



SPORTS

North Carolina transplant athletes share stories, sports



COMMUNITY FOCUS

Raleigh entrepreneur earns H&R Block small business grant

The Triangle Tribune

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HAVE A SAFE Labor Day

Faith, Family, Fellowship and Good Food

St. Augustine's President Emeritus Prezell Robinson celebrates 105 years

By Alex Bass
alex.bass@triangletribune.com
RALEIGH - For Prezell Russell Robinson, every opportunity for faith-filled, familial fellowship is a good time. Food catalyzes conversations for the St. Augustine's University president emeritus, who celebrated his 105th birthday on Aug. 25. Daughter JesSanne Robinson Johnson and her family brought the patriarch's culinary favorites - shrimp, trout and German chocolate cake - for dinner at the same home where

Robinson and his late wife, Lulu, and JesSanne moved in the 1970s after SAU eliminated its presidential residence to make space for a library. "His lineage is going to be there forever, hopefully," Johnson said. "We will be able to appreciate all of the wonderful things he left on campus." The library was dedicated in 1984 in honor of alumnus Robinson - the college's president from 1967-95. Robinson, a World War II (Army) veteran, and a sociologist and educator per his Ivy League Ph.D. de-

gree from Cornell University, extends his lifelong learning now through more listening from the comfort of his living room chair with headphones connecting him with news and music resources. His teaching is timeless, through the treasure trove of handwritten notes - to himself and the institution's sons and daughters. "I know how I felt receiving a handwritten note as a student from the college president," said Everett Ward, who has Robinson's message from when he was

elected freshman class president in 1977. Ward became the first African American executive director of the North Carolina Democratic Party before returning to SAU as its president from 2014-19. He extended traditions of note writing, eating in the cafeteria with students, and including students in scholarly discussions. "That was a Prezell Robinson model of leadership," Ward said. "Your personal success is never enough. If your community is not Please see SAU/2A



St. Aug's President Emeritus Prezell Russell Robinson and daughter JesSanne Robinson Johnson.



ALEX BASS

Monday's groundbreaking was a celebratory affair.

NCCU coach's housing dreams come true in boyhood community

By Alex Bass
alex.bass@triangletribune.com
RALEIGH - LeVelle Moton became emotional well before he spoke on the program for the Aug. 25 Cottages of Idlewild groundbreaking at the Raleigh park bearing his name in his boyhood community. As someone prayed with a teary-eyed Moton before the ceremony, his eyes were watery again when he invoked the name of his late grandmother, Mattie McDougald, who called Moton regularly to pray with her. "She ended every prayer by asking God to bless her kids' kids," Moton said. "I would say, 'God, please bless her kids' kids.' I didn't even know I was praying for myself."

Moton and his Raleigh Raised Development business partners, Clarence Mann and Terrell Midgett, in collaboration with the city, Wake County, Raleigh Area Land Trust, North Carolina Housing and Finance Agency, Coastal Federal Credit Union, Haven Design/Build, Wells Fargo Foundation and scores of other entities, will bring 18 affordable cottages - 14 for sale - to a Raleigh area where emancipated individuals had some of their earliest opportunities for land ownership. The community, which will serve residents earning 30% to 80% of the area median income, is scheduled for completion in approximately 16 months. "This is about ensuring that


young people have a safe place to lay their heads, so they can go to school, so they can eat, so they can build relationships, and then, do like Raleigh Raised - come back, give back and lift up," Raleigh City Councilman Corey Branch said. Moton, who is coaching at his alma mater, N.C. Central, recalled how no one in his neighborhood grew up with a "silver spoon." The groundbreaking included golden shovels. More precious than gold for Moton was the presence of his mother, Hattie McDougald. "It's something that should have been done a long time ago. But we couldn't," she said. "Back Please see NCCU/2A



North Carolinians are no longer in debt to hospitals

By Lynn Bonner
NC NEWSLINE


Medicaid enrollees began receiving letters from hospitals last month telling them their old medical debts have been erased. That medical debt relief is part of the program former Gov. Roy Cooper, and the former head of the state Department of Health and Human Services announced last year that increases hospitals' Medicaid payments in exchange for erasing debts amassed by people with lower incomes. Debt relief letters will go out in phases and continue into next year, Julia Lerche, chief strategy officer and chief actuary for N.C. Medicaid, said in an interview last week. The state DHHS is collecting information from hospitals on the numbers of people whose medical debts have been erased, along with total debt abolished, and will have a report in the next few months, she said. "We are really proud of the program," Lerche said. "We know how much it means to so many people in North Carolina." Under the program, hospitals are forgiving Medicaid enrollees' medical debts dating back to 2014. Former DHHS Secretary Kody Kinsley said last year that as people were signing up for expanded Medicaid, they talked about the heavy weight of old medical debts. Hospitals will erase medical debt for people who are not enrolled in Medicaid but whose incomes are at or below 350% of the federal poverty level or whose total debt is more than 5% of their yearly income. Hospitals also agreed to provide discounts to patients who meet income guidelines. Please see DEBT/2A




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SAU president emeritus celebrates 105 years

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successful, then you as a leader have failed.”

Robinson’s autobiography, “A Man’s Reach Should Exceed His Grasp,” reinforces this precept through the exaltation of his wife. “I am so proud of Lulu, and her accomplishments, the love and care she gave to our family, and the support and encouragement she gave to me in the pursuit of my dreams. All that I have accomplished, we did together. To this, I will be forever grateful,” Robinson wrote.

