



## SPORTS

**MJBL championships feature North Carolina teams.**



## COMMUNITY FOCUS

**New gallery opens in downtown Raleigh.**

# The Triangle Tribune

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VOLUME 27 NO. 32

Week of August 10 - 16, 2025

\$1.00

## August is Black *Business* Month



## Highway 54 residential community offers road to mobility

By Alex Bass

alex.bass@triangletribune.com

DURHAM - Reinvestment Partners Executive Director Peter Skilern would not take "no" for an answer.

Nothing or no one was going to stop his pursuit to convert an Extended Stay Hotel at 2504 NC Highway 54 into affordable housing. "This is for folks who've got a job and income to pay the rent, but not enough, necessarily, to buy or to live downtown," Skilern said. "This is a place of security and of opportunity."

The Pines Apartment Community has approximately 50 of its 72 total one-bedroom studio units available since leasing began in March. All units include kitchens, with the lone difference being dishwashers in some. Communal spaces include payable washers and dryers.

The facility, built in 1996, was rezoned for multi-family housing per Durham's affordable housing density bonus. These terms require one-half of the facility's total units to be real estate for Reinvest-

ment Partners. "You can lease to residents earning 60% of the area median income.

A unit with 313 square feet costs \$950 per month. A 420 square foot unit is \$1,025 or \$1,050 per month (\$25 more with a dishwasher). A 581 square foot unit is \$1,100. Utilities are included with rent, and television and Internet service are available for \$50 per month.

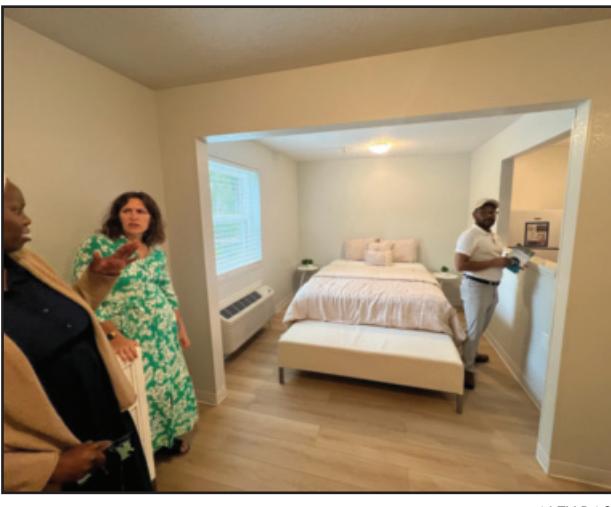
"You can really design it to how you see your vision for your apartment," said Robert Polanco, director of

ment Partners. "You can stylize it how you see fit."

Applicants are required to have an income 2.5 times the monthly rent and a minimum 550 credit score. "If they are a bit lower than 550, then they would need a guarantor or a cosigner," said Mimi Mejia, The Pines' leasing consultant.

Mejia said that while students' financial aid packages can be considered income, "students do need a cosigner or guarantor." Polanco said current

Please see 54/2A



ALEX BASS

Visitors take a tour of The Pines.



ALEX BASS

Left to right: Ashley Kazouh, Dudley Flood and Deanna Townsend-Smith.



ALEX BASS

Kelsey Coleman, with bullhorn, leads a protest outside of City Hall.

## Community responds to withdrawal of Hayti District rezoning proposal – for now

By Alex Bass

alex.bass@triangletribune.com

DURHAM - The Reverend Julian Pridgen, pastor of Saint Mark AME Zion Church, was poised to deliver a Monday message to a packed City Hall chamber about the devil being in the details of the Fayetteville Street Corridor/Heritage Square rezoning proposal.

Pridgen and his fellow rezoning opponents were silenced at the Aug. 4 City Council meeting, during which the proposal vote - delayed from June 16 - never happened. Attorney Jamie Schwedler, representing Sterling Bay - the Chicago-based owner and developer of the Heritage Square property - withdrew the proposal after speaking for 10-plus minutes about what she deemed the proposal's merits.

Durham City Attorney Kimberly Rehberg affirmed Sterling Bay's legal right to request a withdrawal, which the Council approved, 5-2, including dissenting votes by DeDreana Freeman and Nate Baker.

For observers, the prevailing issue was "how" the withdrawal happened. "She should have said that in the first five minutes," community activist Jackie Wagstaff said. "They could sell it to another developer, and they'll come back and ask for this same thing over again. The election will be over by then."

Freeman, Mayor Leo Williams, Mayor Pro Tem Mark Anthony Middleton and Council woman Chelsea Cook will be on the ballot in the Oct. 7 primary, with opportunities for advancing to the Nov. 4 general election.

Rehberg said six months must pass before the matter can be presented to the Council again.

Terrence White, who was prepared to speak on behalf of the Durham Committee on the Affairs of Black

Please see HAYTI/2A

## Raleigh leaders exhort community to build educational partnerships

By Alex Bass

alex.bass@triangletribune.com

RALEIGH - Dudley Flood, while more than 50 years removed from his high school football and basketball coaching days, reminded community leaders at a Raleigh Chamber event of the importance of the ACC.

Flood, a soft-spoken, statuesque statesman who turns 93 on Sept. 13, helped facilitate North Carolina public schools' integration during the 1970s

and '80s, as he ascended to associate superintendent of the N.C. Department of Public Instruction.

"What in the world is coming to school?" Flood said of what he heard from constituents as he traveled the state and country leading integration initiatives. His response then is the same as now.

"School is coming to whatever comes to it," he said at the Chamber's "Perspectives:

Strategies for Workplace Success" conference at the Raleigh Convention Center. "The school realizes it is there to help all the other communities. The business community realizes it is there to help the school, to help all the other communities."

This dynamic, he said, requires understanding the ACC: avoiding "Adversarial" and "Competitive" relationships, while embracing "Collegiality."

Please see RALEIGH/2A

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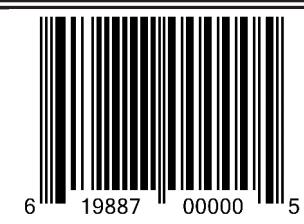
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# Highway 54 residential community offers mobility

**Continued from page 1A**  
renters include college students, military veterans and Research Triangle Park professionals. "A lot of folks are using this as a stepping stone to their next goal, their next dream," Polanco said.

Skillern, Polanco, Mejia and Roderick Cannady, The Pines' maintenance supervisor, found quiet joy in the fact that no residents could attend a July 31 press conference. They all were working.

