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The Triangle Tribune

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VOLUME 27 NO. 34

Week of August 24 - 30, 2025

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August is Black *Business* Month

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AARON DAYE, NCCU LIFE

The first day vibes were strong at North Carolina Central this week. The Eagle Scholars were all over campus, heading from class to class and soaking it all in. Here's to a great year for all HBCU students.



The late Tyrone Berry with his grandson on a fishing trip.

COURTESY



ALEX BASS

Ashton Place rents range from \$475 to \$1,075.

Ashton Place Apartments expand downtown 55-and-older living

By Alex Bass

alex.bass@triangletribune.com

DURHAM - Barbara Lennon went the extra mile, literally.

Lennon, who has spent most of her life in Durham, applied for a unit in the Willard Street Apartments last year. One might recognize Lennon's youthful, occupational energy - including work as a Durham Police Department crossing guard - and not believe she is approaching her 64th birthday, which she will celebrate in her Ashton Place Apartments home.

"Every time she swings by and waves her hand, an immediate smile goes ear-to-ear across my face," said Ashton Place assistant property manager Tytia Jones, who remembers Lennon's Willard Street application.

Jones knew Ashton Place - with 51 affordable units for residents 55 and older - was on the horizon and approximately a mile away on Jackson Street. Jones realized there could be an opportunity for all of the needed pieces to fit together for Lennon.

"We can talk and have conversations, and you can walk away feeling good," Lennon said. Lennon, who worked for Durham Public Schools in child nutrition for 25 years, just marked five years in her crossing guard capacity. The opportunity to see Lennon and others, and how everyone helps each other, with simple errands and transportation to doctors' appointments and other civic endeavors, has been transformative for

Please see ASHTON/2A

Organ donors 'turn loss into hope' for survivors

By Freda Freeman
CORRESPONDENT

Just as in life, the last thing Tyrone Berry did before his death was to show love. But this time it wasn't toward family members or loved ones. It was toward complete strangers.

When Berry, 63, of Carolina

Shores, died on May 30, he donated his organs so that others may live. "Signing up to be a donor, it's more than checking a box. It's really an act of love, and I feel like that's what that heart [on your driver's license] means because you're showing a true act of love to someone. Whether

it's someone being able to walk their daughter down the aisle, someone seeing their kids graduate or grandparents getting to see their grandchildren, it's a true act of love," said his daughter, Tyrisha Berry, of Raleigh.

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Index
News 1A
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Life/Religion 5A
Sports 6A
Focus 8A

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Organ donors 'turn loss into hope' for survivors

Continued from page 1A

Tyrisha Berry said her father saved the life of a 51-year-old woman with a liver transplant. "In the midst of grief, knowing that a part of my loved one lives on to help others is a deep sense of comfort and meaning. I basically had the power to turn loss into hope. It strengthens me every day knowing my dad did that, and I'm a part of that," she said.

A heart symbol on a driver's license identifies the person as an organ donor. Berry signed up to be a donor on Aug. 26, 2019.

Tyrisha Berry said she was shocked when she learned her dad was a designated organ donor, but, at same time, she was not surprised because "my dad was a stand-up guy you could call on for anything. My dad would give you the shirt off his back."

Berry, who suffered cardiac arrest the week of his death, was not only the first Black person, but he was the first-ever organ donor at Columbus Regional Healthcare System in Whiteville in 90 years. Inspired by Berry's story, other people have since signed up to be donors.

Historically, organ donations occur at larger hospitals with larger critical units and trauma centers. Grassroot efforts are being made to increase donations at smaller hospitals like Columbus Regional

Hospital, said Honorbridge CEO Danielle Bumarch. Honorbridge, the largest organ procurement organization in the state, works to recover donated organs, eyes and tissue from deceased donors for transplantation.

August is National Minority Donor Awareness Month. African Americans constitute 14% of the U.S. population, yet they represent more than 27% of the national organ transplant waitlist.

Black people are three times more likely than white people to need a kidney transplant, yet they are significantly underrepresented among registered donors, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health.

More than 4,000 people in North Carolina are on the transplant waitlist. Over half are minorities. Thomas said it's a blessing when a family knows their wishes.

The need for donated organs among minorities is more critical than ever. HonorBridge is working with HBCUs, civic organizations, and sororities and fraternities on public education campaigns to increase donations among African Americans, Bumarch said.

"In North Carolina, the need is really great. It's over 50% of the waiting list, over 2,000 of our 4,000 patients are minorities. It's 90% of the kidney waiting list; that's the most needed organ that really hits that

population. Nationally, the need is about 70%, so our need is greater here for those minority populations," she said.

"In 2024, 70% of the kidneys were transplanted into minority populations. Sometimes kidneys and pancreases are transplanted together because of renal failure and diabetes. In those cases, 90% went to minority populations. It's important to know that those gifts do come back to their population, and especially with kidneys, it's best to have a match like that."

Allen Thomas, an HonorBridge family support coordinator, has been at the bedside with families for over 12 years as they make the devastating decision to withdraw life support after a loved one has been declared brain dead.

Thomas said it's a blessing when a family knows their wishes.

"I see families struggle trying to understand what would their loved one want to do whenever they're not registered. It's a gift to the family to know what the deceased wishes rather than let the family grapple with that decision. When family members place that heart on their license and make their decision known, they are really giving their loved ones a gift," Thomas said.

Visit honorbridge.org or donatelifenc.org for more information.

Eagles ready to fly!!!



AARON DAYE, NCCU LIFE

St. Aug's alumni split on latest university news

By Alex Bass

alex.bass@triangletribune.com
RALEIGH - Saint Augustine's University is planning a Sept. 2 virtual fall semester start, and social media responses have been mixed.

Besides not allowing students, or anyone else, on campus, the school also needed a temporary injunction to preserve its accreditation with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges.

On Facebook, alumni posted expressions of thanksgiving and requests for continuing prayers. Others reaffirm the perpetual task for the board of trustees to reunify SAU stakeholders.

"Praise God, from whom all blessings flow," wrote Nancy Mason. Jacquelyn Mickie McCloud, meanwhile, left readers to draw their own conclusions but seemingly with a pointed implication.

McCloud wrote, "I do not mean no harm, but have y'all been in contact with Dr. Kevin E. James or Chris Rey?" James and Rey are presidents of Morris Brown and Barber-Scotia Colleges, respectively. James led Morris Brown in regaining accreditation with another agency. Rey is working to do likewise at Barber-Scotia.

"New leadership and accreditation for limited time - Interesting," wrote Crystal Bodie Smith.

Former vice chair Sophie Gibson is the new chair. V. Lynette Mitchell was named vice chair. Previous chair Brian Boulware remains a member of the board.

"This reshuffling must not be dismissed as corporate musical chairs - recycling the same leadership under new titles," SaveSAU Coalition chair Ben Johnson said in an Aug. 19 news release. "When the music stops, those responsible for failure must step aside, not simply change seats."

For some, the changes underscore the need for greater transparency in all endeavors. Gibson joined



COURTESY

Sophie Gibson

the BOT in 2024 and attended May's commencement. Boulware was absent for the 2024-25 academic year's fall and spring commencements. The Tribune's attempts to contact Gibson were unsuccessful.

SaveSAU took legal action last year to have the entire BOT removed but was deemed not to have appropriate standing to bring the case to court.

Mitchell joined the BOT earlier this year before ascending to the No. 2 leadership post. Gibson and Mitchell are two of eight BOT members - among 16 total - who began their service in either 2024 or 2025.

