



SPORTS

DPS crowns its middle school champions.



COMMUNITY FOCUS

2 Black festivals in Triangle last weekend.

# The Triangle Tribune

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"Serving Raleigh, Durham and Chapel Hill"

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« 52 WEEKS OF BLACK BRILLIANCE »

## Duke doctor broke medical barriers

COURTESY OF DUKE UNIVERSITY  
From student activist to Duke University senior associate dean for Student Diversity, Recruitment, and Retention, Dr. Brenda Armstrong left behind a legacy of almost half a century of service to Duke and the wider medical community.

Armstrong was born in Rocky Mount on Jan. 19, 1949. In high school, she chose not to attend an exclusive New England private school and instead attended Rocky Mount's segregated Booker T. Washington Senior High

School. Despite the school board's belief that none of its students would attend college, teachers taught her and more than 40 other students college readiness courses like calculus and trigonometry and ensured that they were prepared to take college entrance exams.

As a result, Armstrong entered Duke as an undergraduate in 1966. Her class was only the third at Duke to include African Americans. In 1967, she helped to establish Duke's Afro-American Society. While serving as president, she

helped to organize the takeover of the Allen Building, which she and roughly 60 other students occupied to call attention to the needs of African American students. These needs included the establishment of an African American Studies Department, a Black student union, protection from police harassment, and an increase in enrollment and financial support for Black students.

After graduating from Duke, she studied at the St. Louis University School of Medicine and was the only Black woman student for

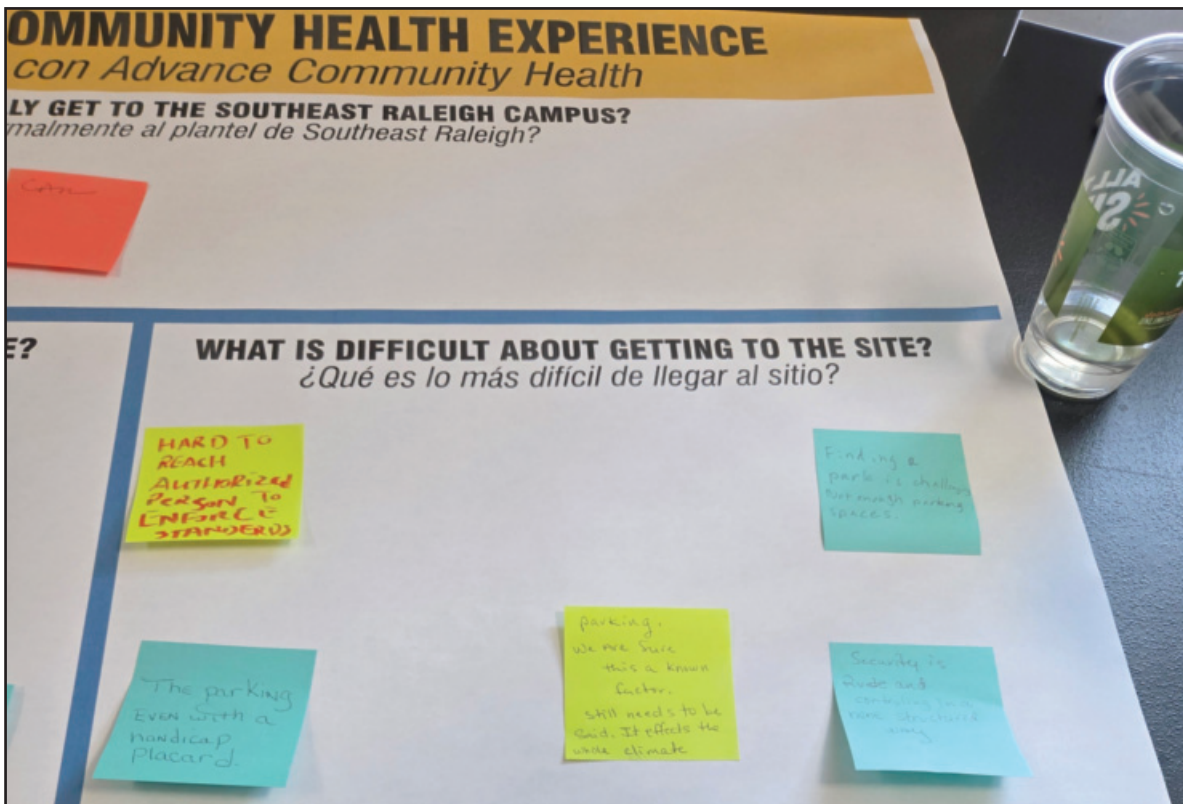
three of her four years of studies. Armstrong became the second Black woman in the United States to earn a board certification in pediatric cardiology. With a focus on bringing high quality medical care to underserved populations, her clinical appointments included numerous directorships of pediatric clinics and laboratories in North Carolina and consultancies for the U.S. Military.

In 1979, Armstrong became a professor in the Duke University School of Medicine Department of

Please see DUKE/2A



Dr. Brenda Armstrong also was a passionate supporter of the Durham Striders track program.



KYLIE MARSH

Participants leave sticky notes with suggestions on Advance Health's expansion plans.

## Advance Community Health seeks public input on expansion

By Kylie Marsh

Kylie.marsh@triangletribune.com

RALEIGH - Advance Community Health needs public input to shape its future growth. LS3P Architect and Project Manager Anita Karimu said Advance is at a "pivotal point" during a campus growth plan workshop, hosted at the Barwell Road Community Center last week.

Advance Community Health is a nonprofit health care center

serving Wake and Franklin counties. It offers affordable pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, dental, behavioral, nutrition, pharmacy and primary care services on a sliding fee-scale. "Our aim is generally to help Advance Community Health build a strong future, expand access to services and improve the patient experience, and grow with the community," Karimu said.

After opening its Southeast Raleigh campus on Tarboro Road,

the campus moved to Rock Quarry Road in the late 1990s. Now, it's looking to expand and needs public input on what it should plan for the site.

"Advance does not want to catch anyone off guard," Karimu said. "It's rare, in my experience, to work with an organization like Advance Community Health which is so tied to the community."