Polanco noted one res-

ident who is saving for a house. Cannady, a Durham native like Mejia, recalled growing up in circumstances like some of The Pines' residents. "I just wanted to make sure what I didn't have, I want to make sure I can give other people the opportunity," he said.

He noted The Pines' proximity to health care, shopping, highways, public transportation, and thus education and career opportunities. "This location opens up all those doors,"

Cannady said. "Basically, it gives you hope, again, that it can be done."

Tim Gabel, CEO of RTI International, offered a vision of The Pines in a larger context for more housing that is affordable. "What we have here is an exemplar that I hope will propagate other examples in the Park," he said.

Information about The Pines is available at [www.nuleafproperties.com/the-pines](http://www.nuleafproperties.com/the-pines), or by calling 919-351-1103.



N.C. Central enrolled its largest student body ever in the spring semester.

## A Landmark Year NCCU breaks records in 2024-25 and expands its legacy

By Stephen Fusi  
N.C. CENTRAL NEWS  
COMMUNICATIONS

DURHAM — North Carolina Central University is celebrating a landmark year with historic enrollment, national accolades and transformative achievements in academics, research and student engagement.

NCCU led the University of North Carolina System in enrollment growth for both fall 2024 and spring 2025, welcoming its largest student body ever, 8,579 strong. This surge reflects NCCU's appeal and effectiveness of its strategic enrollment management efforts. The university was able to provide on-campus housing for 38% of the student body, far exceeding the UNC System average of 28% for on-campus housing.

"NCCU is poised to soar to even greater heights in the years to come," Chancellor Karrie G. Dixon said. "We are building a strong foundation for growth, student development, community engagement and operational excellence. We launched a new five-year strategic plan with input from the broader NCCU community and stakeholders, and we are just getting started on our bright vision for the future."

The department of nurs-

ing's Accelerated BSN program achieved a 100% licensing exam passage rate in fall 2024. NCCU also remains a top destination for veterans and working professionals. U.S. News & World Report ranked its online programs No. 2 among HBCUs nationwide and No. 9 in North Carolina. The online bachelor's degree in business administration ranked sixth statewide and second among North Carolina's HBCUs. NCCU's online programs for veterans were ranked No. 5 in the state and No. 2 among HBCUs.

NCCU made history as the first HBCU to establish an institute dedicated to artificial intelligence. The university formed partnerships with Google, OpenAI, IBM, Anthropic, Cisco, Dell, AWS Academy and others to create cutting-edge learning opportunities for students and drive cross-disciplinary innovation.

NCCU's financial standing remains strong, with Moody's affirming its A3 credit rating. The university made important strides in strengthening its financial footing, including embarking on proactive cost savings campaigns and restoring operating relationships with key vendors.

The university exceeded its annual fundraising goal, bringing in \$17.2 million in

gifts and commitments to support academic programs, student services and scholarship funding. An alumni giving rate of 10% - surpassing the national average - underscored Eagle Pride and deep commitment to future generations.

Student engagement remained high, with nearly 2,800 students contributing to over 161,385 hours of community service, delivering an economic impact of \$5.6 million and further cementing the university's achievement of the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification.

Strategic partnerships with local and statewide institutions such as neighboring Durham Technical Community College and Duke University delivered career-enriching development opportunities to students.

Recognizing the need for stronger connections to Durham's faith-based community, the first clergy breakfast was held to reintroduce the university to this important stakeholder group.

NCCU redoubled its efforts to engage with the North Carolina General Assembly, reestablishing a government relations office and hosting legislators on campus to witness NCCU's transformation firsthand.

# Developer withdraws Hayti zoning request

**Continued from page 1A**

People, called the withdrawal's timing "an interesting turn of events," and raised two questions: "Are they, really, looking to sell that plot of land, or are they looking to potentially have some type of influence in our local elections coming up?" White reiterated the DCABP's rezoning opposition, adopted as an official position on July 31. "This particular project does not bring any type of economic viability for the Black community at large," White said.

Freeman directed pointed comments at Schwedler just as she challenged the attorney's notion of community on June 16. Then, when Schwedler mentioned Black community leaders with whom Sterling Bay representatives engaged, Freeman noted that Schwedler mentioned no women.

This time, Freeman's words for Sterling Bay were more expansive. "I hope that they understand the kinds of relationships that they are creating in the community - in a very historic Black community that has faced a lot of discrimination and urban renewal," she said. "All of those things have happened to them, and you repeat that."

The packed Council chamber saw a mass exodus after the withdrawal was approved. Peaceful protests continued outside City Hall.

Pridgen said Sterling Bay offered Saint Mark 100 parking spots each Sunday from 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. "Sterling Bay would require us to purchase insurance, very expensive insurance, to park over there," he said. "The gift would end up being a burden in the long run and in the short run."

"It is unconscionable for us to go along with rezoning that property to build more luxury apartments when we've got homeless people sleeping on our front porch."

## Raleigh leaders exhort community partnerships

**Continued from page 1A**

"To measure me by you or you by me is unfair to both of us," he said.

Beyond fairness, public education's realities include N.C. school systems being required to increase the roughly 25% they contribute to the total cost of educating each student.

Approximately 10% of North Carolinians over age 25 still do not have a high school diploma. "Without resources, they will not get to the 'Portrait of a Graduate,'" said Ashley Kazouh, Flood Center associate director.

The Portrait of a Graduate, designed and refined through the years by the Department of Public Instruction, aligns with students' preparedness for higher education and meeting the state's workforce needs. "It reflects exactly what businesses say they need, which are strong communicators, collaborators and problem solvers," Townsend-Smith said.

ing mitigating technology gaps among students.

Townsend-Smith said that since the COVID-19 pandemic, 82 of 115 LEAs have had inadequate funds to upgrade digital devices that were essential to K-12 virtual teaching and learning.

"Fewer resources mean less support, especially in historically marginalized districts," said Deanna Townsend-Smith, senior director of the Dudley Flood Center for Educational Equity and Opportunity. "This includes the lack of educators who are prepared, especially a diverse educator workforce."

In some N.C. counties, the LEA is the largest employer. The same LEAs are challenged by persistent systemic barriers, includ-

Townsend-Smith challenged business leaders to partner with LEAs in fostering equity by investing in digital infrastructure. School and business community partnerships can be a resourceful pipeline for cultivating students and educators when businesses think of themselves. This practice applies to the fostering of both students' higher education and workforce readiness.