St. Aug’s alumnus and legendary track coach George Williams echoed Ward in affirming Lulu Robinson’s prowess as an educator at the college. “I followed the same playbook,” Williams said of Robinson, who partici-

pated in track & field as an undergraduate. “I was just in a different arena. God didn’t make winners and losers. He made choosers. I watched the choices that he made.”

Robinson’s far-reaching humanitarian endeavors took him all over the world, including to the United Nations. In a faculty/staff meeting, Robinson told the story of how he introduced himself at the UN, and acknowledged - in his authentic, home-grown South Carolina drawl - his St. Augustine’s affiliation and that many of them might not be familiar with the institution.

Williams recounted what Robinson said he was asked to do. “When you get back, tell coach Williams we said ‘Hi,’” said Williams, who almost

fainted at that moment. “He represented us with the utmost dignity and pride,” Williams continued. “He is the kind of guy, intentionally a gentleman, who was focused on getting the job done. He was always himself. He is still part of my family.”

For Johnson, a 1988 St. Aug’s graduate, the Aug. 25 family meal was timeless. Her interwoven “home and school” family grew whenever Robinson brought his wife and daughter to dine with students in the campus’ cafeteria after a Sunday service in St. Augustine’s Chapel.

“The whole family loved that, because he was a people person,” Johnson said. “(He said) Do not forget the people who helped you get here.”

NCCU coach’s housing dream comes true

Continued from page 1A
then, when you saw stuff like this coming up, you knew who it belonged to - not us.”

Celia Selden, one of Moton’s favorite teachers from his days at Daniels Middle School, offered a metaphor for educators’ continuing influences on students, and the significance of the groundbreaking occurring on Wake County public school’s first day of the traditional calendar.

“What good is a community if a teacher who inspired you can’t afford to live there?” Moton asked. Affordability is enhanced by purchasing loans at 2% below market rate, courtesy of Coastal Credit Union. “You can spend that money more now on your unit, on your groceries, on your life,” said Creighton Blackwell, Coastal Credit Union chief community impact and public affairs officer. Moton mentioned another youth statistic he

aspires to change through affordable housing initiatives. He said six young men made it out of his neighborhood in 45 years, with five employing basketball as a vehicle. “They can become developers and use their minds,” he said. McDougald’s discerning eyes are watching, as if she was watching her son in the neighborhood decades ago. “They better get started,” she said. “I’m counting. I want to see it.”



STOCK PHOTO

Wall Street is killing the housing market

By Garrett Brand
SPECIAL TO THE TRIBUNE

There are few things more important than our homes. Alongside providing our shelter, homes are where we make memories with friends and family, where bonds are formed and strengthened.

Unfortunately, the right to a home in America is under threat. Rents have skyrocketed, homelessness is rising, and homeownership is increasingly unattainable for most Americans.

There are multiple causes, but one culprit stands out: classic Wall Street greed. Massive private equity corporations and hedge funds are buying up homes by the thousands — houses, apartment buildings and mobile home parks alike — and then jacking up rents.

This trend accelerated after the 2008 financial crisis, when investment firms snatched up homes in foreclosure and began renting them to the growing number of people locked out of ownership. The result? An epidemic of

corporate slumlords. According to a recent study, nearly a fifth of all homes sold in the first quarter of 2024 were purchased by investment firms — including over a quarter of low-priced homes that might have been affordable to working people. With their vast wealth, these companies are able to easily outbid real people, often paying a premium to buy properties before they even hit the market. This reduces supply and encourages developers to sell at higher prices that only Wall Street can afford. Once a firm owns a property, it can rent it out at an inflated, algorithm-fixed price, further driving up costs for working people. Take Blackstone. The trillion-dollar private equity giant owns over 300,000 U.S. residential units, making it the largest corporate landlord in the world. The company has hiked rents in its properties by as much as 64% over just two years. While Blackstone’s tenants often can’t make rent, CEO Stephen

Schwarzman now enjoys a net worth north of \$50 billion. I’ve seen the impacts of Wall Street’s assault on our homes firsthand. According to a Georgia State study, my hometown of Atlanta has the highest concentration of Wall Street-owned single family homes in the country. In the past 15 years, mega-corporations have purchased over 70,000 homes in Atlanta, accounting for over 30% of all single family rental properties in the city. In some districts, as much as 99.6% of the market is owned by corporate investors! As a result, longtime residents have been pushed out, housing costs have soared, and inequality has multiplied. For me and many of my friends, the idea of owning a home in the city we grew up in feels less realistic every day — an unfortunate truth across countless towns and cities in America. That includes Charlotte, where 19% of homes have now been purchased by in-

Please see **HOUSING/3A**

North Carolinians are no longer in debt to hospitals

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Hospitals and Undue Medical Debt, a nonprofit that works to wipe out such debts, are looking at available income data to determine who is eligible to have their debts erased.

As part of the program, hospitals had to agree to measures that would help people from going into debt in the first place, agree not to sell to collectors the debts of people whose incomes are below 300% of the federal poverty level or to report patients covered under the policy to credit reporting agencies.

North Carolina has federal approval to run the program through June 2026, Lerche said. The program may eventually erase \$4 billion in medical debt.



Study: N Carolina ranks poorly for state victim compensation programs

By Eric Tegeth
PUBLIC NEWS SERVICE

North Carolina’s crime victim compensation program ranks second-worst in the nation, according to a new analysis.