The workshop included feed-

Please see ADVANCE/2A

## A Call to Action

By DPS Superintendent Anthony Lewis

When I was 10 years old, I watched my grandmother clean the homes of white families. I heard her say, "Yes ma'am" and "No ma'am," to women younger than she was. As a child, I did not yet have the language to describe what I was witnessing. But I understood dignity. I understood humility. And I understood the discipline of respect, even when respect was not equally returned.

That experience shaped me. It taught me that respect is not weakness. It is strength. It is self-possession. It is character. And it is what we must model for our students.

At our last Meet and Confer session, I was addressed publicly by my first name by the DAE president at the close of the meeting.

Let me be clear: This is not about ego. It is not about titles for the sake of titles. It is about professionalism, respect, cultural awareness, and what our students learn when they watch how adults treat one another.

There is enough dysfunction at the federal and state level. If we begin to exercise it at the local level, we work against the very reason we show up every day, and that is for the scholars of Durham Public Schools.

I appreciate that the statement issued by the DAE president acknowledged the racial connotation of what occurred. If we can recognize that in a written statement, then surely we can demonstrate the same awareness and respect around the Meet and Confer table. Our children deserve nothing less.

In this district, we teach students to address adults and one another with respect. We correct them when they fail to do so. We teach them that leadership carries responsibility. We cannot demand those standards from children while excusing behavior from adults that falls short of those same expectations.

When the superintendent is addressed in a manner inconsistent with professional norms in a formal public setting, it sends a message. It suggests that standards of respect are optional. That protocol is negotiable. That titles earned through years of study, hard work and sacrifice are insignificant.

As a Black man serving as superintendent, I cannot ignore the historical context in which informality toward Black professionals, particularly those in positions of authority, has been used to diminish status and erode credibility. What you ignore, you allow. What some may dismiss as a small slight, carries weight in a country where Black men with doctorates have often been denied the dignity routinely afforded to others.

Stripping enslaved Africans of their names when they were brought to the United States was a strategy of domination intended to erase identity and assert control. During the Jim Crow era, it was a common practice for white individuals to use first names to refuse Black men the courtesy titles of "Mr." or "Dr.," reducing them to a subservient status.

This is bigger than a microaggression. It reflects how bias can surface in ways that normalize inequity. Intent does not erase impact. This moment is not about division. It is about accountability and growth.

I am speaking today as an accountability partner for the sake of our children. I cannot censor anyone's speech. But I can insist that we hold ourselves to the standards we expect in our classrooms. I will continue to practice respect and humility, and I will not be part of or tolerate anything less.

We cannot prepare students to thrive in a diverse democracy if we fail to model respect across differences. There are times to restore and there are times to reset.

We cannot claim equity while tolerating behavior that undermines dignity.

We cannot ask our students to rise above bias if adults refuse to examine their own.

Please see A/2A

## Nida Allam concedes District 4 race to incumbent Valerie Foushee

By Kylie Marsh

Kylie.marsh@triangletribune.com

DURHAM - Durham County Commissioner Nida Allam decided against a recount in her tight race with incumbent Valerie Foushee for North Carolina's 4th Congressional District.

Foushee's margin of victory is 1%, or 1,202 votes.

"Tomorrow, we get back to work," Allam said to supporters just after Tuesday night at the Fruit in Durham. "We've got a little bit longer to hang on, but I'm

confident that our hard work will pay off."

But late Wednesday night, Allam conceded the race to Foushee.

"Though these were not the results we hoped for, I am proud of the movement we have built, the voices we have lifted up and the journey we have ahead," Allam said in a statement.

District 4 includes portions of Wake and Chatham counties, and all of Orange and Durham counties. While Allam won Durham and Wake, Chatham and

Orange voted for Foushee.

This is the second time the two have faced each other; Foushee beat Allam in 2022. Foushee is likely to be the district's representative, as it is deep blue.

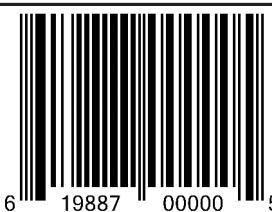
While both candidates campaigned on fighting for Medicare for all, a Green New Deal and opposing the Trump administration, Allam is left of Foushee, representing a more progressive attitude. Most

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## Duke doctor fought for equal rights for all

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Pediatrics. Asked why she chose to return to Duke after her experiences as an undergraduate, she said she had some unfinished business with Duke, and her desire was to make Duke live up to the greatness she knew it had the potential to be.

She became an associate dean of admissions for the School of Medicine in 1996, a position she held for over 20 years. She played a major role in diversifying the student population in the school and is credited with recruiting the most diverse classes in the school's history. In 2017,

she was inducted into the Student National Medical Association Hall of Heroes.

Armstrong passed away on Oct. 7, 2018, but her legacy lives on in the expanded diversity of the Duke School of Medicine as well as the American medical community as a whole.

## Advance Health seeks public input on expansion

**Continued from page 1A**  
back stations that asked participants questions and to offer suggestions. Respondents voted on amenities that would make the site more attractive and fit their needs by placing stickers as "votes" next to topics. Among the responses were a desire for eye care services, legal services, day care and a thrift store as potential businesses in the area. A community garden, fitness area, event plaza, and walking or cycling path received the highest votes for desired amenities.

Community engagement coordinator Eiman Ali said community members also expressed a desire for podiatry, physical therapy and access to food.

Samone Bullock Dillahunt, Advance assistant vice president of marketing, said most patients are between the ages of 24 and 50.

"Advance serves patients who may face certain barriers to health care access like geographic, transportation, financial," Bullock Dillahunt said. "Southeast Raleigh is a historically Black community, and the patients may have more complex health care needs like chronic conditions. Just conditions that may require more time from providers."

There are several goals for the growth plan. First, the center wants to become a community anchor with a strong Southeast Raleigh identity.

"We know that healthy communities thrive when they have healthy participants, and health starts in our bodies," Karimu said. "Advance is really hoping that this whole effort will really lock them into Southeast Raleigh and make sure that when people look at them, they know that that's an eco-

nomics driver and a health driver."