"They want you to be able to apply that degree and the things that you have learned to the things that you will need to do in your field of work," Kazouh said. "There are certain things you are looking for in people you are going to have working these farms and factories."

"We can teach anybody anything. In order to teach them, they need these critical thinking skills."



## Why sex education starts at home, Part 1

By Anissa Durham  
WORD IN BLACK

When was the last time you spoke to your child about sex?

For many parents and guardians, talking about the birds and the bees can be difficult, uncomfortable and cringy. But for Black families, talking about sex carries an added urgency: Federal data shows Black youth account for a third of all U.S. STI cases, while Black women make up half of new HIV diagnoses.

At the same time, sex education in schools — already inconsistent and often abstinence-focused — faces growing political threats, from state laws restricting LGBTQ+ topics to stalled federal efforts to dismantle the Department of Education.

Dr. Sara C. Flowers, vice president of education and training at Planned Parenthood Federation of America, says sex education is

so much more comprehensive than just the act itself.

It involves talking to children and young ones about consent, communication skills, gender identity, body image and safe sex. "Sex education also includes anti-bullying, online safety, puberty, the biological elements of reproduction, sexual orientation, birth control, abortion and all of these elements," she said. "These are a broad suite of both knowledge and skills that (kids) learn about at home first."

In the case of communication, Flowers says she's seen parents teach their children the correct names of body parts. This sets the foundation for open communication, and it allows children to ask questions in a safe environment. At times, it may be difficult to answer a question, but offering to revisit the conversation or finding out together can model vulnerability, and their health is

at stake.

In 2022, half of the reported cases of chlamydia, gonorrhea and syphilis were for youth aged 15-24. And a third of all cases of these STIs were reported by Black or African American people. In the same year, Black women accounted for 50% of new HIV diagnoses, a little more than two times the rate for white women and two-and-a-half times the rate for Hispanic women.

In a 2024 study, parents who spoke to their children aged 10-17 about sexuality were shown to reduce teen sexual risk behavior and increase comfort to continue these conversations. Adolescents and young adults' sexual behavior puts them at risk for sexually transmitted infections and unplanned pregnancies, the report found.

However, sexual health education in schools is

Please see SEX/3A

## DMV recommends reform to reverse customer long lines

By Gary D. Robertson  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

RALEIGH — Customers at North Carolina's Division of Motor Vehicles are waiting longer in lines that are often far away from home, while agency staffing fails to keep pace with the state's surging population, according to agency reviews that also recommend major reforms.

Elected Republican State Auditor Dave Boliek on Monday released two audits totaling nearly 600 pages that scrutinize the DMV — the bane of motorists in many states. But

long lines and frustrations are acute in the ninth-largest state.

"Our DMV affects the economy. It affects people having to take off of work unnecessarily. It takes our students out of the classroom," Boliek told reporters. "This has to be fixed, and it has to be a top priority."

Boliek promised during last year's campaign to conduct a top-to-bottom review of the DMV if elected. Elected leaders' constituents have complained about the inability to book appointments on

line close to home and the struggles for their teenagers to complete driving tests.

It's not unusual for customers to camp outside driver's license offices in the wee hours hoping to get seen later that day. Problems continued as federal REAL ID license security requirements took effect in May.

Erin Van Dorn of Holly Springs said at Boliek's news conference it took her and her teenage son four trips to the DMV — the last time 130 miles away in

Please see DMV/3A



# The Triangle Tribune Classifieds

August 10-16, 2025 | 4A

## EMPLOYMENT

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Boca Raton, FL 33432

## LEGAL NOTICES



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**Request for Letters of Interest and Statements of Qualifications for A/E Design Services for the Junction Road Fleet Operations Center**

### RFQ No. 26-006

The County of Durham requests Letters of Interest and Statements of Qualifications for Architectural and Engineering Design Services for the Junction Road Fleet Operations Center to be received on **September 4, 2025** 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.dconc.gov/county-departments/departments-f-z/finance/bid-opportunities>. 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.

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.

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Devin and Jamani Funderburk hope their book, "A Fruitful Life," will help people of faith choose a plant-based diet.

## She went vegan to feel better, now she honors God with food

By the Rev. Dorothy S. Boulware  
THE AFROWORD IN BLACK

When Baltimore native Jamani Funderburk first eliminated meat from her diet, it wasn't about animal rights or weight loss. It was simply an experiment. However, she quickly noticed physical changes, including increased energy and relief from menstrual pain.

The roughly 18-month experiment soon flourished into a vegan lifestyle, and now Funderburk's greatest desire is that the food she eats honors God. "In Genesis 1:29, he tells us we are supposed to consume the fruit of the earth," she said. "And we'll see it also in Revelation 22:2, it says the herbs were given to us for the healing of the nations."

Her now-husband Devin, who suffers from Crohn's disease, was also seeking a path to healing. Together, they turned their personal journeys into a shared mission: helping others take control of their health through food and faith. Their new e-book, "A Fruitful Life: How to Transition to a Plant-Based Diet," walks readers through "how they reversed chronic illness, renewed their minds, and discovered the joy of living well — physically, emotionally and spiritually."

After changing her diet, what first caught Funderburk's attention was she felt lighter after meals. There was none of that heaviness that leads to mandatory naps. And after about nine months, she eliminated dairy products,

which made her feel even better.

"I was about 8 when I was diagnosed with anemia, and my pediatrician put me on iron pills, which I took for over 13 years," Funderburk said. She also got relief from the debilitating menstrual cycles she'd experienced for most of her life. Funderburk had migraines so intense they made her vomit. At times, she'd pass out. And as a teen performer — singing and acting as Young Nala in Disney's touring production of "The Lion King" — she often had to push through pain.

"When I would go to performances, I would literally be sick. All the time," she said.

After high school, she enrolled at the American Musical and Dramatic Academy in Los Angeles, completing a four-year program in three years with a degree in musical theater. But instead of running toward Hollywood, she started to feel God pulling her through a journey of healing from that and showed me that food was to be used as a survival tool rather than a kind of comfort."

Funderburk says she and her husband want to show people that healthy food can be satisfying, both for the body and the soul, because God created us to live abundantly. "We can't live abundantly if we're sick. We can't do all that God has called us to do if we're unwell," she said.

And even skeptical relatives have come around. Last Thanksgiving, the duo hosted a fully plant-based dinner.

