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« 52 WEEKS OF BLACK BRILLIANCE »

Susie King Taylor: the first Black U.S. Army nurse

By Novella Nimmo
NATIONAL UNDERGROUND
RAILROAD FREEDOM CENTER

Susie King Taylor was born Aug. 5, 1848, the oldest of nine children to Hagar Ann Reed and Raymond Baker in Liberty County Georgia. She was deemed property, as she was born on the Grest Plantation. Even though she and her family were en-

slaved, the Grest did not follow the norm of being cruel owners. At the age of 7, Taylor and one of her brothers were allowed to live with her grandmother who was a free woman in Savannah, Georgia.

April 1862 brought the Civil War, with South Carolina being the first state to secede. Once Union troops captured Fort Pulaski, enslaved African Americans

began to escape to freedom. Taylor's uncle was among the ones looking to take his family, and Taylor went along.

While aboard ship, she met Captain Whitmore. Talking with him revealed her ability to read and write. Once they reached the island, Captain Whitmore revealed her abilities which led to Taylor becoming a teacher. She taught

over 40 children by day and a number of adults by night that wanted to learn.

The next big change that came in her life was the construction of the first Black regiment. The First South Carolina Volunteers was formed on Nov. 7, 1862, under of white Commander Colonel Thomas Wentworth Hissinson. "Volunteers" because none of them were paid because of

the color of their skin. Commander Hissinson fought for them to get paid, but his words and writing fell on deaf ears, and payment for their service was never received. The regiment name was later changed to 33rd United States Colored Infantry Regiment.

The war brought another killer into the camps besides fighting. The killer

was a virus called smallpox. Even though there was a vaccination for smallpox, most states outlawed the vaccination for fear the vaccine itself would spread the virus. The outbreak spread in the camps since almost all of the troops had never been vaccinated.

There was an outbreak of smallpox in Taylor's regiment, which led her to be-

Please see **SUSIE/2A**



STOCK

North Carolina's Black homeowners 'subsidizing gentrification,' group says

By Kylie Marsh
kylie.marsh@triangletribune.com

While homeownership is out of reach for many North Carolinians, skyrocketing property taxes are displacing longtime owners.

In some N.C. counties, owners of lower-priced housing are paying proportionately double compared to owners of more expensive homes, according to the Wake County Property Tax Justice Working Group.

"Nationwide, there has been a massive problem where Black folks, in particular, and other people of color are being undervalued when they go to sell or refinance their home," Rob Stephens, a member of the Working Group, said.

The coalition of organizations, including the NAACP, Men of Southeast Raleigh, Southeast Raleigh Promise, the North Caro-

lina Housing Coalition and others, assembled in 2024. The group has worked across the Triangle to educate cost-burdened homeowners about local property tax relief programs and assist them in applying. On average, the Working Group helped homeowners save \$60,000 in in property taxes.

During its first virtual gathering on May 14, group members discussed the inequities in property tax assessment, its impact on low-income homeowners, current relief programs and recommendations for expansion of those programs. "What we're seeing in transitioning and gentrifying Black neighborhoods is that the tax value is ahead of the actual value," Stephens said. "Black folks are subsidizing gentrification fundamentally."

Stephens presented slides comparing values between ren-

ovated homes purchased by investors and put on the market as short-term rentals and Airbnb versus homes owned by long-term Black residents. A five-bedroom three-bathroom home purchased and renovated by an investor in 2022 for \$350,000 was assessed at \$260,000, compared to a three-bedroom one-bath home owned by a Black resident valued at \$260,000 in 2024.

Stephens said the family who used to live in the five-bedroom home was displaced due to overdue taxes. "What often happens is that city of Raleigh home repairs were being considered remodeled," he said.

These repairs are an anti-displacement measure, like accessibility accommodations for aging and disabled populations. "Having a handicap-accessible

Please see **NC's/2A**



COURTESY

Durham agency assists in fight against gun violence

By Tyshon Holland
SPECIAL TO THE TRIBUNE

DURHAM - The day Tiffany Swoope decided to move GRACED, Inc.'s meetings out of the Cornwallis neighborhood, it reflected the harsh reality in Durham's fight against gun violence.

A program designed to keep young people engaged in safe, structured environments had to leave an area where safety itself had become uncertain. This situation reinforced the idea behind GRACED's mission, that intervention must occur to intercept the behavior of the local youth before it becomes a pattern.

"We are hoping our policymakers, our community leaders, our elected officials will listen to our children and come up with a plan," Swoope said.

Swoope's work has centered on building that kind of early intervention through exposure, mentorship and consistency. GRACED connects young people to structured opportunities like college tours all across North Carolina.

Swoope aims to expand how students see their futures. The program has operated for about three years and has reached hundreds of young people across Durham. "We're not just showing students what's possible. We're helping them believe those possibilities belong to them," Swoope said.

The organization also hosts events weekly that bring youth together with mentors and community members, including Thursday night podcast sessions where students discuss gun violence, decision-making and identity. These spaces are designed to build trust. In Durham, where officials have reported declines in violent crime and homicides in recent years, prevention efforts like GRACED serves as part of a more focused public safety strategy.

Angel Barnes, a North Carolina Central junior psychology major, is one of the student mentors helping carry out GRACED's work. She supports youth through tutoring, structured mentorship assignments, and hands-on engagement that includes cooking meals and participating in small group sessions.

Barnes is part of a small mentor team comprised of about five to six NCCU students who are each assigned to work closely with young participants. Barnes also speaks at events focused on gun violence prevention, helping students develop communication skills and conflict resolution strategies.

"I feel like you can really start with the youth and get them out of the streets," she said. "That alone would solve a lot of the gun violence, because it's really the youth."

NCCU accounting major Jai'Dione Moore represents the lived experience that reinforces the need for programs like GRACED. Having survived gun violence, he describes how quickly small conflicts can escalate when young people lack tools to manage conflict. "Most violence could have been resolved if people weren't so

Please see **GUN/2A**

Advocacy group says insurance crisis is exacerbating home affordability crisis

By Kylie Marsh
kylie.marsh@triangletribune.com

Republican legislators are wrapped around the finger of corporate insurance companies, according to advocacy group Unlocking America's Future.

Getting past the barrier of simply purchasing a home is tough, but it's not the end of the financial headache. Insurance is a necessity, especially during a time of climate emergency that's created historic damages.

Unlocking America's Future hosted a May 20 virtual panel

with natural disaster survivor Tony Dunn, North Carolina State Senator Natalie Murdock, and N.C. Democratic Party Chair Anderson Clayton to discuss what the group calls the "insurance crisis," linking the political topics of climate emergency with corporate governance.

UAF representative Jayson O'Neill introduced a report published by the group which "exposes how North Carolina's congressional Republicans, Representatives Chuck Edwards and Greg Murphy, didn't just fail to address this crisis; they helped

to create it."

"The home insurance crisis is devastating North Carolina homeowners, renters and businesses, impacting the housing market and making coverage unaffordable, unavailable or unattainable for working families and people across the state," O'Neill said.

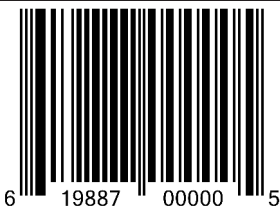
In 2018, the camp fire in Paradise, California, was the most destructive wildfire in the state's history. Dunn lost his home and spent five years bat-

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Susie King Taylor: the first Black U.S. Army nurse

Continued from page 1A come a nurse. This is also where her "healer" abilities came in.

One of the important plants that her Grandma Dolly taught her to use as medicine was sassafras to purify the blood and reduce joint inflammation. Susie wasn't afraid of smallpox because she remembered this lesson.