Other goals include integrating nature and wellness to the development, increasing parking and public transit access, and adaptability so that the campus maintains sustainability and use as health care develops into the future.

"Right now, when we look at the timeline for a growth plan like this, we're talking about what are we going to achieve in the next five years but also what we're going to achieve in the next 10 years," Karimu said. "It's really difficult to always project what the future of health care is going to look like, what technology is going to look like."

Advance Community Health will host a free Neighborhood Network event on March 28, 10 a.m. to noon, at Chavis Community Center.

## A call to action by DPS Superintendent Lewis

**Continued from page 1A**

This moment, while difficult, is also a teaching moment. If our students are watching, and they are, let them see adults reflect, grow, and recommit to treating one another with dignity. Let them see that respect is not optional. Let them see that leadership requires accountability. Let them see that you have one time to teach people how to treat you. Let them see that we can confront harm and still move forward together.

So here is my call to action. Let us recommit, publicly and collectively, to professional norms in all district spaces. Let us recommit to ongoing equity and implicit bias training or self-study, not as a compliance exercise, but as leadership development. To disrupt oppressive systems, we must first be willing to disrupt ourselves.

Let us hold ourselves to the same expectations we hold our students. And let us ensure that every person in this district, regardless of race, title or position, receives the dignity they have earned.

Our students deserve adults who model respect. They deserve leaders who confront uncomfortable truths. They deserve a district culture where equity is not a slogan, but a practice.

Let us use this moment to teach what some adults may not have fully learned.



## Durham community searches for ways to combat the child care crisis

By Lynn Bonner  
NC NEWSLINE

The child care crisis is familiar to most working parents looking for a place to enroll their children. Child care is expensive: in Durham, the average cost of infant/toddler care in a five-star center is more than \$20,000 a year. And in some parts of North Carolina, it may be next to impossible to find a space in a center or home-based day care, especially in rural areas.

Day care operators, child care workers and Durham legislators gathered last week to talk about the roots of the problem and what can be done.

"We have to have a sustainable model and program," Sen. Natalie Murdock, D-Durham, said.

One major factor is money. Child care workers made an average of \$10.73 an hour last year. Many don't have jobs that provide health insurance. For many child care business owners, profit margins are slim. Child care workers and advocates said employees deserve better treatment and higher pay. "The rubber band has already snapped," said Dee-Dee Fields, a former child care provider who now works for the National Domestic Workers Alliance NC.

"We don't have economic security. The system is broken. We're not asking for charity. We worked like dogs and slaves."

Sen. Sophia Chitlik, D-Durham, said more funding would solve the problem, and outlined a child care legislative package she sponsored with Sen. Jay Chaudhuri, D-Wake. "This is a bipartisan issue," Chitlik said.

The state House, the state Senate and Gov. Josh Stein all included money in their proposed budgets to increase the child subsidy rate - the amount the state will pay to help eligible families afford child care. But House and Senate Republicans failed to agree on a comprehensive budget last year, and none of the mini-budgets that did pass included a subsidy increase.

The child care system can't depend on the state or federal government for all its needs, said Rep. Zack Hawkins, D-Durham. He suggested finding churches or other spaces where child care businesses could operate with low overhead costs and connecting area employers to child care centers.

"We have to take care of ourselves," he said.

The roundtable was held at Kate's Korner child care in Durham, where CEO

Kate Goodwin says teachers make more than the state average and have health insurance. It was at Kate's Korner where Stein announced his bipartisan Task Force on Child Care and Early Education nearly a year ago. The task force issued interim and year-end reports in 2025.

The group developed a half-dozen recommendations but has not reported progress toward its goals. In the meantime, child care centers continue to close.

Between January and October 2025, 280 licensed child care providers closed, according to the task force. In August 2025, more licensed child care providers closed than opened.

The task force is developing a list of recommendations for the legislative short session. But Republican state budget writers are not required to consider them.

"Governor Stein is committed to increasing access to affordable child care for North Carolinians and will continue to urge the General Assembly to make these critical investments. He looks forward to the task force's continued work to identify creative solutions and opportunities," a Stein spokesperson said in a statement.



## 5 advances in Alzheimer's care and treatment

STATEPOINT

For the millions of Americans touched by Alzheimer's disease, 2025 brought major advances in understanding of brain health and progress in diagnosis and treatment.

Here are the year's biggest advances, along with how you can act with this knowledge in 2026.

**\* A structured plan can sharpen brain health.** In a major U.S. clinical trial of older adults at risk for cognitive decline, two healthy lifestyle plans in the Alzheimer's Association's U.S. POINTER study improved memory and thinking skills over two years.

Both interventions included exercise, brain-healthy nutrition, cognitive training and heart health monitoring. However, participants in a highly structured program that also included regular coaching and peer support showed significantly greater brain health gains, demonstrating that when brain-healthy habits are organized and supported, people stick with them and thinking skills benefit.

Next steps for families: Start small but structured; aim for 150 minutes of weekly exercise of at least moderate intensity, Mediterranean-style meals, seven to eight hours of

sleep per night, and two to three short brain-training sessions each week.

**\* Simple blood tests can help spot changes earlier.**

In 2025, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration cleared two blood tests that detect Alzheimer's-related brain changes, offering a less invasive, less expensive option for those experiencing memory changes to support diagnosis and potentially reduce the need for PET scans or spinal taps. Blood tests are not stand-alone diagnostic tools, but their use can help guide next steps for testing, treatment and planning.

Next step for families: Ask your health care team whether an Alzheimer's blood test makes sense for you or a loved one, and how your results would affect lifestyle and health care plans. If they recommend testing, ask them to refer you to a specialist who can explain the results and next steps.

**\* Americans want to know and act sooner.** A recent Alzheimer's Association national survey of adults 45 and older found most want to learn early if they have Alzheimer's before symptoms impact their lives, and 9 of 10 would take a simple test, if available, to clarify next

steps. Early awareness unlocks time to live healthfully, organize support, consider treatment options, and plan finances and care preferences.

Next step for families: Bring your top concerns, what's changed (memory, mood, function), and goals for the next three months to your next appointment.