"A lot of people were like, well, I'm going to eat before I come because I feel like I'm gonna be hungry," she said. But after the meal, they felt full. "They were like, you know what? I feel light. I don't feel like I have the 'itis'!"

### AROUND THE TRIANGLE

#### KNIGHTDALE FESTIVAL

Arts and Education Festival is Aug. 16, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., Knightdale Station Park, 810 N. First Ave.

#### RALEIGH MARKET

The next Black Farmers' Market is Aug. 10, 1-4 p.m., SE Raleigh YMCA, 1436 Rock Quarry Road.

#### CONFERENCE

Black Maternal & Infant Health Conference is Aug. 14, 8 a.m. to 3:15 p.m., McKimmon Conference Center, 1101 Gorman St. Visit: [wake.gov/BMIH](http://wake.gov/BMIH).

#### SCHOOL SUPPLIES:

\* Back to School Jamboree is Aug. 16, 5:30-8:30 p.m., Chavis Park, 505 MLK Jr. Boulevard.

\* Back to school Bash, Aug. 16, 9 a.m. to noon, SE Raleigh YMCA, 1436 Rock Quarry Road.

\* Back 2 School, Aug. 16, 2-5 p.m., Pullen Park

\* Back to School Block Party, Aug. 23, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., 2305 Lake Wheeler Road

#### ACADEMY

The SISI Small PEARLS Lead Academy is accepting

applications for girls ages 7 through high school. Visit [www.thesisi.org](http://www.thesisi.org). Deadline: Aug. 18.

#### DEMENTIA

Dementia Support Training workshop is Aug. 18, 1-3 p.m., Five Points Center for Active Adults, 2000 Noble Road. Call 919-996-4730.

#### CARY PICNIC

The Soul Picnic 2025 is Aug. 16, 5 p.m., Booth Amphitheatre, 8003 Regency Parkway. Tickets: [www.etix.com](http://www.etix.com).

#### DURHAM PATCHWORK

Summer Patchwork Market is Aug. 10, noon to 4 p.m., Durham Armory, 220 Foster St. Visit: [www.thepatchworkmarket.com](http://www.thepatchworkmarket.com).

#### CONCERTS:

\* Singer Jo Gore will perform Aug. 16, 8:30 p.m., Missy Lane's Assembly Room, Suite 100, 310 E. Main St.

\* Al Strong Presents: Jazz on the Roof, Aug. 21, 7-9 p.m., The Durham Hotel, 315 E. Chapel Hill St.

#### POETRY

Jambalaya Soul Slam Paper Thin Poetry Slam II is Aug. 16, 8 p.m., Hayti Heritage Center, 804 Old Fayetteville St. Tickets: [jambalayaaug2025.eventbrite.com](http://jambalayaaug2025.eventbrite.com).

#### BBB

Bibles, Books & Barbecue back to school rally is Aug. 16, 2-4 p.m., The House of Prayer Ministries International, 3329 Durham Chapel Hill Boulevard.

#### TOUCH BUS

DPS is hosting Touch-A-Bus Aug. 16, 10-11 a.m., North Regional Library, 221 Milton Road.

#### CHAPEL HILL CONVERSATION

A conversation on Final Exit Network is Aug. 13, 4-5:30 p.m., Seymour Center, 2551 Homestead Road. Register by Aug. 11 at 919-968-2070.

#### MISC.

SCHOLARSHIPS  
Bold.org allows students to apply for scholarships based on background, interests and goals. Learn more at [bold.org/scholarships/](http://bold.org/scholarships/).

## Ways to conquer back-to-school shopping without emptying your wallet

THECARDGUY.COM

The back-to-school shopping season is here, bringing with it lists of school supplies, new clothes, tech gear and more. For many families, this time of year brings excitement and a fresh start, but also financial pressure. The costs of back-to-school shopping can quickly spiral out of control if you're not careful. According to recent surveys, American families spend an average of over \$800 per child each year on back-to-school expenses, including clothing and supplies.

#### \* Take inventory before you shop.

Before stepping foot in a store or clicking "Add to Cart," start with a comprehensive home inventory. You'd be surprised at how many supplies are hiding in drawers, backpacks or storage bins from previous years! Look for unused notebooks, gently used binders, pens, pencils and markers, backpacks in good condition, and clothing and shoes that still fit. Get your children involved in the process, as they can help assess what's still usable and what they've outgrown, saving you both money and unnecessary clutter.

#### \* Set a realistic budget and stick to it.

The most important step to avoiding overspending is creating a clear, realistic budget. Sit down and list out expected expenses in categories like school supplies, clothes and shoes, technology and extracurricular fees or uniforms. Once you have a total budget number in mind, divide it per category and do your best not to exceed it. Shopping with a budget helps you make thoughtful decisions instead of impulsive ones



COURTESY

driven by flashy displays or "limited time" sales. I also recommend giving older kids their own mini budget for clothing or supplies, as letting them manage part of the process can be a great lesson in financial literacy.

#### \* Shop with the school list in hand.

It sounds obvious, but many parents forget to bring the school-supplied shopping list with them, or they just shop without one entirely. This results in buying extras they don't need and missing items they do need.

Most schools release supply lists well in advance, and many are available online.

#### \* Time your purchases strategically.

Not all back-to-school shopping needs to happen in one trip. In fact, spreading out your purchases can save you significant money. For example, shop tax-free weekends for big-ticket items like laptops or calculators. You can also buy off-season clothes by waiting until September or October for fall clothing sales when stores start clearing out inventory.

#### \* Compare prices and use price-matching tools.

Retailers know parents are looking for deals, so prices for back-to-school items can vary widely. Don't assume the first deal you see

is the best one. Before buying items, check multiple retailers (both in-store and online) and use price comparison websites or browser extensions like Honey, Rakuten or Capital One Shopping. On top of this, look for price-match guarantees, as many big-box stores will honor competitors' lower prices. Apps like Flipp and ShopSavvy can also help you scan flyers and barcodes on the go to find the best deal near you.

#### \* Time your purchases strategically.

Not all back-to-school shopping needs to happen in one trip. In fact, spreading out your purchases can save you significant money. For example, shop tax-free weekends for big-ticket items like laptops or calculators. You can also buy off-season clothes by waiting until September or October for fall clothing sales when stores start clearing out inventory.

In addition, grab clearance deals after the school shopping rush. Many school supplies go on deep discount in late August or early September.

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# SWAC is riding the feel good train

Charles McClelland is full of it.

The SWAC commissioner was beaming on all cylinders at last month's SWAC Football Media Day.