As a nurse in South Carolina, Taylor also met and

worked beside Clara Barton, who later became the founder of the American Red Cross. The 33rd Colored Infantry Regiment is also where she met and married Sergeant Edward King. Together they served until they were no longer needed in 1866 and later had a son. After the war, she and Edward moved back to Savannah where she open up a private school. Unfortunately, Edward died soon after and

public schools opened in her area. She eventually moved to Boston in 1872, where she met and married Russell Taylor. She spent the rest of her life working at Woman's Relief Corps, a national organization for female Civil War veterans.

Susie King Taylor was the first Black U.S. Army nurse during the Civil War and the first Black woman to publish a memoir about her experiences in the war.

Durham agency assists in fight against gun violence

Continued from page 1A

quick to escalate it over the small stuff," Moore said.

Gemaeka Smith recalled being shot in the hip while walking back to a friend's dorm during homecoming at the first Youth Leaders Against Gun Violence Symposium, an event created by Swoope.

"I don't want no one else to go through what I went through", Smith said.

Despite its impact, GRACED still faces major limitations that affect its reach. One of the biggest challenges has been location. It previously held meetings in the Cornwallis neighborhood but had to move elsewhere due to a dangerous environment. Even with those limitations, GRACED continues to expand through partnerships, mentorship pipelines and consistent engagement with young people across Durham.

Swoope said the focus has always been on reaching young people early and giving them opportunities to see beyond their current environment. "Real change starts with consistency and structure. We have to show the youth that a different path is possible before it is too late."

NC's Black homeowners subsidizing gentrification

Continued from page 1A

shower does not increase the value of the house," Stephens said. "While they're nice renovations, they're not the marble countertops, open concept that developers are doing."

At the same time, some of the highest-priced homes in Raleigh are being undervalued. One home sold for \$5 million in 2023 was only valued at \$4.2 million. Another sold for \$3.2 million had a tax value of \$2.2 million.

When this data was presented to the Wake County Tax Office, it conducted its own analysis, resulting in a reduction in the values of over 580 properties across six historically Black communities, saving those families \$500,000. Over 225 Southeast Raleigh residents were mobilized, filing around 75 appeals.

"We did not agree completely with some of the reductions, but it was a great precedent," Stephens said, "because now we can say this is something you can

do everywhere." Getting this property tax relief is a way to protect generational wealth for Black families, he said.

"It's a tragedy that it's being sucked out of Black neighborhoods unjustly, and we know that's just the tip of the iceberg."

While Durham, Orange, Mecklenburg, Buncombe and Chatham counties all offer property tax relief programs as anti-displacement measures, Wake County doesn't. Stephens said this is why strengthening partnerships with the local tax office is crucial.

Sarah Stohler of Raleigh Village East, an aging-in-place group, is one of the volunteers of the Working Group. "One of the things we've discovered is that maintaining your home is one of the greatest challenges to staying in your home as you retire," Stohler said.

There are a few relief programs available for homeowners above the age

of 65 or completely disabled.

The Homestead Exemption can cut property taxes in half for those making less than \$38,800 annually. The Circuit Breaker Exemption is also available to homeowners over the age of 65 or completely disabled, requiring only a percentage of their income to be paid in property taxes. It defers property tax payment for three years and has an income limit of \$58,200. The Disabled Veterans Exemption applies to all disabled veterans and has no income limit.

"The biggest problem is most people don't know about these programs, so we've got to be evangelical," Stohler said.

Owners looking to file appeals in Wake County must do so by June 1. Those seeking assistance can contact wcpertytaxjustice@gmail.com for more information.

(Read the entire article on our website.)



Advocates say insurance is cause of housing crisis

Continued from page 1A

ting an insurance company over a property claim. They then tried to relocate to Western North Carolina. "We learned the hard way that nowhere is safe from climate risks now," Dunn said.

Hurricane Helene affected historic damages on the region, which is experiencing a wave of policy denials and non-renewals. Dunn said his homeowner's insurance premium has tripled since Helene despite not personally experiencing any property damage.

After evaluating the value of his home listed on Zillow and Redfin, Dunn said he is now paying three times more than six months ago.

"Until Helene, they were valuing our house at about 20% over market, which is...that's fine, but it went up to 150% over market after Helene," He said. "It's a problem everywhere."

O'Neill said UAF analyzed profits for North Carolina insurers over the last decade and found over \$100 billion in profits across the state. "So while your premiums are going up, their bottom line continues to go up as well," he said.

Reps. Edwards and Murphy voted to override a governor's veto on the

2018 Consent To Rate Act, which made it legal for insurance companies to raise premiums above the state-mandated maximum without express consent from policyholders, impacting approximately 55% of N.C.'s homeowners.

Murdock said her mother was denied coverage on a home she has occupied since the 1980s. Murdock recently introduced Senate Bill 979 seeking transparency in insurance rates from companies.

UFA's report also cites that both Edwards and Murphy voted for a budget that cut \$300 million from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and Edwards has introduced legislation that would use federal funding for construction projects with outdated building codes.

While N.C. insurers proposed a 42.2% rate in-

crease, policyholders can expect a base rate 7.5% increase in June in a statewide adjustment approved by Commissioner of Insurance Mike Causey.

Clayton said state Republicans have "a long track record of siding with insurance and fossil fuel companies."

Both representatives have accepted over \$90,000 in campaign donations from those industries.

"North Carolina families are paying more to insure their homes or losing coverage entirely, while we've got Republicans in Congress that refuse to protect innocent families, and instead protect fossil fuel profits and block the emergency preparedness investments that could make the difference everywhere," she said.

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NCDOT HOSTING A PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE A PROPOSAL TO REPLACE THE BRIDGE ON VANDORA SPRINGS ROAD OVER U.S. 70 IN WAKE COUNTY

STIP Project No. B-5681

GARNER - The N.C. Department of Transportation is hosting a public meeting to discuss the proposal to replace the bridge on Vandora Springs Road over U.S. 70 in the Town of Garner. The purpose of this meeting is to provide interested citizens with information on the project and gather public input on the proposed design.

Project details and maps can be found on NCDOT's project input website at publicinput.com/vandoraspringsrd-us70. The information will be available at the meeting allowing for one-on-one discussions with NCDOT staff, but there will be no formal presentation.

The meeting will be held from **5 p.m. to 7 p.m. on June 9 at Garner Town Hall, 900 7th Avenue, in Garner.**

People may also submit comments by phone at **984-205-6615** project code **6509**, email vandoraspringsrd-us70@publicinput.com, or mail at the address shown below by **July 1, 2026.**

By Mail: **Martha Hodge, AICP, PMP**
NCDOT Project Management Unit –
Project Manager
1582 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1582

NCDOT will provide auxiliary aids and services under the Americans with Disabilities Act for disabled people who wish to participate in this meeting. Anyone requiring special services should contact Tony Gallagher, Environmental Analysis Unit, at 1598 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-1598, 919-707-6069 or magallagher@ncdot.gov as early as possible so arrangements can be made.

