." Fontenot was the fifth candidate to interview for the GM job. The Falcons previously met with former Houston Texans GM Rick Smith, Atlanta director of college scouting Anthony Robinson and two other directors of college scouting: Brad Holmes of the Los Angeles Rams and Morocco Brown of the Indianapolis Colts.

Dimitroff and Quinn helped build a team that advanced to the Super Bowl in the 2016 season and returned to the playoffs the following year. Atlanta has not reached the playoffs since 2017.

Atlanta has the No. 4 overall selection in this year's NFL draft. Fontenot and Arthur Smith face difficult decisions about the direction of the team. Quarterback Matt Ryan is 35 and wide receiver Julio Jones, coming off a season hampered by injuries, is 31.

Blank has said the team's new coach and general manager will be free to make decisions on a possible rebuild that could impact all players, including Ryan and Jones. Fontenot and Smith wouldn't commit to their plans for Atlanta's most successful players.

"Nothing we will do will be a snap judgment," Smith said. "It's more than Matt and Julio. There's a lot of talented players on this roster. ... It's a constant evolution. There's a lot of talent here that we want to build off of."

NCAT track & field wants to finish what COVID took away

N.C. A&T STATE ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS

GREENSBORO - Duane Ross is ready.

Ten months have disappeared from the calendar since North Carolina A&T State's track & field programs has occupied an infield at an outdoor meet. Ten months have faded since Ross leaned on the railing at an indoor meet as he watched one of his student-athletes whisk by. It's been 10 months since he gave a pep talk before a big race.

The long wait is over. Ross can finally get to coaching at meets, and his teams can get back to meeting their expectations - winning individual, relay and team national championships. N.C. A&T men's and women's indoor track and field teams began the season Jan. 15 at Kentucky's McCravy Green Invitational.

"That mental health day is real," Ross said. "When something takes away your passion, what you do, your routine, at first you don't think much of it, but when it starts to drag on, it takes a lot out of you. Our coaches are ready to get back on the road, see a different facility and see these young people compete. Our athletes are ready to go, too."

The sports world all but came to an end last March when COVID-19 became known in our world. COVID did not exempt track and field. Officials canceled the NCAA Indoor Track and Field Championships in Albuquerque, New Mexico, as the Aggies were warming up to compete. Both teams had just come off winning their fourth straight MEAC championship, respectively.

Among the seniors who are back is sprinter Jaylan Mitchell who won the 60 meters at the MEAC indoor championships and finished ranked seventh nationally. Trevor Stewart is



COURTESY

also back. Stewart's resume includes finishing second in the nation in the outdoor 400 meters in 2019. Akeem Sirleaf, an Olympic qualifier for Liberia, is also back.

On the women's side, graduate hurdler Madeleine Akobundu also decided to return, which means the Aggies could have three of the best hurdlers in the country, along with junior Paula Salmon and graduate TeJyrica Robinson.

"It was encouraging seeing those young people having to make a real tough adult decision if they were going to come back or this was it for them," Ross said. "We had everyone return because no one wants to end their career with COVID having the upper hand. They are a special group. They want to finish out on top, which means

we've done a little more than get them to run fast. They see this as a family. They're smart, they're hungry and they're successful."

But the Aggies are not just about the sprinters. Junior distance runner Regan Kimtai was the most outstanding performer at the MEAC indoors last season after winning the mile, the 5,000 meters and the distance medley relay. Senior Loren James won the award on the women's side after winning the weight throw and shot put.

Ross recruited one of the best men's track and field classes in the country to help with that completeness. He said his women's program is a year behind before they have what they need to win a national title. A top women's recruiting class is on the way; however, Ross says he is "

The **BEST**
in HBCU
Sports

**LUNG
CANCER?**

If you or a loved one are suffering from lung cancer and are over 60, you and your family may be entitled to a significant cash award - even with smoking history.

CALL US NOW TO LEARN MORE. DON'T DELAY, THERE ARE DEADLINES FOR FILING CLAIMS.

CALL NOW, WE'RE HERE 24/7-

877-648-8773

NO RISK, NO MONEY, OUT OF POCKET!



COURTESY

Raleigh writer selected as 2021 Piedmont Laureate

STAFF REPORTS

Kelly Starling Lyons, a Raleigh-based children's literature writer, has been selected as the region's 2021 Piedmont Laureate. Starling Lyons will appear at virtual programming, including workshops, reading programs, and speaking engagements throughout Wake, Durham and Orange counties.

The Piedmont Laureate program is dedicated to building a literary bridge for residents to come together and celebrate the art of writing.

Co-sponsored by the City of Raleigh Arts Commission, Durham Arts Council, Orange County Arts Commission, and United Arts Council of Raleigh & Wake County, the Piedmont Laureate program's mission is to "promote aware-

ness and heighten appreciation for excellence in the literary arts throughout the Piedmont region."

The program focuses on a different literary form each year, including poetry, novels, creative non-fiction, drama/screenwriting, children's literature, short fiction, speculative fiction, and mystery fiction.

"Mrs. Starling Lyons' heart work extends beyond her initial intent, and due to her humility and practicality, I'm not sure that she is even aware," said Durham Public School board member Jovonia Lewis. "She is dedicated to creating opportunities for children to bring books to life, sparking an interest in reading and writing and serving her community through outreach and

community projects for nothing more than exposure for those authors and for families."

"We need more writers from traditionally under-represented backgrounds, and Kelly's voice in this important movement for change has been powerful," said 2013 Piedmont Laureate John Claude Bemis.

"I hope the writers, readers, educators, and artists in our rich Piedmont region have the opportunity to learn and take inspiration from Kelly Starling Lyons as our next Piedmont Laureate. Her efforts will undoubtedly make a lasting impact on our community."