McClelland no longer has to cringe before reporters while waiting for THE question: Why can't the SWAC beat the MEAC in the MEAC-SWAC Challenge or the Celebration Bowl? It can.

The conference has won the last three Challenges and two consecutive CBs.

Then, on Aug. 1, a historic first: the SWAC became the first HBCU conference to have its own streaming service. SWAC TV is available on Roku, Apple TV, Google Play and more.

The free streaming service will showcase all 18 conference sports in some capacity throughout the season.

I downloaded on launch day and watched part of the media day on the SWAC Digital Network hosted by Santoria Black and Tolly Carr. It was as good a production as anything on ESPN, Fox Sports or any other sports network.

McClelland hinted several years ago that the conference didn't want to depend on just ESPN and HBCU GO to showcase its athletic programs. What he didn't come right out and say was when companies, or individuals, think they are your only option, you get taken for granted. SWAC TV changes that thinking. Pepsi and General Motors already are prominent advertisers.

"We think it's a game-changer with the relationship we have with ESPN and HBCU GO," McClelland said. "This is going to allow us to take all the remaining content and give it directly to our consumers. This year, we'll have 45 football games free, live and in high definition on SWAC TV."

**NIL**  
If it's sports-related, it all comes back to Name, Image and Likeness. Once the NCAA settlement was approved, the conference immediately eliminated caps for all sports.

"We want the market to naturally govern itself," McClelland said. "The market will determine what a quarterback is worth. SWAC TV is an additional revenue source that we can put back into NIL for institutions to use."

**Put Up or Get Out**  
ESPN co-host Jay Walker referenced a 2022 SWAC t-shirt he had with all the football coaches' names on it. Today, only two coaches remain from that list.

Some left for more lucrative opportunities like Florida A&M coach Willie Simmons to Duke as an assistant and now at Florida International as head coach. Others were escorted out the door.

McClelland was blunt: "You have to win. ... The biggest difference today is there is a significant amount of resources on the line for winning and losing."

Indeed. The team that hosts the SWAC Championship keeps all the revenue, while the conference pays the visiting team's expenses.

Then the winner goes on to the Celebration Bowl and gets another fat paycheck. All total? About \$3 million, McClelland said.

Women's and men's basketball tournament champions receive equal pay. Their automatic appearance in the NCAA Tournament can earn them even more if they win a game - not to mention the free publicity by just being in the Big Dance.

Texas Southern football coach Cris Dishman was asked what advice he would give the new coaches in the league. His reply?

"Nothing! Nobody gave me any advice."

It's a whole new ballgame.

# The Triangle Tribune Sports

August 10-16, 2025 | 6A



COURTESY

The Rocky Mount (N.C.) Rebels won the softball championship.

## Five teams claim titles during MJBL baseball championships

By Larry Barber  
SPECIAL TO THE TRIBUNE

RICHMOND, VA. - The Richmond regional grounds for a seventh straight year served up a riveting show as the 34th annual Metropolitan Junior Baseball

League saw five teams claim titles last weekend.

All that activity followed the week's 21st Annual Bobby Bonds Memorial Symposium held virtually and showcased Will Boone, founder of Afro Blew Media Inc.; Tyrone Brooks, Major

League Baseball senior director, Front Office and Field; and Matisse Lee, CIAA associate commissioner for external partnerships and special projects.

In the 19U division, the Heritage Rebels (Greenville, N.C.) won a 1-0 extra inning

thriller over Vision (Baltimore) to take the crown. Winning coach Jeffrey Warren said: "The 2025 MJBL Inner City Classic and Black World Series Championship game was every-

Please see **five/7A**

### COLLEGE CORNER

## Shaw alum named MVP of summer league

Naiya Dalce is the new CIAA coordinator for championships, compliance and governance. Dalce worked as a legal intern with several companies, but the Bull City knows her as an event planner with the Durham Sports Commission. She earned a J.D. degree from North Carolina Central.

The NCAA announced this week it wasn't expanding the Division I women's and men's basketball tournaments for the 2025-26 season.

Not that it matters for HBCUs, since it's still pretty much the MEAC and SWAC tournament champions and that's it.

### WOMEN BCIC

The Black College Invitational Championship is moving. The inaugural tourney was held at

the Bojangles Coliseum in Charlotte last March, but the euphoria around the event didn't go as planned.

What was supposed to have been a 16-team tourney dwindled into eight teams after schools either dropped out or decided not to participate. On Monday, the BCIC announced it's moving the event on Virginia State's campus from March 25-29.

### SWAC

CC asked SWAC associate commissioner Andrew Roberts if he ever takes a vacation. "Do weekends count?" was his reply.

Football is two weeks away and the conference released the date for its men's and women's basketball media days at the Embassy Suites in Birmingham,



Former Shaw star guard DJ Thomas.

Alabama. The ladies go first on Oct. 7 and the men Oct. 8, both at 11 a.m. EST.

Savannah State You can go home again. SSU alumnus Phillip Wallace Jr.

Please see **SHAW/7A**

## NC team to compete in 3x3 women's basketball tournament

SUBMITTED BY SPECIAL OLYMPICS NORTH CAROLINA

Five Special Olympics North Carolina athletes and Unified partners will compete in the first-ever Special Olympics North America Unified 3x3 Women's Basketball Tournament in Indianapolis.

Ten Unified basketball teams, comprised of people with and without intellectual disabilities competing alongside each other, from the United States and the Caribbean, will participate. North Carolina's team:

\* Gabi Angelini, Wake County, athlete  
\* Ellie Baumann, Durham County, Unified partner  
\* Clare Feole, Orange

County, athlete  
\* Loranda Quicksey-Mills, Lee County, athlete

\* Takiyah Rustin, Cabarrus County, Unified partner

\* Kayla Crayton, Cabarrus County, coach

3x3 basketball is a fast-paced, half-court version of traditional basketball. It's officially governed by FIBA and has grown from streetball roots into a globally recognized sport, even making its Olympic debut at Tokyo 2020.

A key feature is that teams are made up of three players on the court per team. Games are played for 10 minutes or end sooner

Please see **NC/7A**

## HBCU FOOTBALL N.C. Central makes historic hire to staff

By Bonitta Best

editor@triangletribune.com

N.C. Central  
The Eagles received 18 votes in the Stats Perform FCS Top 25 Preseason Poll.