Victims of violent crime have access to compensation, but their experience with compensation programs varies widely by state. The Center for American Progress and Common Justice measured state programs based on criteria like accessibility and whether compensation is “adequate.”

Chandler Hall, associate director of gun violence prevention at the Center for American Progress and co-author of the report, said states get a 75% match in federal funding but have a lot of discretion to set their own policies for the programs. The report found North Carolina puts up unnecessary barriers to compensation, such as mandatory police reporting without alternative

mechanisms. Hall pointed out it is one of the few states able to deny payments based on a victim’s criminal record. “If we are barring the very individuals who might get the most benefit out of this kind of relief - and otherwise who would be further disenfranchised by their harm, their trauma, without financial support - we’re only making our communities less safe,” Hall contended. The report found Black victims of crime are disproportionately denied compensation in many states. Hall noted for each of the categories analyzed in each state, there is a model statute in other states which could be used to improve compensation programs. However, Hall stressed even applying for a financial reward can be paralyzing for people suffering from the traumatic effects of violence. “Just going through that process itself can be so

burdensome and so difficult that folks often aren’t able to even seek out the help that is available to them,” he said. Hall emphasized there are a number of ways states can improve their compensation programs. For instance, they can make the process more trauma-informed. But public awareness is most important. Hall acknowledged most people do not know they are eligible for compensation. Some find out from community members or even at the funeral of a loved one. He argued expanding the programs would benefit communities. “We think that it can also be a community healer,” Hall stressed. “This can be something that can break future cycles of harm - which we know, disproportionately, most of violent victimization is retaliatory or cyclical harm - and so, this can be a way to break those up.”

Big ‘Beautiful’ Bill a big, ugly lie for OUR communities

By Jovita Lee, Ed.D.
SPECIAL TO THE TRIBUNE

Over the past several weeks, we’ve witnessed elected officials who supported what was the One Big Beautiful Bill Act frame it as once-in-a-lifetime legislation that makes a bold step toward our future.

But for our Black communities and most vulnerable populations, this feels like a huge step back from our hard-fought progress. The new legislation perpetuates outdated systems of oppression, displacement and exclusion, all under the guise of economic control.

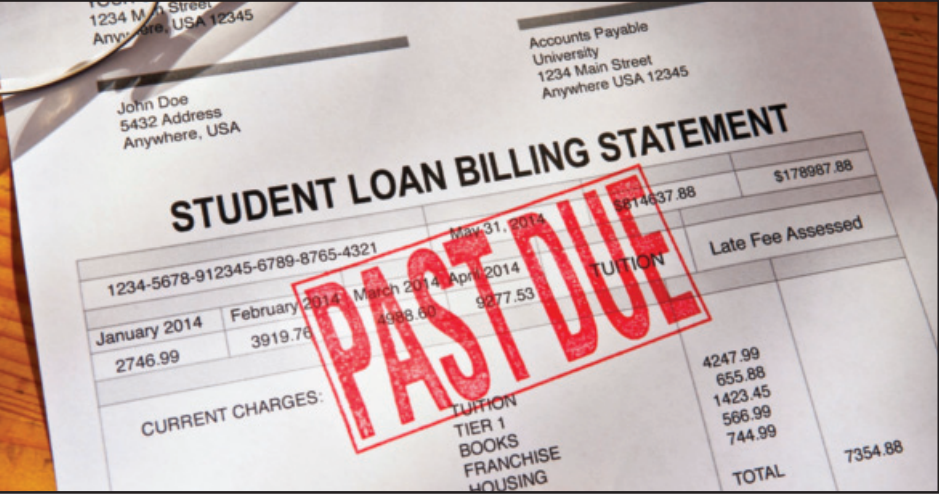
To be clear, the Big “Beautiful” Bill — it’s law now, but the conflicting nomenclature provides a useful reminder — is not a benefit to North Carolina’s communities. The legislation, including language such as “investment” and “access,” is a facade to draw attention away from its true intent.

For example, the approach to development laid out in the document provides a green light for increased instances of gentrification, particularly here in Raleigh, as well as

other urban areas across the state. Raleigh’s southeast region, especially, is fertile ground for the rapid construction of multistory homes next to small, historic homes that have been in the community for almost a century. The new builds are valued at over half a million dollars, compared to the older homes listing at around \$100,000. The new federal legislation worsens gentrification in North Carolina and will push out more longtime residents, especially seniors and low-income families. As for the health care aspect, the legislation will unravel the progress North Carolina has made to expand health care access and defend against food insecurity. Programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and Medicaid are critical to the well-being of Black, brown and rural communities. North Carolina alone has an estimated 3 million people who rely on Medicaid coverage, with the 2023 expansion adding an additional 600,000. It creates access to affordable care and realistic copays. The reductions in the SNAP program will exacer-

bate hunger and food access in North Carolina — a state, mind you, that prides itself on being a leader in agriculture yet cannot provide safe and healthy food for all of its communities. It leaves North Carolina families with the burden of navigating higher food costs and reduces access to healthy foods. The legislation will also close even more of the state’s rural hospitals at a time when we’ve already seen consistent divestment in our rural health facilities over the last 10 to 20 years. Twelve rural hospitals have closed in the last two decades in this state, and the Big “Beautiful” Bill adds the risk of five more closing their doors. The lack of care, coupled with the ongoing environmental injustice and climate impacts our state faces on a frequent basis, is a recipe for disaster. Then there’s public education. The Big “Beautiful” Bill originally included funding freezes that directly impacted Title IV after school programming and Title III English-learner programming. In North Carolina, we have 99 after

Please see **BILL/3A**



Student loan delinquency drops credit scores by 100 points or more

By Charlene Crowell
SPECIAL TO THE TRIBUNE

At least 2.2 million delinquent student loan borrowers have seen their credit scores drop by 100 points or more since loan servicers resumed reporting to credit bureaus in the first quarter of this year.