**\* Treatment can be easier to take.** The August 2025 FDA approval of Leqembi for delivery via weekly injections may ease treatment for some patients. Those who complete initial infusion treatments as directed for 18 months can now receive their subsequent weekly treatment using at-home autoinjectors.

Fewer infusion clinic visits can mean less travel and lower caregiver burden, making it easier to stick to treatments for eligible patients. Decisions depend on eligibility, monitoring requirements, side-effect profile and your clinician's judgment.

Next step for families: If treatment is on the table, ask whether at-home injections might be an option after the initial phase, and what monitoring you'd still need.

**\* A new clinician hub helps care teams stay current.** Please see **ALZHEIMERS/3A**

### BUSINESS BRIEFS

#### DINNER

Bull City Burger and Brewery is hosting a "Lager & Mexican Dinner" March 8, 5:30 p.m., 107 E. Parrish St. Registration: [www.bullcityburgerandbrewery.com](http://www.bullcityburgerandbrewery.com).

#### MARKETS:

\* The Black Flea Market is back March 8, 1-7 p.m., The Shrine Club on Leadmine Road.

\* Raleigh Women's Market is March 8, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., Moore's Square.

\* Sacred Source Holistic

Market, March 15, 2-7 p.m., Durham Central Park, 501 Foster St.

#### FORUM

The Chamber of Chapel Hill-Carrboro will host The Economic Forecast Forum March 11, 8-10 a.m., The Lumina Theater, 620 Market St., Chapel Hill. Register: [carolinachamber.org](http://carolinachamber.org).

#### TOUR

The next Durham Business Listening Tour is March 13, noon, East Regional Library, 211 Lick

Creek Lane.

#### CHAMBER

Durham Chamber of Commerce's 2026 Annual Meeting is March 17, 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., Carolina Theatre of Durham. RSVP: [www.durhamchamber.org](http://www.durhamchamber.org).

#### OPENINGS:

\* The Blood Connection is expanding to Cary at 750 SE Maynard Road.

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

# 5 advances in Alzheimer's care and treatment

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**rent.** When clinicians have fast access to evidence-based resources, patients get clearer answers and more consistent care. The new centralized professional portal, ALZPro, launched by the Alzheimer's Association,

now curates practice guidelines, professional training, and point-of-care tools for earlier detection, appropriate test use, treatment eligibility and safety monitoring. Next step for families: Let your health care professional know that the

Alzheimer's Association has new research, training and support materials for professionals. For information, support, research and public policy, visit The Alzheimer's Association at alz.org or call 800-272-3900.

# Nida Allam concedes District 4 race to Foushee

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 visibly, Allam was endorsed by Vermont progressive Senator Bernie Sanders.

Foushee received extensive endorsements from other Democrats, causing her to be labeled as "establishment" and "status quo." The race broke state records as the most expensive Democratic primary, reaching over \$4 million in donations.

Supporters at the Fruit told The Tribune their vote was motivated by Allam's rejection of corporate funding. Foushee's campaign dwarfed Allam's, receiving donations from the American Israel Public Affairs Committee and PACs associated with artificial intelligence companies like Anthropic, which recently faced backlash due to privacy concerns surrounding mass surveillance.

"I think one thing that's really wrong in our political system right now is where people get the money, and where that money is coming from," Elizabeth Hoane said. "I'm lucky enough to know Nida Allam personally, and I see her when we're out in the streets protesting and demanding change; she's there with us."

Many Triangle Democrats didn't have a problem with Foushee's record and were hesitant to switch leaders in Congress. "I like Nida, personally," said Melissa McCullough of Chapel Hill. "But Valerie Foushee has credibility amongst her peers, good committee assignments ... and she brings home federal dol-



KYLIE MARSH

Nida Allam thanks supporters at the Fruit in Durham.

lars. Now is not the time to send in someone who has to start from scratch."

Muhammad Shahzad is a North Carolina State professor of computer science. He supports Allam because she is new.

"The status quo has been going on for a very long time, so I would like to see some new, more energetic faces in the House," he told The Tribune.

Many of the ads that voters in the 4th District saw weren't funded by the two candidates. Initially, much of that spending came in support of Allam.

A group called "American Priorities" spent at least \$500,000 on ads promoting Allam and attacking Foushee. The disclosure records show a lot of its money is coming from out-

of-state tech executives like Omer Hasan. He also donated a lot to a PAC supporting Zohran Mamdani's campaign for mayor of New York.

Allam thanked supporters from organizations like Leaders We Deserve, Sunrise Movement, The N.C. AFL-CIO, the Indian American Impact Fund, The Working Families Party, No Dem Left Behind and College Democrats of America.

"We will keep exercising our right to dream," she said, "and we will bring home a victory for the working families of North Carolina in the days ahead."

WUNC contributed to this article.

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# Rising optimism among small and middle market business leaders suggests growth for North Carolina

SPONSORED BY JPMORGANCHASE

Business optimism is returning for small and midsize business leaders at the start of 2026, fueling confidence and growth plans.

The survey, released in January by JPMorganChase reveals a turnaround from last June, when economic headwinds and uncertainty about shifting policies and tariffs caused some leaders to put their business plans on hold.

Midsize companies, who often find themselves more exposed to geopolitical shifts and policy changes, experienced a significant dip in business and economic confidence in June of 2025. As they have become more comfortable with the complexities of today's environment, we are seeing optimism rebounding in the middle market nationwide - an encouraging sign for growth, hiring, and innovation. Small businesses, meanwhile, maintained steady optimism throughout 2025, but they aren't shielded from domestic concerns. Many cited inflation and wage pressures as the top challenges for 2026 and are taking steps to ensure their businesses are prepared for what's ahead.

Overall, both small and midsize business leaders are feeling more confident to pursue growth opportunities, embrace emerging technologies and, in some cases, forge new strategic partnerships. That bodes well for entrepreneurs in North Carolina. Here are a few other key findings from the Business Leaders Outlook about trends expected to drive activity in North Carolina this year:

**1) Inflation remains the top concern for small business owners.** Following the 2024 U.S. presidential election, many anticipated a favorable business environment. By June 2025, however, that feeling shifted amid concerns about political dynamics, tariffs, evolving regulations

and global economic headwinds.