HBCU champion Jackson State is the only HBCU team ranked at No. 17. MEAC champion South Carolina State, which lost to the Tigers in the Celebration Bowl, collected 35 votes. Tennessee State, which earned an at-large playoff berth and probably knocked NCCU out of a spot, earned 21 votes.

On Aug. 17, the football program is having a yard sale from 1 to 6 p.m. at the Student Center. Various merchandise and equipment will be on sale while supplies last.

And in the biggest news of the week, HBCU Gameday's Wali Pitt

reported that Jennifer King has joined the Eagles staff as an offensive analyst. King was an assistant coach with the Carolina Panthers, Washington Commanders and the Chicago Bears. Her parents are North Carolina A&T season ticket holders. Game on!

### N.C. A&T

And speaking of the Aggies, A&T sold out of single tickets for homecoming in a matter of hours. South Carolina State is the homecoming guest.

**Grambling State**  
Alumnus Doug Williams will receive the President's Lifetime Achievement Award for volunteer service on Aug. 9. Williams is an outstanding

Please see **FOOTBALL/7A**

# Five teams claim MJBL baseball championships

**Continued from page 6A**  
thing baseball is meant to be. Two well put-together teams competing to the end between the lines. Eight scoreless innings with it ending by one run in the ninth. This is minor baseball. This is the way the game should be played."

Raoul Edwards is Vision's head coach. Rebels star pitcher Christian Chance threw a nine-inning shutout with the help of his defense. Chance won the Ken Free Most Valuable Player Scholarship Award.

"He never missed a beat and didn't appear to show any slowing down in the bottom of the ninth as he retired the side for the

win," Warren said. "Chris has a mean glove at third base when he is not pitching and is a graduate of South-Central High School. He has currently committed to Lenoir Community College in Kinston to play the 2025-26 season."

The Greensboro Bison defeated the 2nd2Nunn squad out of Northern Virginia in a nailbiter, 8-7, to win the 14U title. Juan Langford coaches Greensboro, and Matt Nelson and Winston Hylton lead 2nd2Nunn.

In the lone girls' skirmish, the Rocky Mount (N.C.) Raiders defeated the Elite Nationals of Washington, D.C., 7-5, to win the championship. Rocky

Mount is coached by James West. The losing coaches were Sheree Myers, Olivia Edwards, Tony Zanger and Harry Thomas.

MJBL was founded in 1966 by William M.T. Forrester, the late father of current executive director William "Bill" Forrester. The league was established in Richmond during segregation when Black youngsters had limited opportunities to participate in organized baseball. While open to everyone, MJBL remains the only national youth league geared towards inner-city Black athletes. Forrester recently released the book "Black World Series," chronicling the amazing MJBL journey.

# Shaw alumnus named MVP of summer league

**Continued from page 6A**  
takes over the women's basketball program after the departure of Cedric Backer to Coppin State.

Wallace coached at SIAC member Miles College from 2004-22, amassing 210 victories, the most in program history.

He began his coaching career at Savannah State in 1990, leading the women's program to a 105-38 record. Wallace earned both his Bachelor of Science and master's degrees at SSU.

**Prairie View A&M**  
And so it begins. PVAM has eliminated its women's and men's tennis programs effective imme-

dately. Scholarships will be honored through graduation and the student-athletes who wish to transfer will receive full assistance.

**MEN**  
Shaw

Former Shaw guard DJ Thomas was named most valuable player of the Ground Zero Pro-Am League played at Enloe High School.

Thomas also was an invaluable sixth man on the Raleigh Firebirds team that advanced to the TBL championship final.

**Bowie State**  
Basketball coach Darrell Brooks will coach in the

HBCU All-Star Dream Classic this weekend in Harlem.

The game showcases 40 of the best female and male HBCU players. You can watch the game on Aug. 9 at [www.hbcuallstardreamclassic.com/](http://www.hbcuallstardreamclassic.com/).

**Goodbye. Hello.**

The transfer portal just keeps on giving.

\* North Carolina A&T guard Camian Shell is now a Delaware State Hornet.

\* Western New Mexico guard Jaelyn Morrison to Johnson C. Smith



Players of Special Olympics North Carolina team.

## NC Special Olympics team competes in tourney

**Continued from page 6A**  
when the first team scores 21 points.

It's a half-court format and a single hoop. The basketball is unique in that it is the same weight as a standard men's ball but slightly smaller.

"Since Day 1 of practice, our team has felt like a little family," Crayton said.

"Our team has a ton of combined basketball experience. We are hoping to be competitive and have as much fun as we can. The team has a few defensive concepts and offensive sets up their sleeves, so they are ready to show everyone what North Carolina is about!"

This tournament is a part of 2025 SONA Confer-

ence, which will see nearly 1,000 Special Olympics staff and leaders from the United States, Canada and the Caribbean come together in Indianapolis. Held in partnership with Pacers Sports & Entertainment and the Indiana Fever, the event will serve as a centerpiece of the larger SONA Conference.

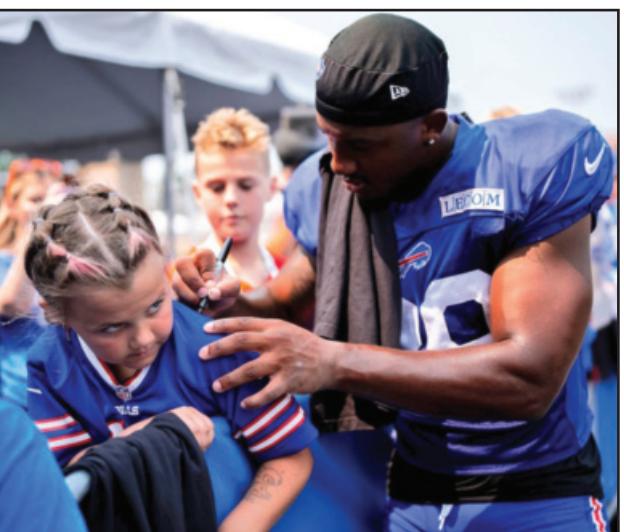
Jennifer King was the first Black woman to coach in the NFL.

## N.C. Central adds female coach to football staff

**Continued from page 6A**  
ambassador for HBCU sports and all sports since his retirement from the NFL. Williams was the first Black quarterback to win a Super Bowl.

The Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation, in partnership with the Atlanta Falcons, has provided new helmets for Morehouse College and Clark Atlanta. The helmets are equipped with the latest technology for players' health and safety.