Steven Williams, tapped as the National Alumni Association representative on the BOT in 2024, still has not been seated. "While I have not had the privilege of direct nor indirect communication with the newly appointed chair, Ms. Sophie Gibson, since her appointment announcement, I look forward to one day soon collaborating closely with her and other board members to resolve any outstanding issues as swiftly as possible," Williams said via text message.

"I value transparency and actively working towards a resolution that will support the best interests of Saint Augustine's University and its stakeholders."

The SAU website includes a biography for Gibson among its "Board of Trustees" section. Gibson is a marketing CEO in the Atlanta area, where Boulware resides, too. Boulware filed for bankruptcy relative to his three Georgia cigar bars last May. Mitchell, a 1989 SAU graduate, is director of finance and administration at Temple University.

Johnson offered a timeline for measuring the new leaders' transparency commitments. "If they don't have questions, then they should have questions within the first 60 days of being on the board," he said.

Johnson was unaware of SAU's newly posted spring 2026 calendar, which suggests students will attend classes on campus. January 3-4 are listed as "check-in and move-in" dates for new and returning students, respectively. Students last lived on campus last fall before they departed for Thanksgiving break and completed the semester online.

"We have to pass inspections, and we don't know when that is going to occur," Johnson said.

Reps say state health insurance increases will hurt worker retention

By Lynn Bonner
NC NEWSLINE

The board overseeing the health insurance plan for North Carolina workers and retirees voted last week to raise most enrollees' premiums to help cover a deficit that has grown to \$507 million this year.

State Treasurer Brad Briner, whose office oversees the health plan, said no one wants to increase premiums but the hikes are needed to remedy the plan's financial instability. The insurance plan has been relying on cash reserves to pay bills because it has been paying out more than it has taken in. The reserves are running low.

State employee and teacher representatives told the board that low wages and higher insurance premiums will push workers out of their jobs and make it even harder to fill vacancies. While premiums are increasing, state employees and teachers are not guaranteed raises this year. Republicans in the state House and Senate have not

agreed on a comprehensive budget that includes state employee and teacher raises.

"We know that the State Health Plan has financial challenges, but this board's responsibility is not to balance those challenges on the backs of the people who work with our kids every single day," said Bryan Proffitt, vice president of the North Carolina Association of Educators. "Your job is to protect the health and well-being of people who serve this state."

The board should demand more funding from legislators, Proffitt said, because they should not have a "free pass" to underfund schools and benefits.

Ardis Watkins, executive director of the State Employee Association of North Carolina, blamed the health care industry for high prices. "This health plan had been an ATM for the corporate health care machine," she said. Without raises and with inflation, state employees are already falling behind, Watkins said.

Cherry Hospital em-

ployee Charles Owens told the board that the psychiatric hospital in Goldsboro is understaffed, forcing workers to endure 12- and 16-hour shifts. "A steady paycheck and a decent health care benefit were the last things that were assisting us in getting new hires and retaining permanent staff," he said. Health plan trustees should have waited to know the size of employee raises before saddling them with higher insurance costs, Owens said.

The plan sets up four salary tiers. Employees who make \$50,000 or less and insure only themselves under the basic plan will see increases of \$10 per month to \$35. Workers in the top tier who make more than \$90,000 will pay \$80 in premiums for comparable coverage.

Premiums will be reduced for enrollees who include their children in their insurance plans.

Adding more insured children will help improve the plan and help single parents, said Health Plan executive administrator Tom Friedman.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

CHAMBER

August is Black Business Month. The Greater Durham Black Chamber of Commerce has a full schedule of events throughout the month. Visit www.gdbcc.org.

NETWORKING

The Chamber's next Business After Hours is Aug. 28, 5-7 p.m., Rizzo Center, 150 DuBois Home Lane. Register at business.carolina-chamber.org.

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Send business briefs to info@triangletribune.com.

Ashton Place Apts. expand 55-and-over living

Continued from page 2A

Street communities.

"We wouldn't be where we are as a university if it weren't for partnerships," Price said. "We are going to be looking for those kinds of opportunities going forward."

Ashton Place includes 28 one-bedroom one-bathroom units, 11 two-bedroom one-bathroom units, and 12 efficiency units, with 50 of 51 total units occupied.

The lone vacancy is due to a recent resident's death. Prospective residents must earn between 30% to 60% of the area median income.

A tenant at 30%, Jones said, will have rent around

\$475, while a resident at 60% will spend about \$1,105. Each unit includes free Wi-Fi, available storage lockers and easy access to public transportation.

For Lennon, the Wi-Fi helps her connect virtually with her grandchildren who visit her each summer. Her peace of mind in Ashton Place is reaffirmed each time she reminds her daughter, an engineer in Georgia, and grandchildren to continue living and thriving.

"They don't have to worry about mom," Lennon said. "They can go on and do what they need to do."

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Congress moves to block Trump's Social Security assault

By Stacy M. Brown

BLACK PRESS USA

In its nonstop assault on the most vulnerable Americans, the Trump administration is preparing to impose sweeping cuts to Supplemental Security Income, a program that provides a lifeline for the nation's poorest seniors, children and severely disabled adults. The proposed rule would strip eligibility from hundreds of thousands and slash monthly payments by as much as one-third, even as new data confirms Social Security's trust funds are facing insolvency within the next decade.

According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, nearly 400,000 people stand to lose critical income. That includes more than 275,000 who would see cuts of about \$300 a month, and over 100,000 who could lose their benefits entirely. The changes target families already under strain, specifically SSI recipients living with relatives who receive SNAP, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

The Biden administration had expanded the definition of "public assistance household," shielding recipients from the harshest penalties. That safeguard ensured that low-income families receiving food assistance would not be punished for offering shelter to an elderly parent or disabled child. Trump's rollback would erase that protection, returning to outdated rules from 1980.

"Receiving food assis-



tance from SNAP would no longer be enough to qualify a family as a 'public assistance household,'" CBPP analysts warned. "The resulting SSI benefit cuts would be felt in low-income households with disabled family members or older relatives across the country."

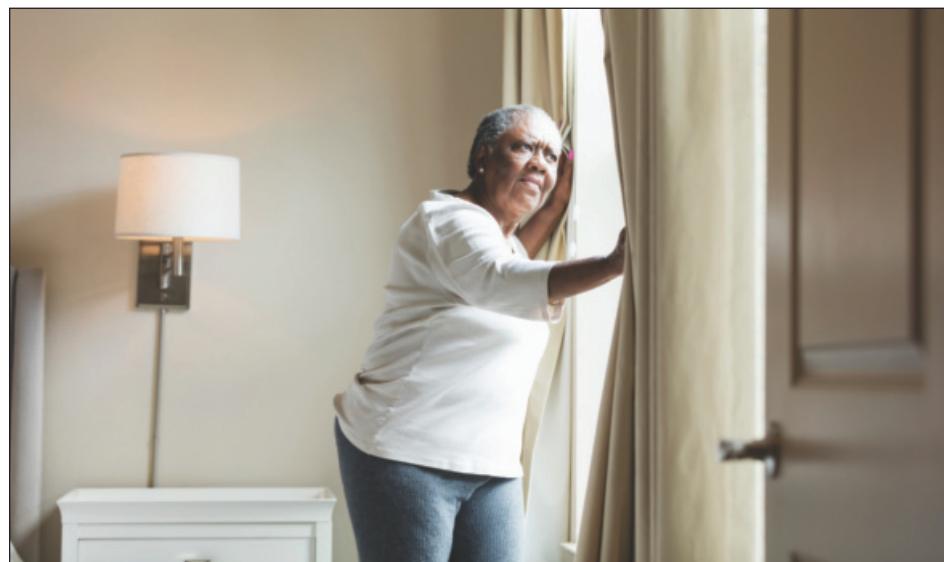
The typical multi-person SNAP household with an SSI recipient survives on about \$17,000 annually — well below the poverty line. Under the new rule, a woman with Down Syndrome living with low-income parents could see her benefits plunge from \$967 to less than \$700 a month, with families forced to track and report household expenses line by line.