Going into 2026, 37% of respondents cited inflation as their top concern. Rising taxes came in second at 27% and the impact of tariffs was third at 22%. Other concerns included managing cash flow, hiring and labor costs.

**2) For middle market leaders, uncertainty remains an issue.** Almost half (49%) of all midsize business leaders surveyed cited "economic uncertainty" as their top concern - even with an improved outlook from a few months ago. Nationally, revenue and sales growth was second at 33%, while tariffs and labor both were third at 31%. In the Southeast, labor and revenue and sales growth were the number two (at 34%) challenges facing midsize businesses, while tariffs fell at number three.

**3) And tariffs are impacting businesses costs.** Sixty-one percent of midsize business leaders said tariffs have had a negative impact on the cost of doing business, as compared to 41% in the Southeast.

**4) Despite challenges, leaders are bullish on their own enterprises.** Though the overall outlook is mixed, 74% of small business owners and 71% of middle market companies are optimistic about their company's prospects for 2026.

**5) Adaption is the theme.** For small business owners surveyed across the U.S., responding to continuing pressures is important in 2026. Building cash reserves (47%), renegotiating supplier terms (36%) and ramping up investments in marketing and technology are among the top priorities.

**6) Big plans are on the horizon.** A

majority midsize company leaders expect revenue growth this year, and nearly three out of five (58%) plan to introduce new products or services in the coming year, while 53% look to expand into new domestic and/or international markets. Forty-nine percent say they're pursuing strategic partnerships or investments.

### The bottom line

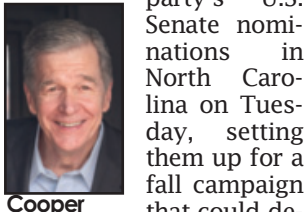
Rebounding optimism among U.S. business leaders at the start of the year is setting the stage for an active 2026. With business leaders looking to implement ambitious growth plans that position themselves for the future, momentum in North Carolina could be beneficial future goals for leaders looking to launch, grow or scale their business this year.

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# Cooper, Whatley clinch US Senate race in NC

By Gary D. Robertson  
 ASSOCIATED PRESS

**RALEIGH** — Former Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper and ex-Republican National Committee Chairman Michael Whatley each won their party's U.S. Senate nominations in North Carolina on Tuesday, setting them up for a fall campaign that could determine control of Congress' upper chamber.



Cooper

Whatley and Cooper are seeking the seat being vacated by Republican Sen. Thom Tillis, who chose last June not to seek a third term. The two announced their campaigns weeks later and easily won their respective primary elections over crowded fields. Cooper's candidacy brought optimism to Democrats aiming to take back the Senate this year with a net gain of four seats. Whatley, who is also a former state Republican chairman, entered the race when President Donald Trump endorsed him after Lara Trump, the president's daughter-in-law, declined to run.

North Carolina, a traditional battleground where Democrats have been able to hold the governor's seat even as voters helped send Trump to the White House, was one of three states

kicking off this year's midterm elections, along with Texas and Arkansas. Tuesday's slate of primaries came against the backdrop of the U.S. and Israel attack on Iran, which began over the weekend.

North Carolina's election this year could be crucial for determining which party controls the U.S. Senate, where Republicans currently have the majority. The seat is open because Tillis decided to retire after clashing with Trump and the president threatened to support a primary challenger. Political experts say a typhoon of outside money could make the race the most expensive Senate campaigns in U.S. history, perhaps reaching \$1 billion.

Many Democrats see Cooper, who served two terms as governor and has been successful in state politics for decades, as the party's best shot at victory. Democrats think their most likely path to regaining the Senate majority includes winning in North Carolina, Maine, Alaska and Ohio.

Whatley promises to keep pushing Trump's agenda if elected, one that he says has cut taxes and spending and restored U.S. military might.

"His leadership has changed our country, and I am proud to stand with him in the fight to secure our border, to strengthen our economy and put America first," Whatley

said while giving his nomination acceptance speech in Charlotte.

Moments later in his own speech in Raleigh, Cooper said inflation, tariffs and threats of health care cuts attributed to Republican policies are hurting North Carolina residents. "These are not ordinary times. Everyday people are being left behind," Cooper said. "And we see the chaos that's coming out of Washington only making it worse."

Some primary voters say Congress needs Democratic control as a counterweight to Trump and what they consider disastrous policies. "I just think we're not headed in the right direction as a country, so I needed to express that opinion," said Shailendra Prakash, 65, of Raleigh, an unaffiliated voter who chose to vote in the Democratic primary on Tuesday and picked Cooper. "My hope is that it needs to flip."

Republican voter Lisa Weaver, 64, of Apex, said she was picking Whatley because as the former RNC chairman, "he's in tune with the issues that we care most about" and would assist the president.

"It's not that I love everything that Trump does, but I do believe in the framework that he is offering for our country," Weaver said.

In the northeastern 1st Congressional District, Laurie Buckhout defeated four other candidates.

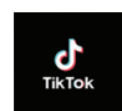
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# CIAA tourney back to thrilling ways

What a CIAA Tournament! The tourney hadn't been this exciting since the early years in Charlotte.

Yes, the favorites won but the drama that got them there was well worth the price of admission, or paying to watch on ESPN+.

Our College Corner wrote that the "Must See TV" championship matchups were Fayetteville State vs. Winston-Salem State on the women's side, and Bluefield State vs. Fayetteville State on the men's.

And the teams delivered. The Rams (26-3) were the story of the tournament. Some of us, OK just me, thought maybe the pressure and the hype of having never won a tournament title would overwhelm the favorites. The longer WSSU stayed in the tourney the hotter the fire.

Instead, there was never any doubt. The Rams defeated their three opponents by an average of 25 points, including a 17-point blowout over the Broncos in the final.

WSSU won its first championship under a first-year head coach who caused as much sensation for looking gorgeous as she did for coaching. Hey, when you've got it, you've got it. (See jump page.)