"We are proud to support the football programs at these historical institutions through this grant," AMB Senior Vice President Chris Millman said. "Player health and safety is para-



Former North Carolina Central Brandon Codrington signs a jersey following Buffalo Bills practice

mount for athletes at all levels of football, and the improvements in the production of football helmets have grown dramatically over the past five years."

**KEMET™**  
**BLACK AMERICAN GAMERS**

**Hi Everybody!**  
I love playing video games! And I found out that a lot of you do too, for instance, 99% of boys and 94% of girls enjoy playing video games. The younger and older teen boys and the younger girls are the biggest fans of the games. Advances in technology have made it possible to play with friends who are not even in the same room with you!

**THE WORLD OF GAMERS**  
Many gamers, creators and developers of the gaming industry say that there is a lack of black characters, protagonists, or voices in the industry. They seem to fill the void by creating games and characters to meet the needs of black gamers. For example, "Treachery in Beatdown City" is about America's first and only Black President, Barack Obama.

The main character in "Treachery" is President Blake Obama and the object of the game is to save President Obama from the Nine Dragon Termites. Another game that addresses a black issue is called "Hair Nah". The objective of the game is to prevent white hands from touching your black character's hair. The creator of this game sought to address the problem of discrimination against Blacks based on hairstyles and texture through the use of a video game.

I bet you didn't know gaming is a multi-billion-dollar industry. In 2025, the gaming industry is projected to earn approximately \$241.1 billion. It is rare for black gamers to even be mentioned in the gaming space. Of the approximately 228,000 jobs in the industry, 19% are held by Black people. More black creators, developers, programmers, and streamers are needed in gaming. But there are a few Black Americans in the industry that you should know.

**GERALD "JERRY" LAWSON**  
Jerry Lawson is a Black engineer who developed Fairchild Channel F and he is the Father of the Video Game Cartridge. As you know, cartridges made games portable, which made it easier for individuals to share, swap, or sell games to their friends. Also, Jerry is owner of Video Soft, his very own game development company and has been inducted to the World Video Game Hall of Fame.

**KEMET**

**TELL THE TRUTH**  
Print the letter T on the line if the statement is True or F if the Statement is False.

Black creators, developers, programmers, and streamers make up 10 percent of the job market.

The Gaming industry lacks diversity.

Muriel Tramis is the first Black female game designer.

Tanya DePass created the game called "Treachery in Beatdown City".

Developer Jerry Lawson is considered to be the Father of the Video Game cartridge.

The video game "Hair Nah" sought to address the problem of discrimination based on black hairstyles and texture.

**ONE MINUTE MADNESS!**  
In one minute or less, unscramble words that are closely related to the gaming industry. The first letter of the name is in bold.

siotMcrf \_\_\_\_\_  
maGre \_\_\_\_\_  
dVeio \_\_\_\_\_  
oxXb \_\_\_\_\_  
oeoPnmk \_\_\_\_\_

**SHAWN ALEXANDER ALLEN**  
Shawn is a game developer, writer, speaker, and activist. He is well known for bringing more diversity into the gaming industry. Shawn has worked on "Grand Theft Auto V", "Grand Theft Auto III", and "Red Dead Redemption". He formed his own company called NuChallenger. Shawn successfully created a video game entitled "Treachery in Beatdown City".

**ZORA BALL**  
In 2013, Zora created a video game at the age of seven, becoming the youngest programmer who owns a computer game. She holds the Guinness World Record for "The Youngest Mobile Game App Developer". While she is also a ballerina and likes "girly" things, she remains the youngest top tech wizard to ever code a video game!

**MURIEL TRAMIS**  
Muriel Tramis was hired as a programmer for Aerospacelab and programmed military drones. Although she had a very successful career of programming drones, she decided to expand her area of knowledge and began designing video games. She was so good at her new craft that she was called the First Black Female Game designer. The games that she is best known for are:  
-La Bosse des Maths  
-Gobliins  
-Mewilio  
-Freedom: Rebels in the Darkness

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**TANYA DEPASS**  
Tanya DePass is founder of the Not For Profit Organization "Need Diverse Games" which is dedicated to diversifying the gaming industry. She is a strong advocate for inclusion of minorities in video games. As she sees it, people see video game players as white guys between the ages of 18 to 35 and she feels this needs to change.

**TRIVIA**  
Match the gamers to their game creation or accomplishment.

**Jerry Lawson** **Zora Ball**  
**Shawn Alexander Allen** **Muriel Tramis**

**Treachery in Beatdown City** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Mewilio** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Video Game Cartridges** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Guinness World Record** \_\_\_\_\_

**ANSWER KEY**  
**TELL THE TRUTH**  
F, T, T, F, T, T

**ONE MINUTE MADNESS!**  
Microsoft  
Gamer  
Video  
Xbox  
Pokemon

**TRIVIA**  
Shawn Alexander Allen  
Muriel Tramis  
Jerry Lawson  
Zora Ball

WEEK OF AUGUST 10, 2025 #215 [WWW.JOEYOUNG.ORG](http://WWW.JOEYOUNG.ORG) KEMET ACTIVITY SHEETS © 2025 BY JOE YOUNG



Left to right: Jermaine Powell, Renee Neptune, Shawn Etheridge, Delayna Robbins and Christopher Evans.

## Ascension Gallery opens in downtown Raleigh

By Alex Bass

alex.bass@triangletribune.com  
RALEIGH - Paul Baker can explain the bright gold wall in the new art gallery at 416 S. McDowell Street. The long-sought wealth of the African diaspora, present in music, fashion, cuisine and so much more, offers a fertile foundation for growing educational opportunities.

"That is why we call it Ascension Gallery - to ascend these artists of color," Baker said.

Baker facilitated securing and developing the new downtown creative space, which opened with several events during August's first weekend. The opening exhibition, "Conscious and Culture: Reframing Art and Thought," will run through Oct. 26. Five artists, including artist-in-residence Christopher Evans, have work displayed. Evans, an Apex native, is joined by Shawn Etheridge, Renee Neptune, Jermaine Powell

and Delayna Robbins. The quintet engaged some of the gallery's earliest patrons in an artists' talk Aug. 2.

Etheridge and Robbins both are Elizabeth City State University graduates. Etheridge, now a grandfather, has gallery pieces highlighting his son's learning and leisure. He recalls, too, how he and his nephew tried to "outdraw" each other by replicating newspaper comics.

"I just never let it go," Etheridge said. He locked in and focused on developing a craft which he hopes offers patrons content for constructive criticism through conversation. "You're going to deal with whatever it is that you don't like about it," Etheridge said. "You're not going to look at it and just walk off."