The end of pandemic relief measures will further reduce affordable credit options for federal student loan borrowers already struggling with rising prices and stagnant wages, making new credit more expensive, if attainable at all. Affected borrowers also will become more susceptible to predatory lenders who exploit their financial difficulties with debt trap business models that worsen – not improve – their financial lives.

According to the New York Federal Reserve's student loan update, delinquency rates surged to a five-year high in early 2025. Further, 1 in 10 borrowers were 90 days or more delinquent on their loans during the second quarter of this year. These numbers are likely to rise as more delinquencies are recorded on a rolling basis.

Among newly delinquent borrowers, 2.4 million previously had scores above 620, strong enough for many to qualify for new autos, mortgages and credit cards. But now, missed federal student loan payments between 2020 second quarter and 2024 fourth quarter are now appearing in credit reports.

Of the estimated 2.2 million borrowers who experienced credit score drops of at least 100 points, 1 million saw their credit score drop by 150 points or more. More interesting, the highest percentages of delinquency by age were among older borrowers: 18% by borrowers 50 and over and 14% by borrowers between 40-49.

Consumer advocates and economists warned of the negative impact of rising delinquencies on consumer finances and national economic activity. "Being delinquent on student loan debt is difficult for people who are approaching their retirement years," said Lori Trawinski, director of finance and employment at AARP. "People end up having to make extremely difficult choices."

The Treasury Department recently restarted collection efforts for defaulted loans, including garnishment of wages and tax returns. Legally, officials can garner up to 15% of the Socials Security benefits of older and defaulted student loan borrowers. A recent CNBC news article reported the Department of Education said it has "paused" that option for now.

These efforts likely will have a disproportionate impact on Black and Latino borrowers, who already suffer from racial disparities in wealth and income. Fewer family financial resources lead to a need for more student loans to finance their education, and then decades of repayment and financial stress.

The Aug. 1 resumption of interest accrual for the 7.9 million borrowers enrolled in the SAVE repayment program begun under President Joe Biden added to financial stress. This program proposed to shorten the number of years borrower repayments to only 10 years, instead of the 20 or 25 years required under other and earlier plans.

Despite SAVE's borrower benefits, it was challenged in two lawsuits still pending that together opposed its implementation. These lawsuits were led by Missouri and Kansas officials; and 18 other states joined the legal challenges – many of which have significant Black populations, including Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Ohio, South Carolina and Texas.

Jennifer Zhang, a research associate at the Student Borrower Protection Center, aptly summarized the growing dilemma: "Borrowers are in a uniquely impossible situation: they must repay their loans with money they do not have, but because of actions by this administration, they are unable to switch to a more affordable repayment plan. Meanwhile, borrowers' access to credit, rental housing, and key necessities of life will become increasingly expensive to nonexistent the further they fall behind, leaving them more desperate and vulnerable to predatory lenders and, ultimately, creating ripple effects across the economy."

Charlene Crowell is a senior fellow with the Center for Responsible Lending. She can be reached at Charlene.crowell@responsiblelending.org.

Big 'Beautiful' bill is a big, ugly lie for communities

Continued from page 2A

school and summer-learning programs. Since the end of July, as a result of the efforts of North Carolina Attorney General Jeff Jackson, \$36 million of that has been secured for release within the state.

As we celebrate this victory, we must remember that \$130 million is still in limbo, which is critical funding for additional workforce, English-learner programs, professional-development initiatives for educators and the reduction of crowded class sizes.

Our state's public education has been repeatedly underfunded every biennial, with Leandro funding still unreleased 31 years later. Additional cuts to our public education will create more strain on educators and students, reducing the quality of education in the state even more.

What we cannot ignore is the fact that the same persons who authored and supported the Big "Beautiful" Bill are the same persons who also fought fervently against equitable voting rights, reproductive justice and funding for public education.

The new legislation is their Trojan horse — packaging corporate giveaways, displacement and lack of care as "progress" while hoping we aren't paying attention.

Our communities have seen enough of the impacts of harmful legislation and deserve policy that protects them and their well-being. As we continue to march toward that end, one thing we can name now is the Big "Beautiful" Bill has nothing to do with the progress of our communities.

Jovita Lee, Ed.D., is policy director for Advance Carolina, a statewide, independent, Black-led, 501c(4) organization building political and economic power in Black communities and institutions in North Carolina.

Wall Street is killing the housing market for buyers

Continued from page 2A

vestors.

As a fundamental need, housing should be a right for all people and families — not an investment commodity for the ultra-rich. In the short term, rent control and increased tenant protections could ease people's pain in this corporate-controlled housing market.

In the longer term, there's an alternative that would allow us all to have the homes we deserve: social housing. Social housing refers to housing developed by noncorporate entities like nonprofits or local, state or federal governments. Social housing is permanently and truly affordable, controlled democratically by its community, and never resold for profit. There are a variety of models, but they all share one key component: they exist outside the for-profit housing market.