Unions and community groups are mobilizing. The AFL-CIO's "It's Better in a Union" bus tour stopped in Bakersfield, California, where California Nurses Association President Sandy Reding blasted the Trump budget bill as "a cruel piece of legislation that will have disastrous consequences for the most vulnerable in our communities, including the patients I care for in Bakersfield." In Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, American Federation of Government Employees President Everett Kelley pledged to fight Social Security staffing cuts.

"Across the country, we are using our voice — as workers, as parents, as people who care about our communities — to demand that this administration and Congress do whatever it takes to protect Social Security," Kelley asserted. "The American people deserve nothing less."

For the 7.5 million Americans who rely on SSI each month, including many with severe disabilities, the stakes are life and death.

"For 90 years, we've kept America's greatest anti-poverty success story alive," Jessica Lapointe, president of AFGE Council 220, told reporters. "We serve widows, orphans, the elderly, disabled, every vulnerable soul in your families and your communities, and they deserve respect and dignity when they come for their earned benefits."



NC to cut Medicaid rates by 3% across all providers

By Brandon Kingdollar
NC NEWSLINE

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services will slash Medicaid spending by \$319 million effective Oct. 1, Secretary Devdutta "Dev" Sangvai wrote in a letter to General Assembly leaders Monday.

That reduction — coming in response to a shortfall in the state budget and changes to Medicaid policy in the One Big Beautiful Bill Act — means the state will reduce rates by 3% to all medical providers, as well as cuts of 8% to 10% for inpatient and residential services, and 10% for behavioral therapy and analysis for patients with autism.

In the letter obtained by NC Newsline, Sangvai wrote that while NCDHHS requested \$819 million for the 2025-26 Medicaid rebase — the state's calculation of required costs for the Medicaid program, accounting for growth in enrollment, increases in drug prices and other factors — just \$500 million was appropriated for those purposes, requiring widespread reductions.

As part of a stopgap budget signed by Gov. Josh Stein on Aug. 6, the General Assembly appropriated \$600 million for Medicaid, \$500 million of which will go to the rebase and \$82 million will go to the Medicaid Managed Care Oversight Fund,

which Sangvai wrote still has a \$33 million deficit.

The remaining \$18 million will make up for what he called a "missing LME/MCO transfer," referring to the Local Management Entity/Managed Care Organizations that manage some Medicaid services.

The letter also outlines plans to entirely cease optional coverage for GLP-1s, drugs like Ozempic and Wegovy commonly prescribed for weight loss. GLP-1s will continue to be covered when prescribed for other health issues such as diabetes and heart disease.

The NCDHHS will also pull funding for the Integrated Care for Kids Pilot, which will end ahead of schedule, a spokesperson wrote in an emailed statement.

Sangvai also indicated administrative cuts ahead, including ending or reducing contracts, letting temporary employees go, and ending some quality control and compliance functions.

"These cuts will significantly impair NC Medicaid's ability to be responsive to emerging needs and inquiries, monitor services for quality and compliance, and continue making timely operational improvements," he wrote.

In a statement to NC Newsline, NCDHHS spokesperson Summer Tonizzo wrote that the appropriation shortfall "will

result in cuts to services and reductions to provider rates to stay within budget."

"All Medicaid providers will face a minimum 3% reduction in reimbursement rates, with some services — including physicians, hospice care, behavioral health long-term care and nursing home services — seeing steeper cuts of 8% and 10%," Tonizzo wrote. "These reductions may cause some providers to stop accepting Medicaid patients, as the lowered rates could make it financially unsustainable to continue offering care."

Tonizzo reiterated Sangvai's comment that "NCDHHS has attempted to make these cuts reversible in the event that additional funding is approved."

A spokesperson for Stein's office wrote that he continues to urge the legislature to pass a complete budget and make up for the shortfall in the Medicaid rebase.

"The Governor has been clear since March that the General Assembly needs to fully fund the Medicaid rebase, and he recently reiterated his concern when their Band-Aid budget fell \$319 million short of what is needed to fund North Carolinians' health care," the spokesperson wrote. "Governor Stein continues to urge the legislature to do its job and pass a budget that stops these forced cuts."

Why young Americans dread turning 26

By Elisabeth Rosenthal and Hannah Norman

KFF HEALTH NEWS

Amid the challenges of adulthood, one rite of passage is unique to the United States: the need to find your own health insurance by the time you turn 26. That is the age at which the Affordable Care Act declares young adults generally must get off their family's plan and figure out their coverage.

When the ACA was voted into law in 2010, what's known as its dependent coverage expansion was immediately effective, guaranteeing health insurance to millions of young Americans up to age 26 who would otherwise not have had coverage. But for years, Republicans have whittled away at the infrastructure of the original ACA. Long gone is the requirement to buy insurance. Plans sold in the ACA's online insurance marketplaces have no stringent quality standards. Costs keep rising, and eligibility requirements and subsidies are moving targets.

The erosion of the law has now created an "insurance cliff" for Americans who are turning 26 and don't have a job that provides medical coverage. Some, scared off by the complexity of picking a policy and by the price tags, tumble over the edge and go without insurance in a health system where the rate for an emergency room visit can be thousands, if not tens of thousands, of dollars. Today, an estimated 15% of 26-year-olds go uninsured, which, according to a KFF analysis, is the highest rate among Americans of any age.

If they qualify, young adults can sign up for Medicaid, the federal-state program for Americans with

low incomes or disabilities, in most but not all states. Otherwise, many buy cheap subpar insurance that leaves them with insurmountable debt following a medical crisis. Others choose plans with extremely limited networks, losing access to longtime doctors and medicines.

They often find those policies online, in what has become a dizzyingly complicated system of government-regulated insurance marketplaces created by the ACA. The marketplaces vary in quality from state to state; some are far better than others. But they generally offer few easily identifiable, affordable and workable choices.

"The good news is that the ACA gave young people more options," said Karen Pollitz, who directed consumer information and insurance oversight at the Department of Health and Human Services during the Obama administration.

"The bad news is the good stuff is hidden in a minefield of really bad options that'll leave you broke if you get sick."

Publicly funded counselors called "navigators" or "assistants" can help insurance seekers choose a plan. But those programs vary by state, and often customers don't realize that the help is available. The Trump administration has cut funding to publicize and operate those navigator programs.

In addition, changes to Medicaid eligibility in the policy bill recently passed by Congress could mean that millions more ACA enrollees lose their insurance, according to the Congressional Budget Office. Those changes threaten the very viability of the ACA marketplaces, which currently provide insurance to 24 million Americans.

Damian Phillips, 26, a re-

porter at a West Virginia newspaper, considered joining the Navy to get insurance as his 26th birthday approached. Instead, he felt he "didn't make enough to justify having health insurance" and has reluctantly gone without it.

Ethan Evans, a 27-year-old aspiring actor in Chicago who works in retail, fell off his parents' plan and temporarily signed up for Medicaid. But the diminished mental health coverage meant cutting back on visits to his long-time therapist.

Rep. Maxwell Frost, a Florida Democrat and the first Gen Z member of Congress, was able to quit his job and run for office at 25 only because he could stay on his mother's plan until he turned 26, he said.