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

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

CALL NOW (855) 932-7733

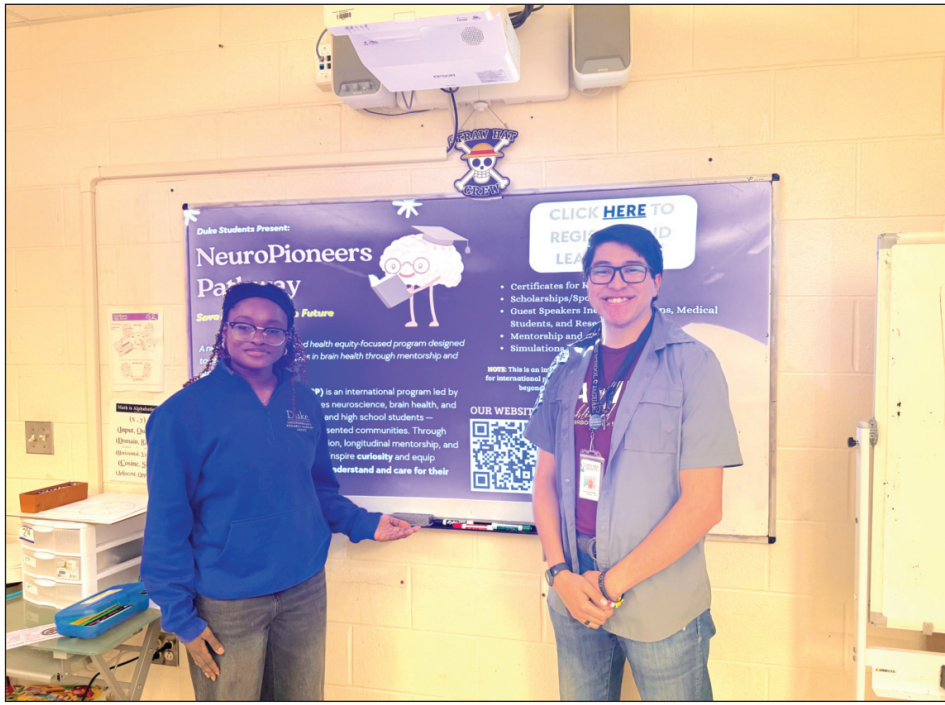
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Victoria Ayodele, founder of NeuroPioneers Pathway, with Carrboro High School teacher Angel Santos.

Duke University student provides pathway to understanding the brain

By Freda Freeman
CORRESPONDENT

When Victoria Ayodele was a young girl growing up in Atlanta, she wanted to participate in neuroscience and healthcare summer programs, but her family couldn't afford them. Now, through her program, NeuroPioneers Pathway, Ayodele, a Duke University pre-med student studying neuroscience and nutrition, is helping others have opportunities she didn't.

"I wanted to be a part of these neuroscience or healthcare summer programs, but there was often a price tag where these programs were \$6,000 to \$7,000, and, at the time, my family just did not have the means to afford such programs. So, I was introduced late to these topics when I was very interested and could have decided early on that I wanted to pursue neuroscience and healthcare before college," Ayodele said.

Founded in 2023, NeuroPioneers Pathway is an international neuroscience education and mentorship program that introduces middle and high school students in grades seven through 12 to brain health and related careers. The student-led, university-funded program connects Duke undergraduate medical students with students to make neuroscience

more accessible and relevant to their everyday lives and provide support as they develop their identities and decide which career they'd like to go into.

NeuroPioneers Pathway holds a free virtual summer camp that reaches students throughout the United States, including Durham and Atlanta, and as far as Nigeria. In addition to being online, this year's camp will also include a hybrid structure in which students who are part of Durham YouthWorks will attend classes at Stanford L. Warren Public Library. Durham YouthWorks, the city of Durham's flagship summer youth employment initiative, serves over 600 participants, ages 14 to 21, annually by providing virtual workforce readiness training and paid summer work placements throughout the city.

At the June 8 camp, students will be offered incentives for participation and attendance, such as creating projects to compete for scholarships, as well as receive certificates, sponsorship, and awards to attend other summer neuroscience camps or healthcare programs. They will also receive one-on-one mentorship with Duke undergraduates and college application assistance. To apply for the summer program, visit neuropioneers.org

Ayodele said the goal is to reach first-generation college students, minority students, and low-income students who have not been exposed to STEM programs and neuroscience early on to help them build their careers and learn how to take care of their health.

"I think it's very important to create equity and accessibility when it comes to building careers in neuroscience and health care. ...If we're serving more patients who are of minority backgrounds, it will help outcomes if the physicians who are being introduced to these pathways can relate to these patients," she said.

Durham YouthWorks Supervisor Jasmine Jones said NeuroPioneers Pathway offers YouthWorks participants an opportunity to explore fields they may not otherwise encounter at their age.

"We support this partnership because it aligns directly with our mission to connect young people with meaningful, career-building experiences that broaden their sense of what's possible. For many of our participants, it's their first time engaging with a university-led program in an academic capacity, and that kind of exposure has a lasting impact on how they see themselves and their futures," she said.

Black teens face a hidden crisis of dating violence

By Jennifer Porter Gore
THE AFRO

Mental health counselor Regine Roy had "a situation" on her hands. More accurately, the 17-year-old female member of her therapy group did and didn't know it.

The teenager, participating in Roy's program for young people, was telling Roy that she and her boyfriend, a 27-year-old man with several children, had an argument. At one point, the teen said, her boyfriend told her she was "at the bottom of his totem pole."

But Roy saw a giant red flag. "I asked her, 'Do you know what a totem pole is?'" Roy asked. "And she said she guessed it meant she was at the very bottom of the people in his life. And I asked, 'What's having you stay there?' 'Are you OK with that?'"

The teenager admitted her partner had an emotional and physical hold on her — circumstances that Roy considers the definition of intimate partner violence.

Advocates and health professionals say stories like the 17-year-old's underscore a troubling reality: Black youth are navigating abusive and



manipulative relationships long before adulthood. What begins as controlling behavior on phones and social media, or an occasional shove can escalate into emotional, physical or sexual violence that many young people don't immediately recognize as abuse. Helping them realize what's happening and getting them out of danger takes patient guidance and a keen awareness of what makes a young person vulnerable.

But health professionals working with youth say traditional methods intended to stop IPV increasingly arrive too late or not at all. Roughly 1 in 12 U.S. high school students who dated in the previous year reported physical dating violence, and 1 in 10 reported sexual violence from an intimate partner, according

to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Data from the CDC's 2021 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, the most recent available, shows Black youth are disproportionately affected, with elevated rates of victimization tied to systemic issues: poverty, neighborhood disinvestment and parental mistreatment, compounded by racial and gender discrimination. Girls are more likely to experience IPV than boys, and students identifying as LGBTQ, or who are unsure of their gender identity, report even higher rates.

Teens who experience dating violence are more likely to report symptoms of anxiety and depression as well as tobacco, drugs or alcohol use and — in the

Please see **BLACK/BA**



Republican NC senators propose cuts to early voting

By Lynn Bonner
NC NEWSLINE

A state Senate bill filed last week would cut North Carolina's early voting period by a week, slicing time from the method voters use most in general elections.

Senate Bill 1084 would move the start of early voting from the third Thursday before election day to the second Thursday for all elections, cutting early voting from 17 days to 10 days.

Two of the three bill sponsors, Sen. Warren Daniel, R-Burke, and Sen. Brad Overcash, R-Gaston, are Senate Elections Committee chairmen. Daniel, Overcash, and the other primary sponsor Sen. Mark Hollo, R-Catawba, did not respond to an email seeking comment.

Both House Speaker Destin Hall, R-Caldwell, and Senate leader Phil Berger, R-Rockingham, have said this year that they think the early voting period is too long. Berger had focused on early voting in primaries.

Asked this week about his thoughts on the bill, Berger said, "We'll have to see." He said he's heard

complaints about the length of the early voting period, particularly from people who work the elections.

Republicans have complained for years that early voting lasts too long, even though voters have shown they will use the flexibility it offers to cast their ballots. In general elections going back to at least 2020, more people voted early in-person than on election day, according to state Board of Elections data.