Cities and states can take the lead in developing their own social housing, like what's happening in Seattle after a citizen-driven referendum. There, a tax on rich corporations will fund a city-owned social housing developer — a great model for cities across the country.

Housing should be a source of safety and joy for everyone, not yet another source of profit for the ultra-wealthy.

By rejecting corporate home ownership and supporting social housing, we can build a world where that's the case.

BUSINESS BRIEFS



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BUSINESS EXPO
Sigma Tau Omega Cary Chapter is hosting "For the Local Community Business Expo," Sept. 6, noon to 4 p.m., Cary Academy, 1500 N. Harrison Ave. Open to the public.

MARKET
The next Durham Twilight Market is Sept. 6, 5:30 to 9:30 p.m., Golden Belt Campus, 800 Taylor St.

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Bids will be received by the County of Durham Purchasing Division, Durham County, 201 East Main Street, 7th Floor, Durham, North Carolina 27701, until **2:00 P.M. Eastern Time on September 23, 2025**. The work contemplated will include restoring approximately 1,500 linear feet of stream and constructing a bioretention pond and drainage improvements in the Whispering Pines Mobile Home Park.

Site visit will be held on **September 8, 2025**, at 10:00 A.M Eastern Time at **111 Valencia Dr, Durham, NC 27703 (Enter Whispering Pines Mobile Home Park at 619 Lynn Rd)**. All bidders who intend to bid are encouraged to attend.

An electronic copy of this Invitation for Bids (IFB) can be obtained from Durham County's eBid System located under Bid Opportunities at:

<https://www.dconc.gov/county-departments/departments-f-z/finance/bid-opportunities>.

Bidders 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.

Obtaining the Bidding Documents

The Issuing Office for the Bidding Documents is:
W.K. Dickson & Co., Inc.
720 Corporate Center Drive
Raleigh, NC 27607
Tom Murray, PM
(919) 782-0495
tmurray@wkdickson.com

Bidding Documents also may be examined at the office of the Engineer, W.K. Dickson & Co., Inc., 720 Corporate Center Drive, Raleigh, NC 27607, on Mondays through Thursdays between the hours of 9:00 am and 5:00 pm, and Fridays between the hours of 9:00 am and 12:00 noon.

Bidding Documents may be viewed and ordered online by registering with the Issuing Office at the Plan Room at www.wkdickson.com. Please note that only Registered Plan Holders may submit a bid as a General Contractor.

Following registration, complete sets of Bidding Documents may be downloaded from the Issuing Office's website as "zipped" portable document format (PDF) files. The cost of printed Bidding Documents from the Issuing Office will depend on the number and size of the Drawings and Project Manual, applicable taxes, and shipping method selected by the prospective Bidder.

Cost of Bidding Documents and shipping is non-refundable. Upon Issuing Office's receipt of payment, printed Bidding Documents will be sent via the prospective Bidder's delivery method of choice; the shipping charge will depend on the shipping method chosen. The date that the Bidding Documents are transmitted by the Issuing Office will be considered the Bidder's date of receipt of the Bidding Documents. Partial sets of the Bidding Documents will not be available from the Issuing Office.

Questions concerning administrative matters should be directed to Delta Farrington, Senior Procurement Specialist, at purchasinggroup@dconc.gov, or (919) 560-0054.

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 \$300,000.00.