Now 28, he is insured through his federal job. "The ACA was groundbreaking legislation, including the idea that every American needs health care," he said. "But there are pitfalls, and one of them is that when young adults turn 26, they fall into this abyss."

Why 26? The decision to make 26 the cutoff age for staying on a parent's insurance was "kind of arbitrary," recalled Nancy-Ann DeParle, deputy chief of staff for policy in the Obama White House. "My kids were young, and I was trying to imagine when my child would be an adult."

Before that time, children were often kicked off family plans at much younger ages, typically 18. The Obama administration's idea was that young adults were most likely settling into careers and jobs with insurance by 26. If they still didn't have access to job-based insurance, Medicaid and the ACA marketplaces would offer alternatives, the thinking went.

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BIDS



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Exterior Renovations for Durham County Justice Services Center
IFB 26-009

Sealed bids, so marked, will be received by the County of Durham Purchasing Division until **2:00 P.M. Eastern Time, on September 30, 2025**, in the Conference Room, Durham County Administrative Complex, 201 East Main Street, 7th Floor, Durham, North Carolina, at which time they will be publicly opened and read. The work contemplated will include:

Replacement of all steel windows with aluminum windows, restoration of the historic limestone façade at 326 East Main Street, Durham, North Carolina 27701 as well as repairing leaks that appear to originate from previous architectural cementitious patches now de-bonded or spalled, cracks in the cementitious coatings and substrates, the parapet coping system, and windows/doors.

The building is located in a historic district and will be reviewed by the Durham Historic Preservation Commission for Compliance with documented Certificates of Appropriateness.

Reference drawing sheet A003 for full project scope narrative.

A Pre-Bid Conference will be held on September 3, 2025, at 10:00 A. M. Eastern Time, at the Justice Services Center Multi-Purpose Room, 326 East Main Street, Durham, North Carolina. All bidders who intend to bid are encouraged to attend.

A Site Visit will be held at the site (326 East Main Street Durham, NC 27701) immediately following the Pre-Bid Conference.

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 Architect (609 William Vickers Ave, Durham, NC 27701); and at the following locations:

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

Plans and Specifications may be purchased for a refundable deposit of \$600. Deposit checks shall be made payable to the Architect **"withArchitecture"**. Contractors may secure document sets after 9:00 A.M., until 5:00 P.M., Monday through Friday at the office of the Architect (withArchitecture). The full deposit shall be returned to those Contractors who return the Specifications and Plans in good condition within ten (10) days after the date set for receiving bids. Plans and Specifications are to be returned to the office of the Architect.

Documents can be issued electronically at no cost to the Contractor.

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.

A 5% bid security is required with each bid that equals or exceeds \$500,000.00.

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

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LEGAL NOTICES

NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA DURHAM COUNTY In the General Court of Justice, District Court Division File No. 25CV000669-340. MORIAH ASHLEIGH WILLIAMS V. EFRAIN MADRIGAL-CERON.

(Body) Defendant: Take notice that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above-entitled action. The nature of the relief being sought is as follows: A complaint for Temporary and Permanent Custody. You are required to answer the petition no later than 40 days from the first publication of this notice published originally on the 17th day of August, 2025, exclusive of such date, and upon your failure to answer or defend the Complaint within said time period, the relief being sought will be granted. This, the 11th day of August, 2025. Jeffrey Scott Thompson, Attorney for Plaintiff 103 S. Main Street, Louisburg, NC 27549.

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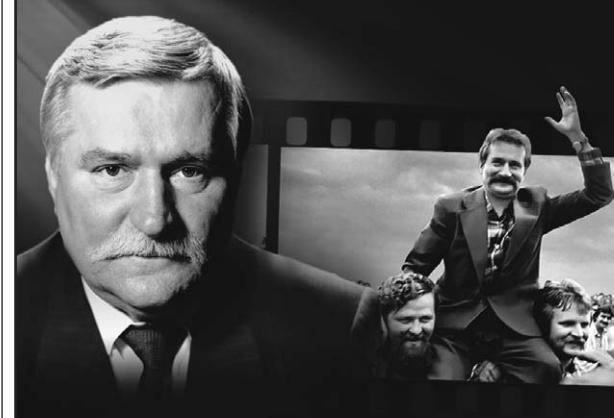
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Sunday's Edition**

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COURTESY

Pastors take notice: these four things you are not

By Mark Dance

SBC TEXAN

Admit it. You do not have enough time or energy to do everything that is expected of you. I'm in that same leaky boat. The good news is that we are not supposed to. Although our gifts and calling are irrevocable, they don't make us invincible.

What if we refused to be the solution to every problem in our church? Imagine defining ministry success by how our members succeed instead of how we succeed? Since our call is to equip people for ministry, we should be giving plates away, not spinning them more ourselves. To help you better focus on your calling, I would like to suggest four professions pastors are not called to.

A PASTOR IS NOT A REFEREE

Referees and umpires have the most thankless jobs on the planet. They should wear spots instead of stripes, because they are huge targets for criticism. Conflict resolution may be the part of a pastor's job that comes with the most pressure and least preparation. Although every pastor (and believer) is called to be a minister of reconciliation, some of us are more gifted and equipped for it

than others.

I took too many years to give myself permission to not fix every feud between spouses, siblings and church members. God reminded me how He fixed the first church conflict in history — with an assist from deacons. As these capable lay leaders waged peace, the pastors refocused on prayer and the ministry of the Word, which led to another wave of growth.

A PASTOR IS NOT AN ATTORNEY

When conflicts reach a legal impasse, some people will consult their pastors for advice. Being an expert in God's law does not qualify you to be an expert in man's law.

We have heard too many examples of ministers mishandling reports of sexual abuse by trying to navigate around the justice system instead of partnering with it. Although it may seem like the line between spiritual counsel and legal counsel is grey, the stakes are too high to go with your gut.

A PASTOR IS NOT A THERAPIST

Mental health issues are difficult to diagnose for any nonprofessional. Taking a counseling class in seminary does not qualify

you to diagnose yourself, much less someone else. In some states, it is not even lawful to use the word "counselor" without the credentials to back it up.

I confess that it is not always easy to discern between a chemical problem and a character problem, as some people struggle with both at the same time. If you suspect someone needs more than you can offer, please encourage them to talk to their doctor or a licensed therapist.

A PASTOR IS NOT A GENERALIST

Pastors must discern whether they are equipping people or enabling them. If we become the hero of someone's story, we divert their attention from the only real Savior. A hero complex has led many pastors down steep paths of burnout, depression or worse.

By the way, I personally know a few pastors who are also practicing attorneys, therapists or referees, but they are the exception. What profession are you practicing that is beyond your gifts and calling? Perhaps it is time you turn your focus back to your primary purpose, thereby encouraging others in your church or ministry to do the same.



COURTESY

Orchestra Noir returns to Raleigh on Aug. 29.

All-Black orchestra is a 'party on stage'

By Freida Freeman

CORRESPONDENT

see Black excellence when they see us and the level of show that we put on, because Maestro is a person who demands perfection, and we always want to rise to that occasion," she said.

Orchestra Noir first performed in Raleigh last year. The members are excited to return this year with The Culture 2000 Tour at the Martin Marietta Center for the Performing Arts on Aug. 29 at 8 p.m. Tickets are available at Ticketmaster.

"Raleigh was one of the most charged up audiences in our history. Charlotte and Raleigh were the first cities we toured, so they kind of started this touring business for us. They just take to it, they love it," said Rodgers who first studied orchestra in North Carolina.