In the 2024 general election, 4.2 million people voted early, compared to about 1.2 million who voted on election day. A Catawba-YouGov survey from August 2024 found strong bipartisan support for 17 days of early voting when asked if that was too short, too long or just about right.

Nearly 70% said 17 days was about right, including 75% of Democrats, 64% of Republicans and about 68% of independent voters, according to the poll.

"As policymakers consider this fall's early voting period and potentially cutting a week from the early voting period, consideration should be given to the past history and public's

opinion on early voting," Catawba College political scientist Michael Bitzer wrote on the Center for N.C. Politics Substack. "Reducing the number of early voting days would likely not reduce voters' interest in voting early; it would likely compress that demand into fewer days."

The last time the Republican-led legislature limited early voting to 10 days was in 2013. The reduction was part of a sweeping elections bill that included a voter ID requirement, the elimination of same-day registration and limits on voting with provisional ballots.

The 4th Circuit Court of Appeals struck down the law in 2016, finding that it targeted "African Americans with almost surgical precision."

The court found that legislators asked for data on the use of voting practices by race, then "enacted legislation that restricted voting and registration in five different ways, all of which disproportionately affected African Americans."

The U.S. Supreme Court ultimately declined to hear state lawmakers' appeal.

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LEGAL NOTICES



LEGAL NOTICE Paving & Repairs for Durham County Facilities

IFB 26-015R

Sealed bids, so marked, will be received by the County of Durham Purchasing Division until **2:00 P.M. Eastern Time, on June 25, 2026**, in the Conference Room, Durham County Administrative Complex, 201 East Main Street, 7th Floor, Durham, North Carolina, at which time they will be received. The work contemplated will include patching, sealing, striping, and crack filling at (1) Durham County EMS 6 Building, 226 Milton Rd, Durham, NC 27712, followed by remaining facilities at (2) Durham Center Access, 309 Crutchfield Street, Durham, NC 27704, (3) EMS #1, 402 Stadium Drive, Durham, NC 27704, (4) Durham County Cooperative Extension Building, 721 Foster Street, Durham, NC 27701, (5) Foster Street Parking Lot, 315 Holland Street, Durham, NC 27701, (6) Durham County Main Library, 300 North Roxboro Street, Durham, NC 27701, (7) The Durham County Community Shelter, 412 Liberty Street, Durham, NC 27701, (8) Durham County General Services Building, 310 South Dillard, Durham, NC 27701, (9) Durham County Main Fueling Station, 310 South Dillard, Durham, NC 27701, and (10) Justice Services Center, 326 East Main Street, Durham, NC 27701.

Site Visits will be held starting at 10:00 A.M. Eastern Time on June 9, 2026. Interested parties will gather in the parking lot at Durham County EMS 6 Building, 226 Milton Rd, Durham, NC 27712.

Instructions for submitting bids, specifications, and a complete description of the work involved and the apparatus, supplies, materials, equipment for which bids are invited can be examined at the office of the project manager, Lee Duncan. Arrangements for examining these documents must be made with Mr. Duncan. Mr. Duncan can be reached by email at leeduncan@dconc.gov.

Questions concerning administrative matters should be directed to Godfrey Herndon Procurement Specialist at (919) 560-0741 or via email at purchasinggroup@dconc.gov.

Contractors who bid must be licensed to do work in the State of North Carolina under the Act to Regulate the Practice of General Contracting. The Contractor's North Carolina License number shall be designated on the outside of the envelope containing the bid.

Bids will be evaluated and the Contract will be awarded in accordance with statutory public contract requirements as supplemented.



LEGAL NOTICE Request for Letters of Interest and Statements of Qualifications for Security Engineering Integration Services for Durham County

RFQ No. 26-041

The County of Durham requests Letters of Interest and Statements of Qualifications for Security Engineering Integration Services for Durham County to be received on **June 23, 2026 at 2:00 P.M. Eastern Time**, in the Durham County Purchasing Division of Finance, 201 East Main Street, 7th Floor, Room 703, Durham, North Carolina 27701, in accordance with applicable provisions of North Carolina General Statutes and Durham County Ordinances and policies. **No submissions will be accepted after the official time and date.**

An electronic copy of this Request for Proposal (RFQ) can be obtained from Durham County's eBid System located under Bid Opportunities: <https://www.bidnetdirect.com/north-carolina/dconc>

Proposers can download a copy of the solicitation and all addenda without registering in the system. However, in order to **automatically** receive email notifications of solicitations and addenda issued by the Purchasing Division, Proposers **MUST** register in the eBid system.

Proposals are encouraged and welcome from historically underutilized businesses (HUBs).

The County reserves the right to accept or reject, in whole or in part, such proposals as appears in its judgment to be in the best interest of the County.

**The Triangle Tribune
Every month is
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MISCELLANEOUS



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HOME & GARDEN

Boost Curb Appeal and Grass Health With Lawn Striping

(StatePoint) Lawn striping isn't just a terrific way to elevate curb appeal, it's key to a healthier lawn.

"With lawn striping, you can add some dimension and interest to your lawn and give it a 'finished' professional-quality look. At the same time, lawn striping benefits the overall health of your grass," says Lenny Mangnall, marketing manager at Exmark.

Not sure how to mow stripes? The secret is alternating patterns. Stripe east to west one week, cut diagonally the next. Because you're reverse cutting and changing the pattern, you're not stressing the grass as much as a typical cut. This will reduce soil compaction, ruts, and scalping, and stop grass from lying down, inviting in light, air, nutrients and water, and preventing the buildup of unhealthy thatch.

While a striping kit will push the grass over farther, you don't actually need one to achieve the look. Any mower can be used for striping, although zero turn and riding mowers will make complicated patterns, like diamonds, easier. One simple trick for the best results is to mow your lawn about half an inch higher than usual, as longer blades will bend more.

To tailor the look of your striped lawn, first, decide which direction you want your stripes to run. Stripes that are perpendicular to the street will be more noticeable than ones that are horizontal. Start on an edge of the lawn and mow a straight line; to keep your pass straight, look about 10 feet in front of the mower, not at the ground right in front of you. At the end of your row, be sure to lift the mower deck as you turn. Mow in a straight line next to the first stripe. You might also consider mowing in a checkerboard or diamond pattern. No matter what pattern you choose, remember that it's supposed to be fun, so enjoy yourself!