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

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**In the General Court of Justice, District Court
Division File No. 25CV000669-340.
MORIAH ASHLEIGH WILLIAMS V. EFRAIN
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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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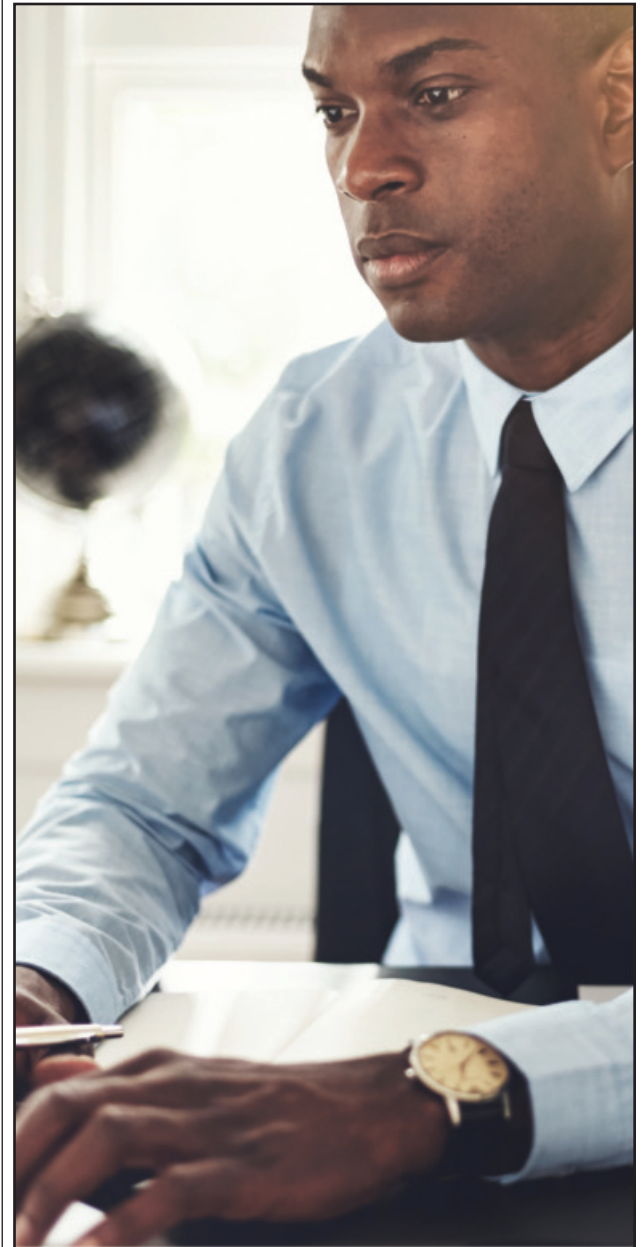
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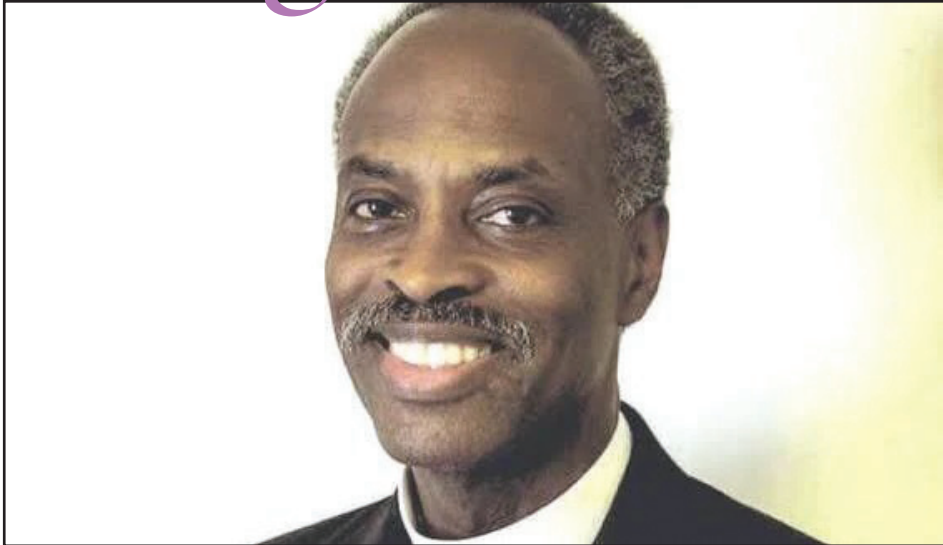


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COURTESY

Staccato Powell.

Former AME Zion bishop pleads guilty in widespread church fraud case

By Tashi McQueen

THE AFRO

Staccato Powell, a former bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, has pleaded guilty to wire and mail fraud and conspiracy to commit fraudulent activity. The crimes were connected to an extensive scheme to gain control of properties belonging to the church in California.

Powell was responsible for forged documents, deception and false statements, according to the United States Attorney's Office of the Northern District of California, which announced the guilty plea last month.

Powell, 65, was officially disrobed by the AME Zion Church in 2021. The denomination, with approximately 1.4 million members worldwide, remains a pillar of the African American community.

Powell was indicted on Jan. 25, 2022, by a federal jury, alongside Sheila Quintana, a former church lay leader. Quintana, 71, pleaded guilty to one count

of conspiracy to commit wire and mail fraud on April 22.

Court documents say Powell and Quintana were chief executive officer and chief financial officer, respectively, of Western Episcopal District, Inc., an entity that Powell established in 2016 after he was chosen as bishop of the AME Zion Church's Western Episcopal District.

In 2016, Powell directed pastors of AME Zion churches in the Western Episcopal District, which consists of churches in several states throughout the western region of the U.S., to sign deeds granting WED title to their congregation's property - such as the church building, lots and residences used by the pastors. At Powell's instruction, Quintana and other WED officers worked to complete the transfer of the titles via grant deeds.

From early 2017, Powell directed Quintana and other officers to secure loans using the properties of local AME Zion churches as collateral. To comply with what lenders wanted,

Powell arranged for the creation of false church resolution documents to support WED's loan applications. He told Quintana to create and sign these documents on behalf of local church officers.

Powell pleaded guilty to fraudulently gaining control of mortgages on the following church properties: Kyles Temple in Vallejo, California; First AME Zion Church in San Jose, California; Greater Cooper AME Zion Church in Oakland, California; University AME Zion Church of Palo Alto, California; and First AME Zion Church in Los Angeles.

As part of his guilty plea, Powell agreed to pay restitution of no less than \$3 million and no greater than \$12.5 million. He also agreed to surrender any claim, right or interest in the properties of AME Zion Church. Powell is out on bond, according to prosecutors. His sentencing hearing is set for Sept. 23. He faces a maximum penalty of 20 years and a \$250,000 fine for each count.

AROUND THE TRIANGLE

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

EXPO
2025 Engage Raleigh Expo is Sept. 13, 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., McKimmon Center, 1101 Gorman St. Register by Sept. 5 at www.eventbrite.com.

MENTAL HEALTH
The Joel Fund presents "Voices of Resilience: A Suicide Prevention Dialogue," Sept. 5, noon to 3 p.m., Whitaker & Atlantic, 1053 E. Whitaker Mill Road, Suite 111.

MARKET
The Market at N.C. Museum of Art is Sept. 6, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., 2110 Blue Ridge Road.

CARY SWARM
Fine Arts League of Cary will host Art Swarm Sept. 3-7, Cary Arts Center, 101 Dry Avenue. Visit ArtSwarm.com.