The Rams got a parade, an Instagram congratulatory message from the mayor and a major shoutout from alumnus Steven A. Smith on "First Take." Love him or hate him, it's the best free recruiting tool money doesn't have to buy.

It was satisfying to see the hype around the women because, let's face it, they still have to fight to earn respect. For example, the women's championship game was livestreamed on ESPN+, while the men's was broadcast live on ESPNU. The "U" may have fewer viewers than ESPN and ESPN2, but it has more than ESPN+.

Next week the road begins again. The NCAA Division II Women's Selection Show is March 8 at 10:30 p.m., followed by the men's show at 11 p.m. The Rams and Broncos are ranked No. 3 and No. 5, respectively, and assured of a postseason spot.

Will WSSU be content with just winning the CIAA Tournament, as so many teams have done in the past. Or will it see what Shaw women saw in 2012 - that a national championship is not out of its reach.

**You Look Familiar**  
Bowie State men's basketball coach Darrell Brooks announced his retirement after the season, and with the heartbreaking loss of vice president of athletics Clyde Doughty Jr., the Bulldogs were a sentimental favorite in the tourney.

But we all knew it had to come down to Fayetteville vs. Bluefield, didn't we? How could it not. Last year, FSU coach Devin Hoehn was at BSU, and BSU coach Lou D'Alessio was at FSU. Then, several players and coaches on both sides switched with their coach. How much better could it get?

A championship game that went down to the final seconds and solidified a newfound rivalry for the future. And just like the women's side, the CIAA will get only two teams in the postseason: the Broncos at No. 4 and Virginia Union, which dropped to No. 7 after losing two straight games to close out the season. Those losses were to rival Virginia State on the road and a determined Bluefield State team in the tournament.

The CIAA still has the best two representatives to try to end its drought in the Atlantic Regional.

# The Triangle Tribune Sports

March 8-14, 2026 | 6A

## DPS Middle School Championship Winners



The Shepard Panthers defeated the Neal Eagles in the Durham Public Schools Middle School Boys Basketball Tournament.



The Sherwood Githens Raiders defeated the Durham School of the Arts Bulldogs in the Durham Public Schools Middle School Girls Basketball Tournament.

## North Carolina Central to induct 1 team, 7 individuals in Rivera Athletics Hall of Fame

N.C. CENTRAL SPORTS INFORMATION

**DURHAM** — The N.C. Central 2016 football championship team and seven individuals will be inducted in the 2026 class of the Alex M. Rivera Athletics Hall of Fame.

This year, the Hall will recognize the football team that won the MEAC title and advanced the Celebration Bowl; as well as legendary football coach Rod Broadway; men's tennis standout Gabriel Cucalon; volleyball star Ariel Germain; football players Adrian Jones, Mike Jones and Christopher McKinstry; and track and field standout Bethany White.

The induction ceremony will take place Oct. 3 during the weekend of an Eagles home football game against Campbell.

### This year's inductees: The 2016 Football Team

The 2016 Eagles received NCCU's first national ranking as a Division I FCS program on Nov. 7 at No. 25.

By the end of the regular season, the Eagles jumped to No. 18 and closed the year at No. 19 in the final poll. Under head coach Jerry Mack, NCCU beat No. 9 North Carolina A&T to cap an undefeated conference campaign, capture the MEAC cham-

pionship and earn a trip to the Air Force Reserve Celebration Bowl in Atlanta.

NCCU's nine wins were the most by the Eagles in the program's DI era.

### Rod Broadway • Coach/Football • 2003-06

NCCU's all-time winningest coach by winning percentage, Broadway won 75% of his games with the Eagles from 2003-06. Going 33-11 in four seasons, Broadway won CIAA championships in 2005 and 2006 before advancing to the second round of the NCAA DII playoffs in both seasons.

The Eagles were named Black College Football National Champions in 2006 after winning 11 games, completing an undefeated regular season for the first time in program history. The 2006 CIAA Coach of the Year, Broadway was inducted into the Black College Football Hall of Fame in 2024.

For his head coaching career, Broadway won 125 games, five Black College National Championships and two Celebration Bowl titles.

### Gabriel Cucalon • Athlete/Men's Tennis • 2015-19

The 2019 MEAC player of the year, Cucalon is NCCU's all-time



singles winner with 46 victories. He went 11-4 at No. 1 singles in his senior season, which also saw him win the Singles A Flight at the HBCU National Tennis Championships. That season, he also won his match in the MEAC Tennis Championship semifinals in the only completed postseason match.

### Ariel Germain • Athlete/Volleyball • 2002-05

Germain is volleyball's career leader in assists (4,036) and assists per set (8.95) and holds the single-season record in assists per set (9.72). A starter on the Eagles' 2004 and 2005 CIAA championship teams, Germain was a three-time All-CIAA honoree.

### Adrian Jones • Athlete/Football • 1994-97

Jones sits second in the program for most interceptions in a single season with eight (1996.) He also defended 23 passes that season, fifth most in program history. Jones also ranks eighth on the Eagles' career passes defended list with 41 (10 interceptions, 31 pass breakups), and his 10 career interceptions are tied for 16th in Eagles history. Jones was also a star return man. He ranks fourth on NCCU's kickoff return average list (29.5 yards per return in 1997). As a senior, Jones led the conference with an 11-yard punt return average and a 29.5-yard kickoff return average.

Please see NCCU/7A

### COLLEGE CORNER

## MEAC regular season ends this week

### WOMEN

#### N.C. Central

Runner Alitz Dennard will spend her summer with Nike.

The junior will serve for 10 weeks as a brand marketing undergraduate intern at its headquarters in Oregon. "I feel really honored to be chosen for this opportunity," Dennard said. "I did a lot of research going into it; I also went to a lot of seminars. I feel like I worked really hard to get that."

In basketball, the regular season ended March 5. NCCU closed out against South Carolina State trying to snap a three-game losing streak. Whatever the outcome, the team (4-9) won't equal or better its 6-8 conference record of last year.

The MEAC Tournament begins March 11 at the Norfolk Scope Arena, which means it's a new season for everybody.