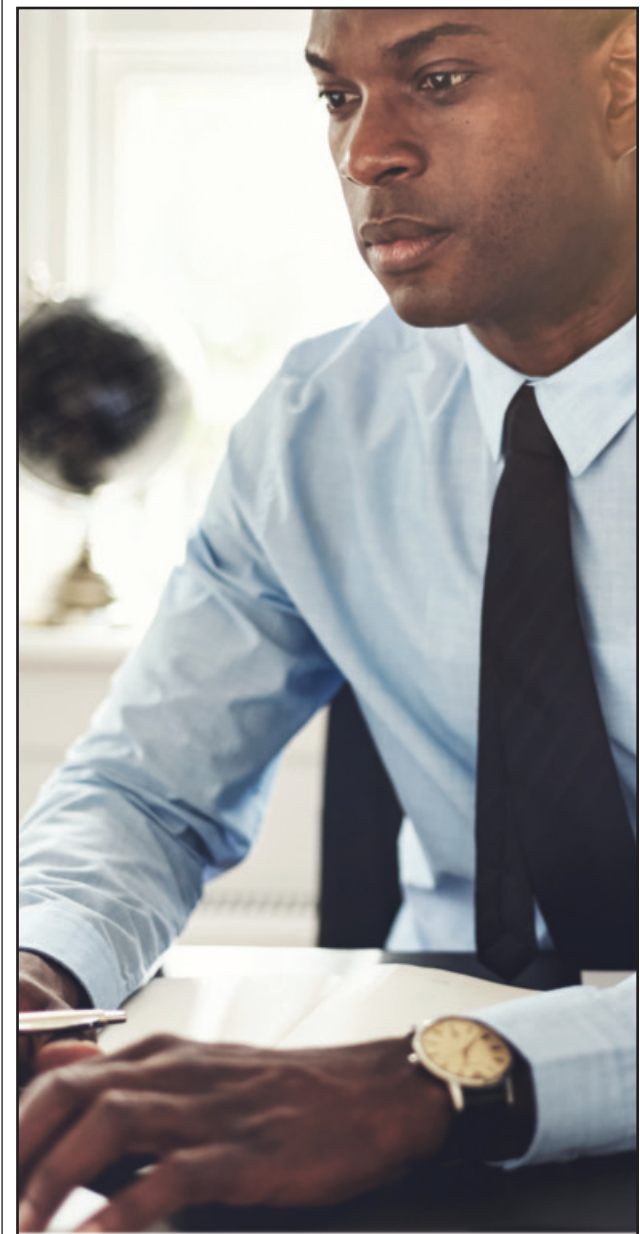
It's always best to start with healthy, lush grass. Find lawn care tips and additional insights on lawn striping at Backyard Life, a unique multimedia destination with a focus on helping homeowners improve their outdoor living spaces. The knowledgeable tips and DIY projects found on Backyard Life, along with Exmark Original Series videos, make it easy to make meaningful improvements to your outdoor living experience.

For thicker growth and a healthier lawn, get outside, start mowing and "earn your stripes."



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Church leadership urged to review outdated legal agreements

By Kisha A. Brown
THE AFRO

Most churches are overexposed. Even the ones with clean books and a strong trustee board.

I recently sat with a pastor and his senior deacon: good people, thoughtful, trying to do right by everyone. The pastor had inherited an agreement: provide retirement payments to the former pastor. And to his credit, he honored it. For 10 years.

Then we met. In a Legal Clarity Session, we created space to step back, not just to react but to assess. To ask: What are you actually responsible for here? What led you to this moment?

What surfaced was uncomfortable but necessary. The original agreement may not have been legally enforceable at all. It was structurally flawed from the start. The old pastor spent the funds before he left, and the agreement

didn't include any safeguards. No financial protections for the church. No proper legal grounding.

Yet, for a decade, the church paid because it thought it had to. It wasn't easy because this old debt cost investing in the church's future. When you look back and realize you have \$180,000 less in your accounts -unnecessarily - that not only hurts pride, but it's the definition of being overexposed.

We think about financial exposure coming from loans and debt, but legal exposure doesn't show up on a balance sheet. It lives in old agreements no one revisits, handshakes that became obligations, and leadership roles that no longer serve current day needs.

I'm not criticizing the church. I grew up in church, where everything important is rooted in trust, history and service. That history, though, can make asking questions

often feel like disruption or drama instead of stewardship. (That's a whole other topic.)

However, if you are in leadership at your church right now, consider this:

What financial commitments exist without clear legal grounding? What agreements are you operating under that no one has reviewed in years?

What risks are lingering simply because "this is how it's always been done?"

My hat goes off to the pastor and his leadership team who listened to their inner voice saying they needed to look into that old agreement. What good is faith without works?

Legal clarity is not about being adversarial or making the church a courtroom. It's about being aligned and leaning into expertise designed to support and sustain the church. That support is not a luxury, it is needed now more than ever.

Questions to ask at your Medicare annual wellness visit

By Marisa Rogers, M.D.
OAK STREET HEALTH

NAPSI - Your Medicare annual wellness visit is an opportunity for you and your primary care provider to check in on your health and create a personalized plan for moving forward. A trusted relationship with your provider helps ensure you have support and guidance whenever health needs arise. To get the most out of your visit, here are five questions you can ask to help you maintain or improve your health:

Do any changes need to be made to my medications?

Be sure to review your current medications and supplements during your visit, especially if you're seeing a new provider. It's important to know whether you're taking the appropriate medications and if any refills will be needed. If you're having issues with your current medication(s), let your provider know. If you are prescribed a new medicine, ask if there are any side effects or interactions with your current medication(s). Make sure you're comfortable knowing how often and for how long you should take a particular medication.

What health screenings or tests do you recommend for me?

Depending on your age and other risk factors, your provider may recommend screening tests for conditions like high blood pressure, diabetes, osteoporosis and colorectal cancer. If you're female, your provider may recommend screenings for breast and/or cervical

cancer. For males, screening for prostate cancer may be recommended. Be sure to disclose if you have any personal or family history of certain cancers or diseases, as this may increase your risk.

What vaccinations do I need this year?

As people get older, their immune system gets weaker, making it harder for their body to fight off infections. This makes older adults more susceptible to illnesses such as the flu, pneumonia, respiratory syncytial virus and shingles. Complications from these conditions can lead to long-term illness, hospitalization and even death. Based on your lifestyle and other risk factors, your provider may recommend specific vaccines that could reduce your risk.

What can I do to stay independent as I age?

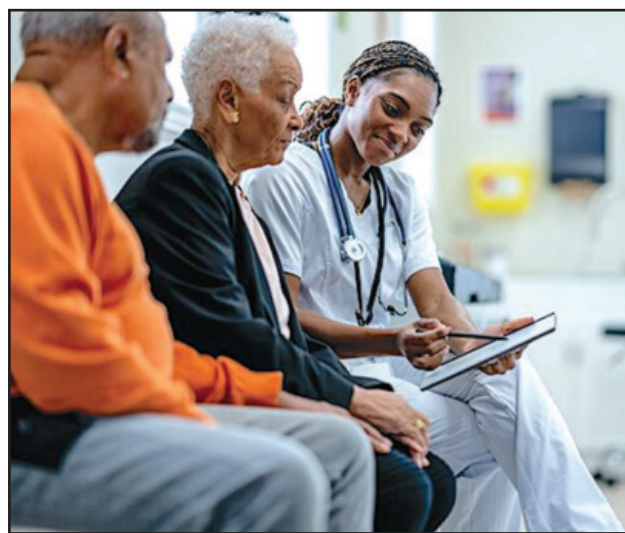
Aside from treating your health issues, your provider wants to make sure you have the information you need to improve your health and prevent other

problems from occurring. Ask about any changes you should make in your diet, which physical activities you can do and what habits you should start or stop. As you age, maintaining mobility is essential for preserving independence and preventing injury. Mental health also plays an important role in influencing your cognitive function and quality of life. Strong social connections help reduce isolation and are linked to longer, healthier lives.

Will I need a follow-up exam sooner than one year?

Ask your provider's opinion on the best follow-up schedule for you. Based on your current health or risk factors, your provider may want to see you sooner or more frequently than once a year.

Also, be sure to ask what you should do in the event of having a sudden illness or symptoms. Your provider may be able to see you for urgent visits, allowing you to avoid the emergency room for minor illnesses.



AROUND THE TRIANGLE

RALEIGH OLYMPICS

Volunteer registration is now open for the 2026 Special Olympics NC Summer Games May 29-31. Contact: Susan Doggett at sdoggett@sonc.net.

DURHAM ELECTRICITY

A community meeting on Duke Energy's proposed rate hike is June 2, 6:30 p.m., 458 S. Driver St. RSVP: mobilize.us/advancecarolina.

families and individuals in transition. Tickets: www.fmfnc.org/tickets.