Tiffany Goode, a trumpeter who's been with the orchestra for seven years, described Orchestra Noir as a "beautiful gumbo of classical-trained musicians who use their instruments to create a new beautiful way of listening to R&B and the different kinds of music that we love."

Goode said Orchestra Noir wants to leave a legacy of Black musical excellence. "We want them to

strumental music teacher and started five orchestral programs in five schools.

While teaching, Rodgers realized he wanted to be a conductor, so he started conducting throughout Europe, where he won several competitions. After that, he asked himself what he could do to make an impact. Having thought about starting a Black orchestra for a long time, he became mission focused during the Black Lives Matter Movement, and decided 2016 was the time and Atlanta was the place. Today, the orchestra has 50 members, 25 when on tour.

Of all his accomplishments, Rodgers — conductor, composer, arranger and director — said he's most proud to lead his ensemble.

"A conductor knows that you have to build with people, and an orchestra has to know you over time, but if you don't have the right leadership skills in play, it won't happen. So, to have an orchestra, build it yourself, and exist for almost 10 years, I'm proud of that. And to do it with my people, to do it with African Americans, I'm most proud of that," he said.

AROUND THE TRIANGLE

KNIGHTDALE FOOD TRUCKS

Night Crawl Food Truck Rodeo is Aug. 30, 5-11 p.m., Haven Farm, 8521 Buffaloe Road.

RALEIGH SCHOOL SUPPLIES:

* Backpack Giveaway, Aug. 24, 3-7 p.m., 1911 Poole Road
* Back to School Bash, Aug. 24, noon to 7 p.m., 6180 Capital Boulevard

MENTAL HEALTH

Community Conversation on Mental Health is Aug. 23, 4-7 p.m., 1725 N. New Hope Road. Contact: Justice Served NC at 919-594-9076.

RODEO

Raleigh Food Truck Rodeo is Aug. 24, noon to 7 p.m., 998 Fayetteville St.

CONCERT

N.C. Central Jazz Collective will perform Aug. 28 in Moore Square Park, downtown Raleigh.

DATING

Board Game Speed Dating is Aug. 28, 7-9 p.m., Gizmo Brew Works, 5901 Triangle Drive. Tickets: www.eventbrite.com

BLOCK PARTY

Oak City Music Collective

END OF SUMMER BLOCK PARTY

End of Summer Block Party is Aug. 30, noon to 11 p.m., Gipson Play Plaza at Dorothea Dix Park.

FESTIVAL

African American Cultural Festival is Aug. 30-31, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m., downtown Raleigh.

DURHAM INTERNET

Durham will offer free internet to low-income families for a limited time. Learn more at: www.durhamnc.gov/5397/MiFi-Distribution.

BLACKNESS

Black August in the Park commemorates 10th anniversary Aug. 24, 4-6 p.m., Durham Central Park, 501 Foster St. An "All Blacks Parade" starts at 3 p.m. at Black Wall Street Marker on Parrish Street.

ROUNDTABLE

The next Community Luncheon Roundtable is Aug. 28, noon, Elizabeth Street UMC Fellowship Hall. Open to the public.

FORUM

Durham Rising's candidate forum is Aug. 28, 6 p.m., Lyon Park Community Center, 1309 Halley St.

SUMMIT

NCCU and OpenAI is hosting a National AI Summit for HBCUs Aug. 29, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., NCCU Student Center, 500 Nelson St. Register: www.nccu.edu/events/.

NAACP

NAACP Durham Branch general meeting is Aug. 31, 3 p.m., Immanuel Temple SDA Church, 2102 S. Alston Ave.

TATTOOS

"How the 60s and 70s Rewired the Future of Tattooing" fundraiser is Aug. 31, 7 p.m., Welcome Tattoo, 316 W. Geer St., Suite B. All proceeds benefit Freedom German Shepherd Rescue. Email: info@welcometattoo.com

FESTIVAL

Early deadline for film submissions for the Full Frame Documentary Film Festival ends Aug. 31. Visit www.fullframefest.org/.

CHAPEL HILL SLEEP

The Importance of Sleep Hygiene lecture is Aug. 26, 4-5:30 p.m., Seymour Center, 2551 Homestead Road. Register by Aug. 25 to 919-968-2070.



August is Black Business Month

Support trusted reporting and strong community storytelling.

During Black Business Month, consider contributing to The Triangle Tribune by donating on our website.

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Veteran HBCU coaches proud of family

Southern head football coach Terrence Graves began his student-athlete career as a freshman at Wake Forest University in 1989. He transferred to Winston-Salem State a year later and played under legendary coach Pete Richardson. He never left.

HBCUs, that is.

Graves graduated from WSSU in 1994 after leading the Rams to two CIAA football championships. He began his coaching career as a Ram also, coaching defensive backs.

Since 1993, he's traveled the HBCU coaching circuit in various positions to Southern, Norfolk State, back to Southern, Mississippi Valley State, Grambling State and back to Southern for a third time.

BONITA BEST Graves also has been recruited by predominately white institutions during his 32-year coaching career - for much more money - but, as the popular saying goes, "All money ain't good money."

"HBCUs mean everything to me," Graves said. "I grew up near Norfolk State, went to school in the ACC and when that didn't work out, I knew I was going back to an HBCU at Winston-Salem State. I started my coaching career at WSSU."

So, forgive Graves if he has a big chip on his shoulder when it comes to the perception of HBCU coaches. Not the coaches who come calling only for a quick year or two paycheck before heading elsewhere, but the coaches who are proud to be members of the HBCU family - with no apologies to anyone.

"For HBCU coaches, there is a negative stain on us," he said. "People think we're only here because we can't go anywhere else, but we're here because we choose to be. I've had opportunities to coach in the SEC, the NFL, the Big Ten, but this is where my heart is. I don't regret it one bit."

Graves and N.C. Central coach Trei Oliver both said at the MEAC-SWAC Challenge press conference that coaching at HBCUs is about so much more. Yes, you've got to win but while you're there, it's about being a positive role model for young men who may not know what that's like.

Which brings up another sticky topic - the prevalence of former professional athletes with little to no coaching experience getting HBCU jobs.

"Those guys can help bring in some exposure and that's good for the league," Oliver said. "But there are a lot of really good coaches out there that are getting overlooked, and it's their time."

Graves concurred with a bit of shade on the side.

"A lot of good coaches put the time in and the work, and all they need is the opportunity," he said. "We're (veteran coaches) not going to lay down. Just because we came up through the ranks, we ain't taking a backseat to nobody."

Rules Changes for College Football

The NCAA has instituted 14 new rule changes for the 2025 season. Some notables ones:

* Feigning injuries. If a player is "injured" after the ball is spotted, the team will be charged a timeout or a delay penalty and said player must remain out for at least one play.

* 'T' signal on kickoffs. Any waving signal by any player on a return team will be an invalid signal prohibiting the team from advancing the ball.

* Communications. Coach-to-player helmet communication is now allowed in the FCS.

Please see **HBCU/7A**

The Triangle Tribune Sports

August 24-30, 2025 | 6A

Scholarship Celebration



COURTESY

Caleb Williams, Noah Salcedo and Zione Oliver are recipients of the AISIN North Carolina Corporation Scholarship through Durham Triple Play - Long Ball. The baseball players have participated in the summer league for several years. Each player earned a spot on the regional team once or twice. All three start college this fall.

HBCU FOOTBALL

N.C. Central, Southern open HBCU season in MEAC-SWAC Challenge in Atlanta

By Bonitta Best
editor@triangletribune.com

The HBCU season starts a week early with one game, but it's a doozy.