Starling Lyons will receive an honorarium and serve until Dec. 31.



COURTESY

Prepare for a financial emergency with these tips

5 tips for building (or rebuilding) your emergency savings

FAMILY FEATURES

The new year provides an opportunity to reevaluate different aspects of your life, and that includes your budget and savings habits. Planning for emergencies by building - or rebuilding if the COVID-19 pandemic required making a withdrawal - a savings account to withstand the unforeseen can increase confidence in your overall financial health and reduce worry that a significant life event will negatively impact your finances.

Even before the pandemic began, 4 of 10 Americans had a hard time finding even \$400 to cover an emergency, according to a report from the United States Federal Reserve. However, if you don't think you have money to save, consider the majority of people who were able to save for an emergency for the first time in 2020 earned less than \$60,000, according to research from BlackRock's Emergency Savings Initiative. Changes in spending due to the pandemic plus government stimulus packages helped many individuals create much-needed cash buffers.

Consider these tips to build your emergency savings account:

1. Start a savings habit: While it's less important to have a specific dollar amount in mind, getting into the habit of putting some money in savings with each paycheck can help protect you should an emergency arise. While one

good rule of thumb is to set aside enough to cover roughly six weeks of living expenses - housing, food, transportation - take a look at what it would cost to cover unexpected issues with your car, a trip to the hospital, a leak in your home or the replacement of a major appliance and start there.

2. Automate your savings: Because an emergency can strike at any time, it's important to have easy access to your funds. However, the account should also be separate from your checking account so you're not tempted to dip into your reserves. Pick a free savings account with no minimum balance requirements and link it to your everyday account to quickly move money over if you need it. If you're planning to stash funds away for months or years that can serve as both an emergency fund and long-term savings, consider a high-yield savings account.

3. Look for ways to cut back: While you may have already made changes to your spending habits amid the pandemic, periodically shopping for competitive rates of recurring bills, such as cable and internet, cellphones insurance policies and other utilities, can be a simple way to save some money each month. Start by asking your current providers about any special rates and promotions that may be available to loyal customers, then check with alternative providers to see if they can

provide the same or better offerings at a reduced cost.

4. Take advantage of one-time opportunities to save: Assuming you expect to receive a tax refund, this provides an easy way to boost your emergency fund if circumstances allow you to save all or a portion of the return. If you're able, consider having your refund directly deposited in your emergency account. There may also be other times throughout the year when you receive one or more cash gifts, like your birthday or holidays, that can help provide a nice cushion to your emergency fund if you can avoid the temptation to spend it.

5. Replenish what you use: Remember to review and adjust your savings plan as needed, whether you're able to contribute over a longer period of time without dipping into the account or if an expensive life event pops up that requires using all or a portion of the funds.

Should you need to dip into the savings, do your best to make replenishing the account to a level you're comfortable with a primary goal in case any additional unexpected expenses arise. Alternatively, if your saving is going well, consider increasing the amount you're saving each paycheck so you're better protected against any major life changes or able to finance a large-scale purchase down the road.

Find more information at savingsproject.org.

EXHIBIT



COURTESY

Lifeline: Hunger Relief During the Pandemic

By Tom Simon
Presented by The ArtsCenter

As its first exhibition of the new year, The ArtsCenter in Carrboro presents "Lifeline: Hunger Relief During the Pandemic," an exhibit of still photographs by local photographer Simon. The work can be viewed online at The ArtsCenter's website through Feb. 15.

Simon, a documentary

filmmaker and television producer, was working as a volunteer photographer for local nonprofits. When COVID-19 hit, he began documenting weekly food distribution efforts in the area.

As he got to know the recipients and volunteers, he realized what he was seeing was the final step in a human chain, a lifeline, that stretches from farm and factory to the kitchen table of those who are hungry. He set out to photograph as many links as he

could, from massive farms to tiny dairies, from a bustling food bank to a church kitchen.

The 35 photos paint a picture of a system stretched to its limit: massive unemployment and food insecurity, governments and NGOs struggling to keep up with historic demand, volunteers and workers trying to provide help while risking infection. Above all, Lifeline is a vivid portrait of our community in a time of crisis.

Honoring Dr. King through giving back



MATHIAS BISHOP

Little Warren was more than happy to pose with the reigning Ms. North Carolina 2021 Vera Morris as they volunteered at the MLK Book Harvest Drive in Durham. Bookbags filled to the brim were distributed to dozens of drive-thru participants at Durham Central Park.



COURTESY

The Decision Project introduced to save more lives

STAFF REPORTS

RALEIGH - Carolina Donor Services has announced a new grassroots educational and relationship-building partnership in southeast Raleigh called The Decision Project. The program will introduce the conversation of saving lives through organ, eye and tissue donation, and ultimately increase the number registered donors in specific multicultural zip code areas where registration rates are low.

"The Decision Project empowers people to make an educated and inspired decision about donation and to share that decision with their family," said Taylor Anderton, Carolina

Donor Services community relations coordinator.

Over half of North Carolina's 3,000 patients on the national waiting list are African Americans needing kidney transplants. Nearly 55% of the state's licensed drivers and ID holders are donors. Yet, in the southeast Raleigh area, approximately 38% have made that decision. Although donation and transplantation can take place between individuals from different racial or ethnic groups, research has shown that transplants have a higher likelihood of success when organs are matched between members of the same racial or ethnic backgrounds.

The Decision Project will

work to raise registration rates and decrease the waiting list numbers. Additionally, Carolina Donor Services will increase community outreach and support through education and providing resources for those communities.

CDS has begun working with Southeast Raleigh Promise but is seeking additional community partnerships as well. "We were welcomed into the community, and we are just starting," said Anderton. "We are looking forward to saving more lives than ever before."

More information about the Decision Project can be found at CarolinaDonorServices.org.