DURHAM INTERNET
Durham will offer free internet to low-income families for a limited time.

Learn more at: www.durhamnc.gov/5397/MiFi-Distribution.

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

TATOOS
"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/.

MARCH
Durham Labor Day March & Rally is Sept. 1, 10:30 a.m., Trinity Ave Park, 410 Watts St. RSVP: bit.ly/DurhamLaborDay25.

CONCERT
Singer Shana Tucker will perform Sept. 3, 6:30 p.m., American Tobacco Campus, 300 Blackwell St. Free admission.

FORUM
Durham Democrats and the Durham Democratic Women are hosting a municipal candidate forum Sept. 3, 6-8 p.m., Hayti Heritage Center, 804 Old Fayetteville St. Open to the public.

FILM
DP&R presents "A League of Their Own" movie screening Sept. 6, 8-10 p.m., Durham Central Park, 501 Foster St.

NCCU ALUMNI
N.C. Central alumni's next meet-up is Sept. 7, 2 p.m., ZincHouse Winery & Brewery, 6225 Wake Forest Highway. RSVP: host.nxt.blackbaud.com.

CHAPEL HILL SHRED-A-THON
Residents and small businesses can shred documents Sept. 6, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Eubanks Park & Ride Lot, 1768 Eubanks Road.

OPEN HOUSE
Seymour Open House is Sept. 7, noon to 6 p.m., Seymour Center, 2551 Homestead Road. Register: orangecountync.gov.

How women experience heart disease differently

FAMILY FEATURES

Most people think of heart attacks as debilitating pain in the chest. However, that's not always the case, especially for women, and missing the signs can be a matter of life and death.

Although heart disease is the leading cause of death among American women, symptoms are often overlooked or explained away as less worrisome conditions, according to the American Heart Association.

One heart disease risk factor, for example, is high LDL cholesterol. Often referred to as a "silent killer," it doesn't always present noticeable symptoms. In fact, data suggests women with high LDL cholesterol are not diagnosed or treated as early or aggressively as men, which can put women at an increased risk for cardiovascular events. Understanding how men's and women's risk and symptoms differ may help identify and treat a serious heart health problem before it causes lasting damage.

Some differences between men and women are present in the body's internal systems, including the cardiovascular system. Women generally have smaller hearts and narrower blood vessels. This can affect heart health in numerous ways, including less efficient stress responses and greater risk of widespread plaque buildup, especially in smaller vessels, called microvasculature, which can pose treatment challenges.



Hormones influence aspects of the body's function, including cholesterol levels. Estrogen, a female sex hormone, raises HDL (good) cholesterol levels. This may be why women tend to have more HDL cholesterol and lower LDL (bad) cholesterol than men, especially before they reach menopause, though inherited high cholesterol can affect women of all ages.

"It's critical to raise awareness about the importance of measuring LDL cholesterol, diagnosing high cholesterol and treating elevated LDL cholesterol per guidelines and individual patient needs," Bloedon said.

"While you may not be able to fully prevent heart disease, you can understand the risks and take proactive steps. Commit to a healthy, smoke-free lifestyle. Exercise regularly and eat a well-balanced diet with limits on processed foods, sugar, sodium and alcohol. Take any medications as directed by your health care provider."

Statins, which reduce the production of cholesterol

in the liver and lower cholesterol levels in the bloodstream, are the medications most often prescribed to help manage high LDL cholesterol. While generally well-tolerated, statin intolerance (the inability to take a statin at any dose or the recommended dose) does occur in some patients and is more common in women.

Talk with your doctor about other steps you can take to manage elevated LDL cholesterol levels and learn more about women's heart health at goredforwomen.org.

What to watch for:

- * Like men, women experiencing a heart attack may notice prolonged or reoccurring chest pain or pressure.

- * In women, that pain may extend to the arms, back, neck, jaw and stomach.

- * Some women experience shortness of breath with no chest pain at all.

- * Other symptoms women are more likely to report can be easily mistaken for other conditions like fatigue, disruptions to normal sleep patterns.

Workers hack former employers' passwords for personal use

STAFF REPORTS

Password Manager surveyed 1,200 U.S. workers in July from past and current employers to better understand how seriously they take the security of workplace accounts and how secure those accounts truly are. The results reveal widespread lax practices around password security.

Key findings:

- * 27% of workers share their current employer's passwords with someone outside the company.

- * 40% of workers say they've used a former employer's password after leaving the company; 15% are still actively using passwords from a previous job.

- * Most access old accounts to save money, with some saving over \$300 per month.

- * 60% say they were able to log in because the password hadn't been changed.

- * 1 in 10 former employees say they've been using old credentials for more than four years.

Nearly three in 10 workers admit sharing their current employer's passwords with someone outside the company. Among them, 45% say they do so because the other person helps them with their work, while 33% say it's to help someone save money.

"To curb credential sharing, companies should require employees to sign an

Acceptable Use Policy and undergo regular security awareness training," says information systems and cybersecurity expert Gunnar Kallstrom. "Beyond that, it's critical for companies to implement Role-Based Access Controls, enforce robust Identity and Access Management protocols, apply multifactor authentication, and clearly define and enforce access policies."

Roughly 40% of workers admit to using login credentials from a previous employer to access accounts, tools or services. Among them, 15% say they're actively accessing these systems, and 40% have been doing so for at least a year. The vast majority say they've never been caught.