N.C. Central vs. Southern - MEAC-SWAC Challenge

Atlanta has been good to NCCU coach Trei Oliver.

The Eagles' last visit earned them an HBCU national championship after defeating Jackson State in the 2022 Cricket Celebration Bowl. The year before that, Oliver coached the team to a 23-14 win over Alcorn State in the Challenge.

Both teams are considered blue bloods of HBCU football. Both are well acquainted with each other, and both fell one game short of meeting in last year's Cricket Celebration Bowl.

"When he (coach Terrence Graves) was at Southern (as an assistant), I was at Grambling," Oliver said. "When I was at Southern, he was at Grambling. This will be one of the most athletic teams we'll see this year. It will be a dogfight."

Graves can brag that he is the only head coach to win the Bayou Classic at Southern and

at Grambling State - as fierce a rivalry as there is.

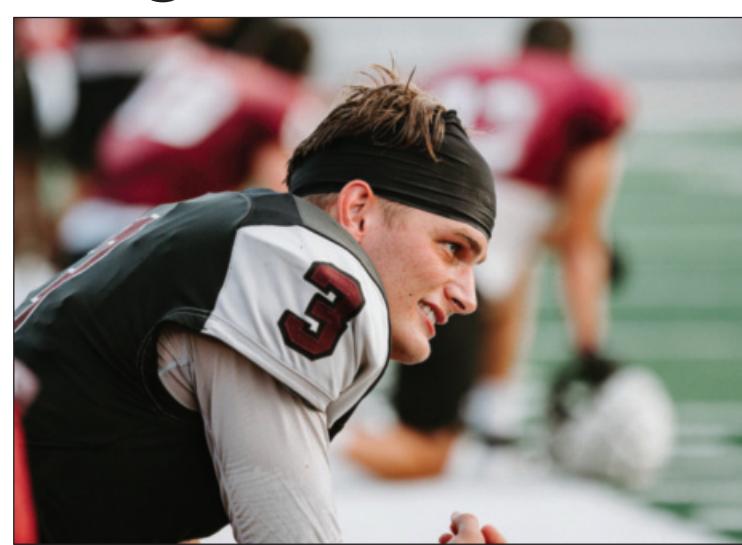
The Jaguars are picked to win the SWAC West with a boatload of talent, led by preseason All-American defensive end Ckelby Givens who led the FCS in tackles for loss (27.5) last season.

"Ckelby is our team leader on and off the field," said Graves who won't name a starting quarterback until Saturday. "We can't turn the ball over."

In Durham, expectations are high as usual for the Eagles. Redshirt senior quarterback Walker Harris is back as a second-year starter with an army of wide receivers at his disposal, including the rehabbed Quentin McCall, Chauncey Spikes and Chance Peterson. McCall and Spikes also are redshirt seniors.

Redshirt senior running back Chris Mosley, whom Oliver calls the "fastest guy on the team," will take some of the pressure off Walker, as well as an offensive line with five returning starters.

Still, Walker understands it all starts with him. "I want to take that next step and become an elite quarterback at this level," said Walker who is being



COURTESY

N.C. Central quarterback Walker Harris.

coached by former Eagle superstar Darius Richard. "The biggest thing for me is consistency. I gotta be an elite quarterback from the first quarter to the fourth quarter."

Defensive coordinator Jesse Thompson is the new man in charge of the unit. The former Mississippi Valley State defensive coordinator will also coach the safeties.

Preseason All-American senior defensive back Malcolm Reed, all-conference linebacker Max U'Ren, and defensive linemen Christian Smith and Thomas Johnson lead a veteran pack that held opponents to a league-best 18.4 points per game last season.

"The standard and expecta-

Please see **NCCU/7A**

COLLEGE CORNER



Tyne Ross is the 2025 CAA volleyball preseason player of the year.

Discount CIAA tourney books now on sale

Football season just started, but the CIAA is already discounting its basketball tournament books. Fans can get \$100 off the regular price of \$275 until Sept. 1. In case you're booking your hotel early, the tourney runs Feb. 24-28.

WOMEN

Mohagony Collins ended the 2024-25 season as the

NCAA Division II leader in total blocks and blocks per game. Collins recorded 107 total blocks in just 27 games, which averaged to a nation's best 3.96 per game.

N.C. A&T 2024 CAA Rookie of the Year Tyne Ross is the 2025 CAA volleyball preseason player of the year. Ross is

Please see **CIAA/7A**



Special Olympics NC excels at basketball tournament

SUBMITTED BY SPECIAL OLYMPICS NORTH CAROLINA

A Special Olympics North Carolina team comprised of three SONC athletes and two Unified partners brought home a silver medal in their division in the 2025 Special Olympics North America Unified Women's 3x3 Basketball Tournament in Indianapolis.

Ten teams of Special Olympics athletes and Unified partners

from the United States, Canada and the Caribbean competed in the tournament. Unified competition allows individuals with intellectual disabilities, Special Olympics athletes and individuals without intellectual disabilities to train and compete together.

Special Olympics North Carolina's team included:

* Gabi Angelini, Wake County, athlete

Please see **SPECIAL/7A**



HBCU Hoops Invitational will showcase women's and men's basketball teams in December.

Discount CIAA tourney books now on sale

Continued from page 6A
the first volleyball player to earn preseason honors since the Aggies were in the MEAC in 2020.

"She had an outstanding freshman campaign," 2024 CAA Coach of the Year Hal Clifton said. "We are so proud of her and the work she has put in over the past year, and to receive this honor is a tribute to her work ethic, character and desire to be the best she can be."

Volleyball overachieved last season. Coaches picked the team to finish last, but instead NCAT qualified for the conference tournament and a postseason bid. This year sees more respect as NCAT is picked fourth overall.

HBCU Invitational
Hampton, Cheyney, Bethune-Cookman and Edward Waters women's basketball teams will compete in the inaugural HBCU Hoops Invitational

Tournament Dec. 4-7 at the ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex in Orlando, Florida. A four-team men's bracket will follow the women.

Turnin' Pro
Former N.C. A&T guard Jordyn Dorsey signed with Adana Basketball Club in Turkey.

MEN
N.C. Central

The Eagles released their nonconference basketball schedule Monday. CC only looked for one name, and we saw it: N.C. A&T in Durham on Dec. 6. The Aggies haven't played in McDowell since 2021.

NCCU opens the season at N.C. State. CC thought the Wolfpack would never invite the Eagles back after losing in overtime in their last meeting. What a game that was. That squad is arguably the best one ever under coach LeVelle Moton. The team also travels to ACC opponents

Virginia and North Carolina.

Fayetteville State
The Broncos will induct six individuals and three teams into their 2025 Athletics Hall of Fame. The ceremony is Oct. 10 at the Fulton Recreation Center.

The inductees:
John Michael Cole, golf coach

Kristen Hanzer, women's basketball

Robert "Bobby" Henderson, bowling coach

Martin Herring, men's track & field

Richard Medlin, football

Ines Nieves, women's tennis

1995 volleyball team

2002 women's tennis team

2007 women's bowling team

Invitational
The men's bracket of the HBCU Hoops Invitational consists of Florida A&M, Florida Memorial, Tuskegee and Barber-Scotia.

Special Olympics NC team shines at basketball tournament

Continued from page 6A

* Elli 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

"This team doesn't give up, stop or slow down. They gave it everything

they had for the whole tournament," Crayton said.

The tournament 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 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.

The tournament was held in partnership with Pacers Sports & Entertainment and the Indiana Fever.