ANNIVERSARY

P.R.O.U.D. celebrates its 30th anniversary June 5, 6:30 p.m., ReCity Network, 112 Broadway St.

HOUSING

A community conversation about Raleigh's affordable housing crisis is June 4, 7 p.m., Tarboro Road Community Center, 121 N. Tarboro St.

OPIOIDS

Where should opioid settlement funds go? Join the conversation June 4, 5-6:30 p.m., BOCC Chambers, 200 E. Main St., second floor. Register: bit.ly/48cxiVM.

GROUNDBREAKING

Alma Street Commons Groundbreaking Ceremony is June 5, 11 a.m., 1104 Alma St. RSVP: www.eventbrite.com.

FESTIVAL

Raleigh International Food Festival is June 6, 11 a.m. to 9 p.m., Raleigh City Plaza, 421 Fayetteville St.

FUNDRAISER

Families Moving Forward and Chefs for Change are hosting "Raisin' the Roof" spring mixer to support

HUNGER

Durham Hunger Day is June 7, 3-6 p.m., Durham Central Park, 501 Foster St.

RECIPE OF THE WEEK

How busy families can balance time, taste and nutrition in easy fashion

FEATURE IMPACT

In those precious few minutes between waking up and heading out the door or arriving home from school pickup, the pantry is a common destination. Seeking a grab-and-go lunch, sending your student off with a bite of protein or searching for an afternoon snack can leave you scanning the shelves for a go-to solution.

In response to demand for powerhouse snacks that do it all while tasting amazing, Bumble Bee Snackers easy-open, single-serve cans are shaking up

snack time with a variety of bold flavors that are perfect for any time, place, budget or craving.

To find more snacking solutions that are packed with flavor while saving time and money, visit BumbleBee.com.

Bang Bang Tuna Sliders

Servings: 2

8 ounces tri-color shredded cabbage (coleslaw mix)
2 tablespoons fresh lime juice (1 lime)
2 tablespoons olive oil
½-teaspoon sea salt
¼-cup mayo

2 tablespoons sweet Thai chili sauce
1 can Bumble Bee Snackers Thai Chili Tuna, included whole chili minced and reserved
4 slider buns

In small bowl, mix cabbage, lime juice, oil and salt.

In another small bowl, mix mayo, chili sauce and minced chili from tuna can.

On bottom of each bun, evenly divide layer of coleslaw followed by tuna. Drizzle sauce over top, to taste. Cap with top bun and serve.

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Women's flag FB gaining traction in NCAA

By Pat Graham
ASSOCIATED PRESS

Women's flag football is on track to gaining NCAA championship status. If all goes according to plan, a title game may even take place right before the sport makes its Olympic debut at the 2028 LA Games.

The NCAA Committee on Access, Opportunity and Impact recently voted to recommend that Divisions I, II and III add a national collegiate flag football championship as soon as the spring of 2028.

Although not official yet, it's a giant step toward NCAA championship inclusion for women's flag football. In order to be recommended, 40 schools need to sponsor it at the varsity level. More than 100 schools have been planning to compete during the next academic year, according to the NCAA.

"Today is a landmark day for collegiate athletics, as women's flag football officially becomes an NCAA championship sport," said Marion Terenzio, chair of the Committee on Access, Opportunity and Impact Emerging Sport Subcommittee and president at SUNY Cobleskill.

"This step recognizes a sport whose growth, competitiveness and national momentum have been impossible to ignore. Elevating flag football to championship status affirms that progress and opens new doors for women to compete at the highest level."

The next steps for adding an NCAA flag football title game include each division reviewing the recommendation and sponsoring a proposal by July 1. Should that occur, the divisions will vote in January 2027, with all three divisions required to approve for a championship to be held. There would also be the formation of a committee to oversee NCAA women's flag football.

Women's flag football is looking to join a list of sports that have gained NCAA championship status through the Emerging Sports for Women program. That includes rowing (1996), ice hockey (2000), water polo (2000), bowling (2003), beach volleyball (2015), wrestling (2025), acrobatics and tumbling (2026) and stunt (2026).

"The momentum behind the game reflects the passion of athletes, coaches, administrators and partners across the country who have embraced flag football and invested in creating more opportunities for female athletes," said Izell Reese, founder and CEO of RCX Sports, the official operator of NFL FLAG. "We're excited to continue working alongside the NCAA, NFL and school leaders to help accelerate that growth and build sustainable pathways for the next generation."

Jacqie McWilliams Parker, chair of the Committee on Access, Opportunity, added: "Girls want to play. Whenever you give access and opportunity to an easier way to play, the better the success and numbers in participation you see."

The International Olympic Committee voted in 2023 to include flag football, along with cricket, baseball-softball, lacrosse and squash, on the Olympic program for Los Angeles.

The participation in flag football on the female side is skyrocketing. More than 20 states have now sanctioned it as a girls' high school varsity sport and NFL clubs voted in December 2025 to support the launch of a professional flag football league.

It's filtering down to all ages, too. The number of girls ages 6 to 12 playing flag football has increased by 283% from 2015 to 2024, according to USA Football research.

"This is great news for flag football," USA Football CEO Scott Hallenbeck said.

The Triangle Tribune Sports

May 31 - June 6, 2026 | 6A

Raleigh Firebirds swim team partners with Knightdale



COURTESY

The Raleigh Firebirds swim team has partnered with the city of Knightdale to provide swim lessons for ages 6 to 18 through the Firebirds' Fin Camp. Learning how to swim is one of the most important life skills a child can have. Fin Camp is an introductory swim program created specifically for:

- * Children who are new to the water
- * Swimmers looking to gain more confidence in the water
- * Families who want to learn the basics

There will be separate sessions throughout the summer at Knightdale Community Pool, 202 Milburnie Road. To learn more, visit www.championscoaching.org or call Zion Hall a 919-948-0092.

COLLEGE CORNER

N.C. A&T hurdlers best in the country

WOMEN

N.C. Central

Senior Tia Lucas competes in the high jump this week in the NCAA East Regional at the University of Kentucky. The entire regional will be streamed on ESPN+.

The athletic department was awarded \$10,000 at the inaugural MEAC Foundation Sneaker Ball for outstanding Academic Progress Rate achievement.

NCCU set a school-record 992 overall single-year APR score in the Division I era for the 2024-25 academic year. Nine programs earned perfect 1,000 single-year scores.

Lincoln (Pa.)

The Lions recruited Bluefield State women's basketball coach Paul Davis to head their program, which hasn't had a winning season since 2022-23.

Davis led Big Blue to a 15-12 overall, 8-8 conference record

last season. He has his work cut out for him, but coaches love a challenge.

MEN

N.C. Central

Coach Trei Oliver is the keynote speaker for the Durham Sports Club's annual scholar-athlete luncheon on June 3.

Oliver is quite a hit with club members. This will be his fourth appearance if our math is correct. The luncheon honors the top scholar-athletes in Durham Public Schools. For tickets, visit durhamsportsclub.org.

In basketball, coach LeVelle Moton keeps filling his roster. A second Maryland Eastern Shore transfer is coming to Egleland: forward Maurice Vassel.

N.C. A&T

The Aggies will be well represented this week at the NCAA East Regionals. Five women and 17 men are headed to Kentucky,



COURTESY

N.C. A&T's 110-meter hurdles team is No. 1 in the nation.

including the men's 110-meter hurdles team that is ranked No. 1 by the USTFCCA. CC ain't spelling out all those alphabets.

The top-ranked team is junior Isaiah Taylor, who broke the CAA outdoor championship record; senior Jason Holmes; Desmond Smith; and Brandon

Smith. The 's average time is 13.61 seconds. Now, that's fast. CC is looking forward to watching them compete this weekend.