After a brutal nonconference schedule, softball (1-17) travels to rival North



COURTESY

The Eagles family is in mourning after the tragic death of former student-athlete Steven Perry (51) on March 1. Perry, who played football from 2014-17, was a Master Trooper with the N.C. State Highway Patrol. He was killed by a wrong-way driver on the Durham Highway. He was 30 years old.

Carolina A&T March 11 for a doubleheader. Then MEAC play kicks into gear March 14 when Coppin State comes to Thomas Brooks

Parks in Cary, NCCU's homefield.

Shaw Softball (0-7) will be seek-

ing its first win when it travels to Mount Olive this weekend. At least the

Please see NCCU/7A

# NCCU men end regular season on ESPNU

Continued from page 6A  
weather is starting to feel like spring sports.

**MEN**

**N.C. Central**  
The Eagles are on a two-game win streak heading into this week's finale against S.C. State. Kelechi Okworogwo earned MEAC defensive player of the week honors for his performance against Delaware State.

NCCU is tied with Norfolk State for third place. Howard is No. 1 and Morgan State is No. 2.

In tennis, the men travel to Orlando, Florida, to compete in four matches at USTA National Campus. They will battle Hampton,

Howard, St. Thomas and Fairfield.

**Shaw**

Assistant coach Wykevin Bazemore is the acting men's head coach after Bobby Collins' release last week. Bazemore was a standout player at Winston-Salem State.

**AAMU**

Alabama A&M men's basketball coach Donte Jackson is a finalist for the Collegelinsider.com 2025-26 Skip Prosser Award, given to the Division I coach who showcases integrity on and off the court.

Jackson, in his first season after leaving Grambling State, has the

Bulldogs at 16-13 overall, their first winning record in 20 years.

**Tennessee State**

The Tigers (21-9, 15-5) earned a share of the Ohio Valley Conference under first-year coach and Duke alumnus Nolan Smith. It ends a 31-year drought and earned the team the No. 1 seed in the tournament.

TSU averaged 80.5 points per game - the second-highest scoring mark since the program reclassified to Division I.

Guard Aaron Nkrumah was voted conference player of the year and Smith co-OVC coach of the year.



Riverside High School senior Stephanie Diaz-Mendoza captured the 2026 NCHSAA 7A Wrestling State Championship, finishing her season with a dominant 29-1 record. Eighteen of those wins came by pin and four by technical fall, a true display of her strength, skill and determination on the mat.

It is Diaz-Mendoza's second state championship, further cementing her legacy as one of the most accomplished wrestlers in Riverside's history. Last year, she made history as the first female wrestler in Durham to win a wrestling state title, paving the way for future generations of athletes to follow.

# NCCU to induct 1 team, 7 individuals in Hall of Fame

Continued from page 6A  
**Mike Jones - Athlete/Football - 2013-16**

Jones is NCCU's career punt return leader. He broke the school record for career punt return average with 21 yards per punt return (31 returns, 651 yards, two touchdowns). On the defensive side Jones ranks ninth on NCCU's career passes defended list with 36 (25 pass breakups, 11 interceptions), and he is tied for 13th with 11 career interceptions. Jones played on the Eagles' 2016 MEAC

championship squad, and he was also on the 2014 and 2015 teams that won a share of the conference title.

**Christopher McKinstry - Athlete/Football - 1978-81**

McKinstry was selected as a Black College All-American and to play in the Black College All-Star Game. He is NCCU's career leader in tackles with 405, and he led the Eagles in tackles during each of his last three seasons. His 142 tackles in 1979 are tied for the second-most in a single season in Eagles history..

**Bethany White - Athlete/Women's Track & Field - 2015-19**

White was a two-time NCAA regional qualifier in both the 100 and the 200 meters, accomplishing the feat in both 2018 and 2019. He was a six-time MEAC medalist, including silver medals in the 100 and 200 meters in the 2018 MEAC Outdoor Track & Field Championships.

She twice set the meet record at the Duke Invitational in the 100 meters, and she holds the program's DI-era record in that event.

## SPORTS SHORTS

**ZEBULON**

\* Ticket packages are now on sale for the Zebulon Coastal Plain League's inaugural season beginning May 22. Tickets will include an all-you-can-eat menu. For more information, contact Aidan Varrialle at [avarrialle@coastalplainleague.com](mailto:avarrialle@coastalplainleague.com).

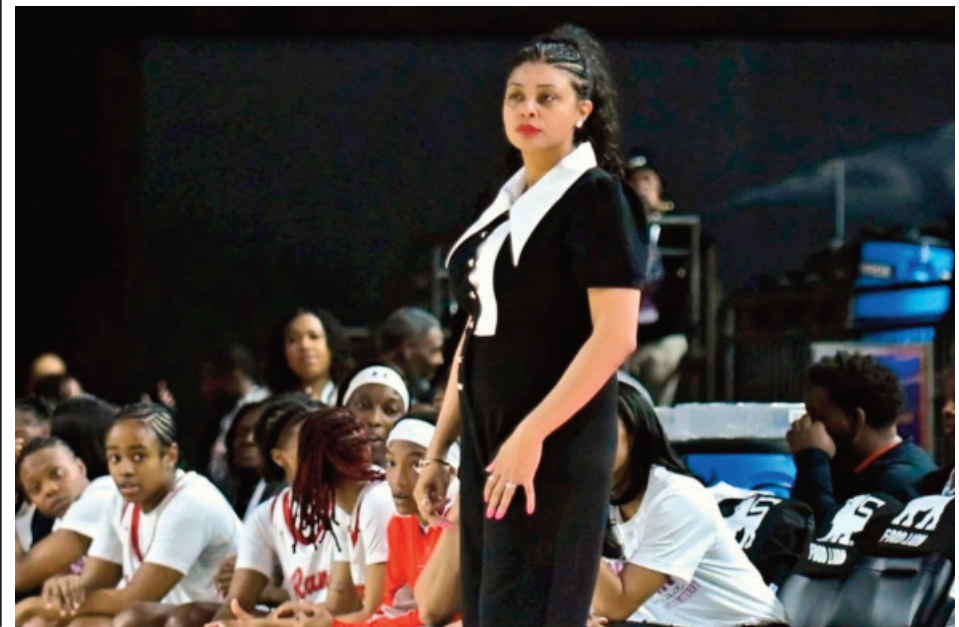
**RALEIGH**

\* Interested in becoming a sports official for Raleigh Parks? An introductory workshop is March 15, 2-3:30 p.m., Green Road Community Center, 4201 Green Road. Call 919-996-4141.