NCCU, Southern open HBCU season on ABC

Continued from page 6A

tion for our program will never change," Walker said. "The brand will remain the same. This season is going to be a championship."

The MEAC-SWAC Challenge will air Aug. 23 at 7:30 p.m. on ABC or ESPN platforms. NCCU hosts New Hampshire Aug. 30 at 6 p.m. on ESPN+.

Shaw

New coach Lamar Mingo has completed his football staff with eight assistant coaches.

* Chip Vaughn, defensive coordinator

* Lawrence Kershaw, offensive line/run game coordinator

* Daniel Bender, wide receivers/assistant special teams

* Coleman Blakston, running backs/video coordinator

* Randy Grissom, kicking coach/equipment manager

* Marquis Griffin, secondary/pass game coordinator

* Brodrick Johnson, defensive line

* Stephen Tate, special teams coordinator

Norfolk State

ESPN's "First Take" will broadcast its Aug. 28 show live at the Spartans' Echols Hall.

"This is an incredible opportunity for NSU to be featured on a national platform," NSU Director of Athletics Melody Webb said. "Having 'First Take' on campus allows us to share our story with millions of viewers and celebrate the legacy and future of Spartan pride."

Goodbye. Hello.

* Walsh University QB Carlton "CeeJay" Yarbrough to Allen University

SPORTS SHORTS

RALEIGH

Raleigh Firebirds' annual back-to-school shoe drive is Aug. 23, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., 5915 Oak Forest Road, Suite 103.

* First Tee will teach golf to ages 6-12, every Thursday from Sept. 4 to Oct. 9, Lake Lynn Community Center, 7921 Ray Road.

Call 919-996-2911.

* RDU Classic Kickball Tournament is Sept. 13-14, Pleasant Park. Learn more at rdusports.leagueapps.com/tournaments.

* Ron N Shoot Sports is holding open workouts for

fourth to eighth graders every Saturday beginning Aug. 23, 10 a.m. to noon, Bethesda Community Center, 2003 S. Miami Boulevard.

Send your sports announcements to: info@triangletribune.com. Photos welcome.

Veteran HBCU coaches proud to be in the club

Continued from page 6A

* Defenseless. Any player attempting to recover a loose ball is considered defenseless.

* Unsportsmanlike conduct. If a player brandishes a weapon, it is considered an unsportsmanlike act. Well, duh!



KEMET™
ALL THINGS AUGUST

Hi everyone!
Because it's August, I decided to only deal with things that were connected to the word August! Let's have a little August fun!



WHAT'S IN THE NAME... AUGUST WILSON!

August Wilson was a Black American playwright. Critics call him "theater's poet of Black America". He wrote a collection of ten plays called "The Pittsburgh Cycle". These plays retold the experiences happening in the Black community in the 20th century. Several of his plays in this series, "Fences", "The Piano Lesson", "Ma Rainey's Black Bottom", and "Joe Turner's Come and Gone" won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama. Wilson was inducted into the American Theater Hall of Fame.

WHAT'S IN THE NAME... AUGUST AGBOLA O'BROWNE

August Agbola O'Browne was a Nigerian jazz musician and drummer. O'Browne, born in Nigeria, immigrated to Britain and from there, he ended up in Poland after joining a traveling theater group. He is considered to be a polyglot, which is a person who speaks several languages. In 1928, he was the first West African jazzman to record an album.

"AUGUST" JOKES

"My nephew turns 3 this August... but since money is tight we just got 'till him."

"My wife and I just had a daughter and we named her June.July.August... we call her summer for short."

"A lawyer asked a witness when his birthday was..."

Witness: "20th August."

Lawyer: "What year?"

Witness: "Every year."

"I just asked my dad what his favorite part about being a teacher is..."

He responded with June, July and August."



AUGUST RECIPE FOR KIDS!

Ingredients:

-Mini whole-wheat tortilla
-Cream cheese
-Your favorite pre cut fruit toppings (i.e. strawberries, raspberries, banana slices, kiwi, blueberries)

-Spread cream cheese on the tortilla.

-Put the sliced strawberries around the edge of the tortilla in a circle.

-Put the raspberries in a circle next to the strawberries.

-Put a circle of kiwi next to the raspberries.

-Put a circle of banana slices next.

-End with putting a few blueberries in the center.

-Cut the fruit pizza in quarters - 4 slices

ENJOY!



AUGUST TRIVIA... DO YOU KNOW WHEN?

Choose the correct August date to complete the sentence.

August, 1992 August, 1932

August, 1821 August, 1974

August, 1782

George Washington created the Purple Heart in

Missouri became the 21st state in

Richard Nixon resigned as President of the United States in

Hurricane Andrew devastated South Florida in

Amelia Earhart was the first woman to cross the US in

BORN IN AUGUST!

Draw a line from the celebrity born in August to what they are famous for.

Michael Ealy

Barack Obama

Whitney Houston

Asia Ray

Al Roker

Kandi Reign

Steph Curry

Chandra Wilson

Actor and Director

TV Weather Presenter & Journalist

Professional Basketball Player

Musical Artist

Singer and Actor

44th President of US

Actor

Dancer



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ANSWER KEY

August Trivia

August, 1782

August, 1821

August, 1974

August, 1992

August, 1993

Born in August

Michael Ealy - Actor

Barack Obama - 44th POTUS

Whitney Houston - Singer & Actor

Asia Ray - Dancer

Al Roker - TV Weather

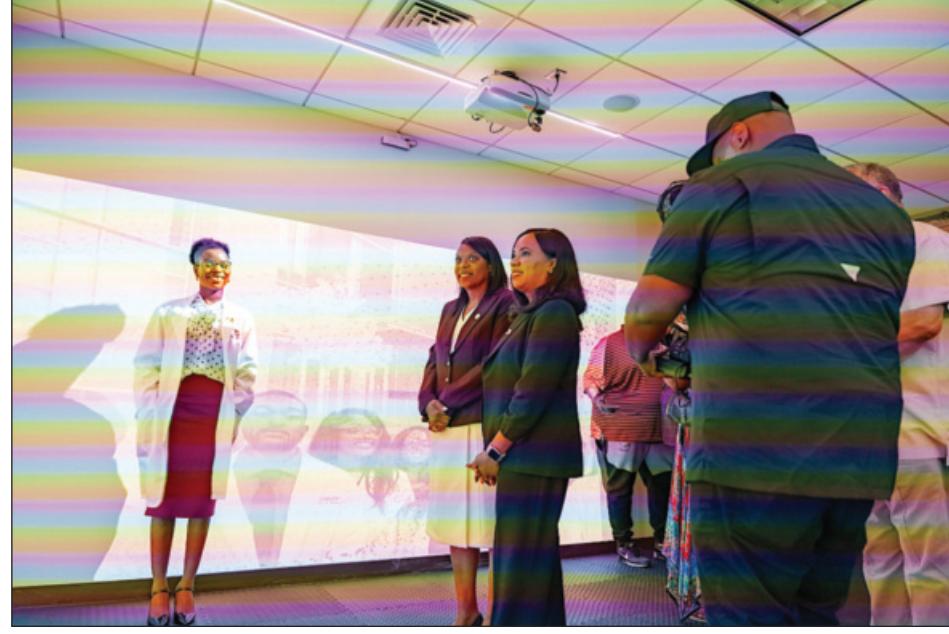
Presenter/Journalist

Kandi Reign - Musical Artist

Seth Curry - Professional

Basketball Player

Chandra Wilson - Actor & Director



COURTESY

Nursing student Noa Leger guides Chancellor Karrie Dixon and NCCU Department of Nursing Chair Yolanda VanRiel through Immersive Interactive Room experience.