Alabama State

The SWAC Tournament cham-

Please see NCAT/7A

Hampton announces Hall of Fame class

HAMPTON SPORTS INFORMATION

HAMPTON, Va. - Hampton will induct eight individuals and one team into its 2026 Athletics Hall of Fame. The ceremony is Aug. 28, and the inductees also will be honored during halftime of the Pirates vs. Virginia-Lynchburg football game.

* **Gareth Bonds, football (1989-92):** Bonds is Hampton's all-time leading tackler with 389 total stops. His 202 career solo tackles are tops in the Hampton record book.

* **Ce'Aira Brown, women's track & field (2013-17):** Brown was a five-time All-American at Hampton, setting five Hampton indoor track & field records and three school records in outdoor track & field. A seven-time MEAC event champion, Brown holds the second-fastest times in conference history in the indoor 800 meters and mile run, and the 2:02.82 she ran outdoors in 2016 still stands as the MEAC's fastest-ever time in that event.

As part of the MEAC's 50th anniversary celebration, Brown was named to the all-time teams for women's cross country, indoor track & field and outdoor track & field.

* **Art Carrington, men's tennis (1965-69):** Carrington was dominant on the hardcourt. He won the CIAA singles title 1967-69. After leaving Hampton, he was the American Tennis Association singles runner-up in 1972 and ATA singles champion a year later. He was only the second African American male to play in the U.S. Open (1973) following Arthur Ashe. He was inducted onto the Black Tennis Hall of Fame, USTA Eastern Hall of Fame and the Elizabeth (N.J.) Hall of Fame.

* **James Carter, men's track & field (1999-03):** Carter was a two-time All-American in the 400 hurdles. Carter holds the school indoor record in the triple jump and MEAC records for most points scored in the con-



ference championship meet. The celebrated hurdler finished fourth at the 2004 and 2008 Olympic finals, one of the highlights of his career.

* **LaShondra Dixon-Gordon, women's basketball (1999-03):** Dixon-Gordon is the program's third all-time leading scorer with 1,967 career points under coach Patricia Cage-Bibbs. The stand-out 5-foot-5 guard helped lead Hampton to the 2000 and 2003

NCAA Tournaments and MEAC titles. She was inducted into the 2016 MEAC Hall of Fame. She is Hampton's 10th all-time leading scorer and sixth in the school record book in assists and fifth in steals.

* **Dr. Herman Neilson, director of athletics, coach, health & physical education chair (1930-73):** Neilson led the Pi-

Please see 2026/7A



Tia Lucas is the lone representative for North Carolina Central.

N.C. A&T hurdles ranked No. 1 in the country

Continued from page 6A

pion earned an automatic bid to the NCAA Baseball Regional, its first since 2022. The Hornets take on Alabama this weekend in Tuscaloosa on ESPN+.

Norfolk State

Like father. Like son. Men's basketball coach Robert Jones will be coaching his son, Justin Jones, after Justin committed to the Spartans.

Tennessee State

The Tigers get a separate recruiting notice because this is what happens when you break a 32-year NCAA Tournament drought under a Duke alumnus.

* Kentucky/Ohio State/Memphis transfer Aaron Bradshaw. (CC understands the pressure on coaches to win now, but doesn't a four-school transfer athlete raise red flags?)

* Portugal pro basketball player Daniel Vieira-Tucka

* Iona F Deondrea Lindsey

* Texas high school state champion Garrett Shelton

* Abilene Christian G Christian Alston

Goodbye. Hello. (Basketball)

* Jacksonville State F Bencao Vungo to Texas Southern

* Coker F Aaron "Boogie" Hall II, Southern

* UMBC G Kenya Ramsey,



Robert Jones with son, Justin.



NCCU gets rewarded for APR progress.

Morgan State

* New Haven C Merit Innocent, Morgan State

* California State C Yves Cox, N.C. A&T

* Charlotte G Karen Nimo, Coppin State

* Alabama State F Samiah

Puckett, S.C. State

* Xavier F/C Jamal Gibson, Stillman

2026 Hampton University Athletics Hall of Fame class announced

Continued from page 6A rates to 33 CIAA championships. He single-handedly built the school's tennis program into a conference power. During his tenure on campus, he coached Hampton's football, basketball, boxing, wrestling and track & field teams, winning conference championships in boxing, wrestling, track & field and tennis. He passed away in 1978.

* **Lucien Reeberg, football (1959-62):** Reeberg played on both the offensive and defensive lines. He helped anchor the team's defensive front and his strength, power and versatility drew the attention of pro scouts. His dominating play and intel-

lect led the Detroit Lions to draft Reeberg in the 19th round of the 1963 NFL Draft. Reeberg weighed 317-pounds when he reported to training camp. Coach George Wilson mandated that Reeberg reduce his weight to 250 pounds. He entered Detroit Osteopathic Hospital for a routine examination and was diagnosed with uremic poisoning and underlying kidney issues. On Jan. 31, 1964, just nine days after his admission, Reeberg suffered cardiac arrest and died at the age of 21.

* **Dr. Ollie Bowman, Lifetime Achievement:** Bowman wore a number of hats in the 30 years he worked at Hampton Institute. He served as dean of admis-

sions, assistant dean of the Graduate College, a tenured professor of biology, faculty athletic chairman, vice president of the Hampton Pirates Boosters Club and chairman of the Federal Credit Union credit committee. He also was president of the CIAA and worked on numerous NCAA committees dealing with student-athlete welfare.

* **1984-85 women's basketball team, Team of Distinction:** The team finished with a 30-4 record under coach James Sweat, winning both the CIAA regular season and tournament championships and advancing to the third round of the NCAA Division II Tournament.

Firebirds win division



The Raleigh Firebirds captured their second straight Southeastern Division championship with a thrilling 119-118 win over the Fayetteville Liberty at Crown Arena. Julian Gamble sealed the title with a buzzer-beating putback-and-one, completing a dramatic comeback that erased a 22-point third-quarter deficit.

The win also earns the Firebirds a first-round bye in the 2026 TBL playoffs. The Liberty will head to Kissimmee, Florida, for a play-in matchup against the Kissimmee Lamb. Raleigh will play the winner at Chavis Community Center on Martin Luther King Boulevard. For tickets and game-day information, follow the Firebirds on Instagram @raleighfirebirds.

The Luxury Letdown

FAMILY FEATURES

In a world where everyone is juggling busy schedules and endless choices, it's only natural to want more from your vehicle. Not just more features, but more comfort, more quality and more enjoyment every time you get behind the wheel.

According to recent survey data from Mazda, 74% of car buyers said special features are "very" or "extremely important," but 30% admitted they don't have any features worth showing off to friends or family. This is the "luxury letdown;" the excitement of new features fades, leaving you wanting something more meaningful from your car.

People are looking for more than just bells and whistles. They want a car that feels good to drive, that is thoughtfully designed and that brings more joy and satisfaction to everyday life. It's not about having the most options or the flashiest tech. It's about all that and quality, comfort and a sense of connection that lasts long after the new car smell fades.

Beyond the Surface

Forget what you think you know about luxury vehicle features. The most memorable cars are typically built with an incredible attention to detail – a craftsmanship you can see and feel. Smart, thoughtful innovation makes driving better, not more complicated. From the shape of the seats to the way the materials feel under your fingertips, every detail is designed to enhance the experience. In fact, 80% of survey respondents said thoughtful design that makes the driving experience better is extremely or very important during the car-buying process. These subtle touches elevate the everyday and make a car feel truly special.