**DURHAM**

\* Long Ball Durham Triple Play will celebrate its 17th season in May. Volunteers needed for coaching, announcing games, scoreboard operators and anthem singers. Contact: Pat James at 919-236-3101.

Send your sports announcements and photos to: [info@triangletribune.com](mailto:info@triangletribune.com).



### DIFFERENTLY ABLED PEOPLE - BLACK AMERICANS WITH DISABILITY ACTIVITY SHEET

Hi Everyone!

I would like to acknowledge some great Black Americans during the National Disability Awareness Month of March. These individuals have not allowed their disability to define who they are nor what they can accomplish.

**DISABILITY DEFINED**

A disability is any medical condition that makes it more difficult for a person to do any ordinary everyday activities or be able to interact with the world around them. Blacks 40 years and older, have the highest rates of disability.

### DIFFERENTLY ABLED PEOPLE MAKING A DIFFERENCE

**Meet Kathy D. Woods:**  
Ms. Woods suffers from Dwarfism. She is known as a Little Person. As a child, she wanted to be a runway model. Even though the modeling agency turned her down, Kathy persisted until she won. She became the first Black American designer for Little People. Her brand is KDW Collection. Kathy is a Little Person with BIG DREAMS.

**Meet Chris Rock:**  
Well-known comedian, Chris Rock suffered from Nonverbal Learning Disorder or NVLD throughout his childhood and continued into adulthood. In 2020, at the age of 55, Chris was diagnosed with the disability. People with NVLD generally have trouble with spatial learning and social cues, although they might have strong vocabulary and verbal skills. Let's thank Chris Rock for talking about this disability and bringing awareness to it.

**Meet Claudia Gordon:**  
Ms. Gordon was born in Jamaica. She began going deaf at age 8, but at age 11 she moved to the United States to attend Lexington School for the Deaf in New York and began learning American Sign Language (ASL). Ms. Gordon attended Howard University and American University, in Washington, D.C. She was the first deaf graduate of American University Law School and the first deaf Black female attorney in the United States. She worked in the Obama Administration as an advisor on disability issues.

**Meet Tatiana Lee:**  
Ms. Lee is an actress, model, social media lifestyle influencer, and disability inclusion and accessibility consultant. She was born with spina bifida, a birth defect where a developing baby's spinal cord fails to develop properly. Tatiana's feeling of exclusion and invisibility forced her to advocate for herself and others with disabilities. She moved to California and became a Hollywood influencer. Tatiana championed for differently abled people to be included in the media. She works for RespectAbility, a non profit organization, as a Hollywood Inclusion Associate.

**Meet Wilma G. Rudolph:**  
Ms. Rudolph's fame stems from her participation in the 1956 Melbourne, Australian Olympics and the 1960 Rome, Italy Olympics. In Melbourne, Ms. Rudolph won a bronze medal in the 4x100 meter relay. Later, in 1960, Ms. Rudolph won the distinction of being the first American woman to win three gold medals in an Olympic. Wilma overcame the triple threat of pneumonia, scarlet fever, and polio. Ms. Rudolph is a hero because she overcame a childhood disability (infantile paralysis/polio) to win three gold medals in Rome.

**True FALSE TELL THE TRUTH!**

Print the letter T on the line if the statement is True or F if the statement is False.

\_\_\_\_\_ Kathy D. Woods designs fashions for people who are 7 feet or over.

\_\_\_\_\_ Chris Rock was diagnosed with NVLD at age 55.

\_\_\_\_\_ Ms. Gordon was the first deaf graduate of the Am. Univ. Law School

\_\_\_\_\_ Tatiana Lee became a doctor because of her disability.

\_\_\_\_\_ Track star Wilma Rudolph suffered from polio as a child.

**ONE MINUTE MADNESS!**

In one minute or less, unscramble the words associated with a disability. The first letter of the word is in bold.

skyleiaD \_\_\_\_\_

ipOBira \_\_\_\_\_

Niaonvber arneLign \_\_\_\_\_

saDilybli \_\_\_\_\_

**WHO AM I?**

Match the individual to the statement.

Halle Berry   Missy Elliott   Serena Williams   Michael Jordan

I learned to control my ADHD as I fly through the "AIR" with my brand named sneakers.

\_\_\_\_\_

Although I have Graves' disease, I am one of the world's best female rappers.

\_\_\_\_\_

I have pulmonary embolism but still raise a racquet on a tennis court.

\_\_\_\_\_

I am hard of hearing but still considered to be one of the most beautiful female actors.

\_\_\_\_\_

**ANSWER KEY**

True: Kathy D. Woods, Chris Rock, Ms. Gordon, Tatiana Lee, Wilma Rudolph

False: Kathy D. Woods, Chris Rock, Ms. Gordon, Tatiana Lee, Wilma Rudolph

Who Am I: Missy Elliott, Serena Williams, Michael Jordan

DIFFERENTLY ABLED PEOPLE - BLACK AMERICANS WITH DISABILITY, 3/8/26, #245 WWW.JOEYOUNG.ORG KEMET ACTIVITY SHEETS © 2026 BY JOE YOUNG

## Black Genius Fest transforms Black Wall Street in Durham

Last weekend, hundreds gathered for Black Genius Fest on Durham's historic Parrish Street, once the heart of the city's Black Wall Street, transforming the corridor into a highly visual, community-led "lab for the future of learning" in recognition of the 100th anniversary of Black History Month.



COURTESY



## African American Cultural Festival

The rescheduled 25th annual African American Cultural Festival was still a huge hit in downtown Raleigh at the North Carolina Museum of History.



MATHIAS BISHOP