Robbins is possessed by her joy to tell her family's multigenerational stories. "I've heard people tell me they feel like they're being

hugged," she said.

Neptune, originally from New York, is an emerging artist who, admittedly, is striving to become more comfortable beyond creative spaces' solitude. She knows growing her brand requires this development. "If it wasn't for that, then I wouldn't have social media," she said. "I'm talking to people when I can talk to people."

For Powell, a Cleveland, Ohio, native, realizing opportunities to learn about one's self is a fruit of what are challenging times for many. Life's most difficult times, he said, often yield opportunities for producing compelling works.

"You've got to handle so much stuff to keep it all together," he said. "They want us to absorb so much and still have a smile on our faces."

Ascension Gallery is open Thursday through Saturday from 3 to 6 p.m., and Sunday by appointment.



Kim Miles is the face of the UNC College of Arts and Sciences.

## Kim Miles is the 'genius of organization' at UNC

By Caroline Daly

UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS  
Years ago, at a faculty event, Kim Miles was introduced as the "genius of organization," and the nickname stuck.

The description sums up Miles' work as the student services manager in the classics department in the UNC College of Arts and Sciences. Miles' continuous desire to keep students and faculty in the department organized earned her the 2025 Massey Award. Nominators note that her positive effect and impact on students and faculty directly correlates with the success of the department and its work.

"The service of Kim's that I find most incredible is her dedication to this department and this University. Her care for each student, each faculty member, the stories of Kim's labor to this department could fill a novel," said one nominator.

Before she came to Carolina, Miles graduated from Alamance Community Col-

lege and also worked there. In 1989, she became a clerical secretary at the UNC School of Social Work. She transferred to the classics department to work in their main office in 1992, then two years later she became the student services manager.

In her role, she assists undergraduate and graduate students in tracking program requirements and addressing questions. Along with her administrative duties, Miles meets with students to see how they're doing, checks that they are on track and asks how their senior honors thesis or exams are going.

"The undergraduate students I see on a more regular basis are the ones that hang out in the common room, which is directly across from my office," Miles said. "I'll see the students over there and get to know them better by seeing them so much."

Although she doesn't see them as much on campus, Miles works more closely

with about 25 to 30 graduate students, from admission through graduation day. She knows every one of them and what is going on in their life.

"Running into her in the hallway or at the office copier is always an enjoyable part of the day, and she truly makes an effort to connect with each of us," said one nominator. "Kim makes some of the absolute best baked goods. Nothing makes my day like a Kim email in the morning telling us that there are 'goodies' in the department common room. She also makes special deliveries of baked goods to graduate students' offices before their exams (along with notes wishing us luck), which has made me feel incredibly cared for and supported at some of the most stressful times."

Beyond her role as the heart of the classics department, Miles — the longest-serving member of the department — is the glue uniting Tar Heels past and present.

## HBCU NEWS



COURTESY

### N.C. CENTRAL

A \$500,000 grant from the Walton Family Foundation will fund a NCCU research initiative aimed at addressing barriers to career pathways for young men in North Carolina's Research Triangle region.

Led by Tryan McMickens, Ed.D., professor of higher education and coordinator of NCCU's higher education administration program, and Jim Harper II, Ph.D., professor of history and associate dean of the school of graduate studies, the two-year study will examine the challenges faced by 'opportunity youth,' referring to young men, ages 18 to 24, who are disconnected from education or employment.

Despite national progress in access to education, many young men furthest from opportunity continue to face systemic obstacles, contributing to high drop-

out rates and limited postsecondary success.

The research aims to identify solutions through research-based interventions, community engagement and policy recommendations.

"I am thrilled that the Walton Foundation has chosen to invest in NCCU faculty to advance research on postsecondary attainment among boys and young men," said Ontario Wooden, Ph.D., NCCU provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs. "This support highlights the importance of this critical area and empowers our faculty to deliver meaningful, evidence-based results. I eagerly anticipate the insights and impact this work will bring."

Titled "Understanding Education as a Career Choice for NC Research Triangle Youth," the proj-

ect will support a research team composed of faculty, six graduate students from the higher education administration and history programs, a project manager and a two-day conference planned for 2026.

McMickens' work centers on higher education access, the experiences of Black male students, college mental health and historically Black colleges and universities.

He is the author of "Black Male College Students' Mental Health: Providing Holistic Support in Higher Education." Harper explores African and African American education and the use of technology to deepen public engagement with history.

He is the co-author of "With Faith in God and Heart in Mind: A History of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc."



STOCK

## SECU Foundation awards \$300k to Legal Aid of NC

### STAFF REPORTS

RALEIGH — Legal Aid of North Carolina received a \$300,000 grant from the SECU Foundation to support its Innovation Lab. The grant was celebrated with a check presentation and a tour of LANC's new Raleigh office and Innovation Lab space at Beacon Point.

LANC's Innovation Lab is the first of its kind in the civil legal services field and is focused on modernizing how legal services are delivered to low-income North Carolinians.

The SECU Foundation's support will help expand services across the state, especially in rural and underserved communities, using technology, data-driven decision-making and community partnerships.

"The Innovation Lab represents a bold new vision for legal aid, and we are honored to have the sup-

port of the SECU Foundation to help bring it to life," LANC CEO Ashley Campbell said.

"This funding will allow us to invest in cutting-edge tools, strengthen rural outreach and increase our capacity to serve the more than 2 million North Carolinians who qualify for our services but too often go without help."

The Innovation Lab is already leading several transformative initiatives. These include the creation of an AI-powered legal information assistant; an updated and more accessible online application; a mobile intake unit to serve rural counties; and partnerships with libraries and community-based organizations to expand access to legal support and information.

"Access to justice should not depend on where you live or how much money you make," said Scheree

Gilchrist, LANC chief innovation officer. "This partnership with SECU Foundation is a major step toward building a more inclusive, responsive legal system that truly meets people where they are."

Civil legal needs in North Carolina are widespread and growing. More than 71% of low-income residents experience at least one civil legal problem annually, often involving housing, health care, domestic violence or veterans' benefits. Yet there is only one legal aid attorney for every 8,000 low-income North Carolinians, compared with one private attorney for every 367 residents. LANC's Innovation Lab is working to close this justice gap and reach those who have historically been left behind.

LANC, the largest non-profit law firm in the state, serves all 100 counties.

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