The Joy of Driving, Reimagined

Driving should be more than a means to get from point A to point B. The most rewarding vehicles are often those that make every journey feel intentional and enjoyable. Responsive handling, intuitive controls and a cabin designed for comfort can transform even the most routine commute into a moment of enjoyment. When a car is engineered to connect driver and road, it brings back the pleasure of driving many have forgotten. For some, this feeling gets lost beneath features and digital overload, but it's possible to rediscover harmony between driver and car – making every trip feel intentional and rewarding.

Confidence Comes Standard

Safety is more than a feature – it's a foundation. Advanced safety technologies and strong crash-test ratings provide peace of mind for drivers and their families. With an industry-leading number of Insurance Institute for Highway Safety Top Safety Pick+ awarded vehicles – including the Mazda3 Sedan and Hatchback, CX-30, CX-50, CX-50 Hybrid, CX-70, CX-70 PHEV, CX-90 and CX-90 PHEV – Mazda is committed to keeping safety at the forefront. Features like active safety systems, robust body structures and intelligent alerts help keep everyone protected, allowing drivers to focus on the road ahead.

Why Features Alone Don't Deliver the Full Car-Buying Experience



Value That Surprises

Many shoppers believe a premium experience comes with a premium price tag. However, value is found in vehicles that deliver quality, innovation and comfort without the luxury markup. The materials, craftsmanship and driving dynamics often surprise those who expect to pay more for such an experience. It's not just about what's included, but how it all comes together to create a sense of satisfaction and pride in ownership. The result is a driving experience that feels special, accessible and built to last.

A New Standard for Everyday Driving

In a world that constantly demands so much, there is a kind of more that stands out. Not just in features, but in the feeling, the craftsmanship and the sheer joy of driving. This is the more of Mazda – a more that is intentional, meaningful and designed to enrich every journey.

When you're ready for more from your next

M&F Bank awards \$10k to Durham small business

STAFF REPORTS

DURHAM - M&F Bank, the only minority-owned bank in North Carolina, awarded a \$10,000 grant to a Durham entrepreneur during May's National Small Business Month.

Special Beginnings Midwifery, a healthcare practice focused on midwifery, women's health and newborn care, was gifted the grant on May 21. Founded by Adiah Oyefesobi in 2022, the business focuses on providing compassionate, personalized and holistic care.

"I started Special Beginnings Midwifery because I knew families deserved better maternal care - more time, more access and more continuity. Too many women experience rushed appointments and fragmented care. I wanted to create a place where they feel truly known and supported through pregnancy, birth and postpartum care," Oyefesobi said.

The check presentation brings the Empowering Growth Small Business Grant initiative grand total to \$120,000 in funding awarded to North Carolina entrepreneurs since 2024. In addition to expanding its grant program across the state, M&F will host several events to help small businesses access resources, enrichment and additional funding.

"The Empowering Growth Small Business Grant continues to build on M&F Bank's commitment



FACEBOOK

From left to right: Caroline Taylor, chief lending officer; Eric Powell, retail sales and operations manager; Nicole Humphrey, Raleigh city advisory board member; Adiah Oyefesobi, grant recipient; Durham Mayor Leonardo "Leo" William; Soberina Traywick, Durham city advisory board member; Valerie Quiett, chief legal officer; and John Saunders, chief operating officer.

and mission to service our community," said Caroline Taylor, M&F senior vice president and chief lending officer. "Particularly as small businesses continue to face challenges accessing capital, M&F Bank is proud to invest in entrepreneurs who need it most, helping to fuel broader economic opportunity across North Carolina."

In partnership with the Fiserv Back2Business Program, grant recipients also benefit from a variety of business tools, trainings and networking opportunities. Recipients receive a dedicated M&F business banker, complimentary

merchant processing equipment through Clover, access to mentorship and resources offered by Operation Hope, and a complimentary Chamber of Commerce membership.

M&F will award additional grants in Winston-Salem, Greensboro and Charlotte over the next year. To be eligible, small businesses must be an M&F Bank customer with gross revenues under \$750,000, have been in business for 10 years or less and no more than 25 employees, among other requirements. Interested businesses may view the complete criteria at mfonline.com/small-business-grant.

Pinnacle Financial's PEER Center opens on Duke St.



BONITA BEST

A ribbon cutting and grand opening ceremony for Pinnacle Financial's PEER Center on Duke Street was celebrated last week. PEER stands for Pinnacle Economic Empowerment Resource. The centers offer a full slate of banking services, along with free financial education, to help individuals in underserved communities.

As part of the celebration, Durham resident Lidia Diaz received a refurbished 2016 Toyota RAV4 through the National Auto Body Council's Recycled Rides Program in partnership with Families Moving Forward, Allstate and Gerber Collision Durham-Chapel Hill. She also received gas cards provided by a local Enterprise Rental Company. See the reveal on our website's video page.

Black teens face a hidden risk of dating violence

Continued from page 3A

most extreme cases - suicidal ideation. They also face an elevated risk of IPV during college and adulthood.

Roy has spent more than a decade working with young women and families inside those statistics. She knows the issue personally: the fourth of five children, Roy grew up with a father who was "incredibly abusive" before abandoning the family when she was 7. "I not only heard the abuse that was happening in my home, but I witnessed it," she said, noting her mother and her older siblings bore the worst of it. "My mother experienced severe abuse that still impacts her to this day."

Roy, who has worked with clients as young as 13, has built a framework she calls MESSY: Meditate, Evaluate, Share, Situate, Yield. The process guides the young person through recognizing the harm, overcoming shame, and evaluating the relationship with a trusted friend or relative. Only at the fourth step does the conversation turn to safely leaving the relationship.

Krista Norris, a marriage and family therapist in suburban Dallas, sees many young people who misread warning signs. "Behaviors that are manipulative, controlling or violating can be misinterpreted as care and love," Norris says. "Even instances of jealousy can be interpreted as protective."

Excessive texting, demands for shared locations and passwords or pressure to spend more time together - all of it can read like devotion. But those behaviors, Norris says, "can quickly turn into isolation" from close friends and family. Norris helps clients distinguish between the two. She watches for adolescents who are "shifting who they naturally are, becoming withdrawn, hyper-vigilant or anxious, and

disconnected from support."

For the men she treats who have perpetrated abuse, Norris tries to determine the source of the anger by looking at the "shadow" or subconscious side of an individual. This might come up when an individual is unable to tolerate moments of vulnerability or emotional regulation. Male perpetrators of IPV may struggle with vulnerability because it's "unsafe, dangerous or weak," which then activates defensive control, manipulation, rage and fear.

"Beneath the violence there could be unprocessed trauma, attachment

wounds, feelings of shame and powerlessness or even internalized models of dominance," she says. But she cautions that the therapy isn't allowed to become "a space where harm is minimized by intellectualizing abusive behavior."

Both Norris and Roy say teens are more likely to avoid abusive relationships if they have a steady model of healthy attachment in their lives. "[Unhealthy] cycles do not have to continue."

If there is at minimum one model of healthy attachment, this can disrupt the intergenerational transmission," Norris says.

FRATERNITY NEWS

Dana King Leadership



COURTESY

Omega Psi Phi Fraternity member Nowell Brooks, principal of Advance Academy in Henderson, received the Dana King Leadership Award for excellence in the Distinguished Leadership in Practice Program.

The award is bestowed to a DLP cohort member who has shown tremendous dedication to the DLP Program. Brooks has been described by his facilitators and peers as a model participant exemplifying all the traits of a distinguished leader.

His dedication and attentiveness to the program and his own professional growth, along with capacity for reflection and self-improvement, are only two of the many qualities that stand out, DLP facilitator said Adria Kempner said.

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