N.C. CENTRAL

The department of nursing has advanced simulated training for nursing students by opening an immersive interactive room. The room on the second floor of the nursing building will allow students to engage in virtual medical training scenarios.

NCCU's nursing program is the first at a university in North Carolina to adopt this technology. Among those are training scenarios on therapeutic communication, mental health, post-operative complications and rural community health simulation. "We have access to more than 2,000 scenarios," said Tina

Scott, director of experiential learning.

Ceiling projectors project images onto three walls of the room. Nursing students can also experience touch and even smell. Say, for example, there is a scenario about a 14-car pile-up complete with police, paramedics, injured people on the ground and vehicles on fire.

"There are scent diffusers in there and fans on the ceiling that will pipe in smoke, burning rubber and smells from the environment," Scott said.

In another scenario, "(students) are immersed in a virtual hospital," Scott said. "They can see a virtual patient in a bed. It's a replica

of a hospital setting. It has monitors, a sink. They can also see other nurses. They can see the patient's chart and look up other assessments."

If that's not real enough, nursing students can also talk with the virtual patients in real time. When each scenario is over, instructors review the student's action.

"We will produce nurses in quality and quantity that are needed in North Carolina and the United States," said Mohammad Ahmed, Ph.D., dean of the College of Health and Sciences.

"This is part of our expansion."

COURTESY

Alexis Long

Hillsborough mother in urgent need of lifesaving donor

STAFF REPORTS

Alexis Long, a 27-year-old nurse, mother and Hillsborough native whose life has been devoted to caring for others, is now in urgent need of a lifesaving blood stem cell donor.

Long was diagnosed in 2014 with aplastic anemia and treated at UNC Hospital. The compassion she received from her care team inspired her to become a nurse, earning her degree from UNC Greensboro and returning to work at the very hospital where she had once been a patient. Today, she is a member of

the maternity team, guiding mothers through childbirth and caring for newborns.

Long's life was transformed again this year when she was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukemia. Her best and only chance of survival is a blood stem cell transplant, but a matching donor has yet to be found.

To help find her match, DKMS — the world's largest blood stem cell donor center — is holding a virtual donor drive in Long's name. According to DKMS, 70% of patients must rely on donors from outside

their families, and for patients of mixed heritage like Long, the search can be especially challenging due to a lack of diversity in the donor registry. African American patients, for example, only have a 29% chance of finding a compatible donor compared to 79% for Caucasian patients.

Registering as a potential donor requires only a simple cheek swab. It is quick, painless and could provide someone — possibly Long — with the chance to live a full life. Learn more at: <https://www.dkms.org/get-involved/virtual-drives/swabforalexis>.

SCHOOL NEWS

DURHAM COUNTY

Rob Weldon has been named principal of E.K. Powe Elementary School.

Weldon's career with Durham Public Schools spans multiple roles — Spanish and science teacher, teaching and learning coach, and, most recently, assistant principal at Lyons Farm Elementary.

As part of the leadership team at Lyons Farm, he played a key role in building a thriving school community during its first three years. The school exceeded academic growth every year, and 100% of teachers affirmed that the school is a "good place to work and learn."

Weldon holds a Bachelor of Arts in anthropology from UNC-Chapel Hill, a Master of Education, International Education Administration and Policy Analysis from Stanford University, and a Master of School Administration from N.C. State University.

"I am deeply honored and excited to lead this remarkable school, built in partnership with its vibrant community. As a public educator, I am inspired by the chance to meet the needs of the whole child: academically, socially and emotionally. I look forward to collaborating with the outstanding Powe staff to



COURTESY

Rob Weldon

further strengthen the school's role as a model of excellence in serving our community's children."

Technology Fee

Beginning in this school year, DPS will implement an annual technology fee to help maintain, repair and replace student devices, as well as support the digital resources that enhance teaching and learning. This fee ensures

that students have access to reliable technology for instruction, assessments, and collaboration both in and out of the classroom. The fee is due at the start of the school year and can be paid online or through your child's school.

Families experiencing financial hardship may qualify for a waiver or reduction. Visit www.dpsnc.net/page/technology-fee.

Westside Bottling takes over Coca-Cola Company



COURTESY OF DDI

With tenants now on board, groundbreaking is on the horizon for Westside Bottling, a new mixed-use destination at the former Durham Coca-Cola Bottling Company site at 3214 Hillsborough Road.

The project will bring 370 apartments, 35 townhomes and nearly 70,000 square feet of retail. The development is to be completed by late 2026 through 2027.

Confirmed tenants:

- * Sprouts Farmers Market, this anchor grocery store will be the second in Durham
- * Shake Shack, the first in Durham
- * First Watch, popular breakfast, lunch and brunch restaurant
- * Ulta Beauty, beauty and cosmetics
- * Club Pilates, fitness studio specializing in Pilates
- * Vernis Nail Salon, nail and lash services
- * First Citizens Bank

Bring the garden to your next gathering

By By Melinda Myers

SPECIAL TO THE TRIBUNE

Make every dining experience fun and flavorful by including garden fresh herbs, vegetables and flowers in your meals. Allowing guests to harvest and season their drinks, entrees and sides from the garden or container creates an interactive experience they are sure to remember.

Start your gathering with a review of the menu and a tour of the gardens. Provide guests with a harvest basket and snips so they can collect all their favorite ingredients. Or gather an assortment of herbs and vegetables in advance and display them in containers for your family and guests to make their own selec-

tions.

Include a few herbs and vegetables that can be blended, muddled or added to yours and your guests' favorite beverage. Use the hollow stems of lovage as a straw for tomato juice or bloody Mary. You'll enjoy the celery flavor for this edible straw provides. Provide mint, basil or rosemary leaves to flavor iced tea and lemonade. Just set the herbs near the beverage table for easy access, provide needed utensils and herbal cocktail recipes.

Bring the garden to the party by placing a few containers of herbs, edible flowers and vegetables on your balcony, patio, deck or near the grill. Use small

herb containers as edible centerpieces and add a pair of garden scissors or snips. Label the plants, offer seasoning suggestions, and allow your family and guests to season the meal to their taste when it arrives.

Remind guests to adjust the quantity of herbs used to allow for the difference in flavor intensity of fresh versus dried herbs. In general, you will need two to three times more fresh than dried herbs.

Add a bit of color and unique flavor to the meal with edible flowers. Pick the flowers early in the day when they are at their peak and taste best. Wash them by dipping the flower in a bowl of water and gently shaking. Remove the bitter

tasting base of the petal and the reproductive parts from larger flowers before preparing.

Make sure the flowers you select are edible and free of pesticides. Let your guests know they can eat the flowers, or you'll end up with a pile of petals on the side of every plate. Try nasturtium and daylily blossoms stuffed with cream cheese; calendula, pansy, and borage petals sprinkled on salad; chive flowers for baked potatoes; and mint leaves on top of a slice of chocolate cake.

Harvest your garden and containers regularly to keep plants looking good and producing. Cut the outer leaves of leaf lettuce when they are four to six

inches tall to keep the plant growing new leaves. Pick peppers and tomatoes when fully ripe, so the plant continues flowering and forming new fruit. Remove faded flowers as needed to keep flowering plants covered with blooms.

Dress up your table with a bouquet of your favorite



garden flowers. Pick a few extras to send home with your guests, and they'll surely remember your special gathering filled with homegrown flavor and beauty.

Melinda Myers has written more than 20 gardening books, including *Small Space Gardening*.