When asked how they're able to access these accounts:

- * 60% say the password hadn't changed since they left the company

- * 28% say someone currently at the company shared the password with them

- * 20% say they were able to guess the password

Not only are these companies failing to secure their systems, but some are relying on former employees to act as their IT support. About 17% of workers report they've had a former employer reach out to them because they forgot a password.

"As part of the offboard-

ing process, all company access should be revoked from the former employee. If this does not happen, the company exposes itself to unnecessary risk," says Kallstrom.

"Some of the risks that the company accepts are the possibility of a former employee committing sabotage against the company. Some additional risks are data breaches, intellectual property theft, financial loss, disruption of operations and reputational damage. As far as the risks to individuals, they include legal consequences, accidental misuse and exposure to liability."

Among those who accessed accounts from a former employer, more than half (53%) say they did so to save money. An additional 36% admit they were simply too lazy to set up their own account. A small percentage (2%) say they accessed old accounts intending to disrupt company activity.

For those using former employer accounts to save money, the financial benefit is often significant:

- * 34% say they save \$50 to \$100 per month

- * 31% report saving \$100 to \$200 per month

- * 10% say they save \$200 to \$300 per month

- * 7% estimate their savings exceed \$300 per month

- * Only 19% report saving less than \$50

STOCK

Former N.C. State star's road back to recovery

June 19, 1986.
I was working at a TV station in Baltimore at the time and still vividly remember my boss walking down the hall with tears in his eyes. No one knew why at first. Then he uttered four tragic words: "Len Bias is dead."

The University of Maryland superstar had died of a cocaine overdose. Two days after being selected No. 2 overall by the Boston Celtics in the NBA Draft.

Bias' tragedy could have been Chris Washburn's. The former basketball star had a promising career at North Carolina State University marred and an NBA career derailed by drugs.

The third player taken in that 1986 draft behind Bias was Washburn by the Golden State Warriors. How ironic that the

two were back-to-back picks. Their lives had been intertwined since a chance encounter a year earlier. More on that later.

Washburn will share his story at The Community Family Life & Recreation Center at Lyon Park in Durham on Sept. 5 at 6 p.m. His book, "OUT OF BOUNDS: From Broken NBA Dreams to Redemption: The Chris Washburn Story" that he co-wrote with Ron Chepesiuk, also will be available.

Washburn's law troubles began in college. In 1985, he was charged with second-degree burglary for taking \$800 worth of stereo equipment from two football players' dorm room.

Washburn's attorney at the time is current North Carolina state Senator Dan Blue. Blue and his partners argued the theft was just a prank and no malicious intent was involved. The equipment was returned after Washburn's arrest.

But a tape recording of Washburn confessing to taking the items forced a trial. He pled guilty to three charges of theft and served three days in jail after getting most of his sentence suspended.

N.C. State coach Jim Valvano had dismissed him from the team but reinstated him for his sophomore season, where he averaged 17.6 points and 6.7 rebounds a game.

Then came the encounter. "I was going to class one morning, and some athletes came by, and I let them in. They had a substance I had never seen before, and they asked me if I wanted to try it," Washburn said on the African American Literature Book Club YouTube channel. "My mom in my head said 'No.' They asked me again, and my dad in my head said 'No.' The third time they asked, I said, 'well, what will it hurt.' I never went back to class."

One of those athletes was Len Bias.

Washburn left the team in his junior season and declared for the draft.

But that one good sophomore year impressed the Warriors enough to draft him third overall. Big mistake.

Washburn averaged four points and two rebounds a game in two seasons. Golden State traded him to Atlanta, where he lasted a year. By then, cocaine controlled his life. After failing his third drug test in 1989 - just three years from being drafted - he was banned from the league. Still, the drug use continued, forcing him into homelessness, incarceration and near death.

It wasn't until the loss of his father in the early 2000s that forced an honest look in the mirror.

Today, the Hickory native, 59, is a motivational speaker, entrepreneur and advocate. He's also been clean for 24 years.

The event is free and open to the public.



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August 31-September 6, 2025 | 6A



ALEX BASS

Team North Carolina transplant athletes and supporters.

Team North Carolina transplant athletes share stories, sports

By Alex Bass
alex.bass@triangletribune.com

CHAPEL HILL - Teresa Cross has a medal from 2024 to affirm her mettle. Mark Slade uses pins, while Darryl Ellis uses pens, as both tell their stories. Tajze Johnson embraces doctoral learning, as a patient and student. For these Team North Carolina transplant

athletes, sports is merely a game. The game, though, is life.

The Transplant Games of America, held every two years, offer opportunities to pursue competitive excellence, whether for a first time - to which Johnson aspires in 2026 - or for a seventh time, which Slade, 63, is scheduled next June in Denver.

Ellis, a Navy veteran, acknowledges his athletics background but simply introduces himself. "Transplant recipient," he said. "I have a transplanted liver and a transplanted kidney."

Cross, Slade, Ellis, Johnson and other statewide teammates - from transplant recipients and donors to active caregivers among family members and

friends - gathered at Honor Bridge Aug. 16 to extend their storytelling and advocacy, and receive support, too.

Cross, a Jacksonville educator and 2022 heart recipient, likened her transplant's initial aftermath to that of kindergarteners whom she serves. "I

Please see **TRANSPLANT/7A**

HBCU FOOTBALL

NCCU, Shaw play in Durham this weekend

By Bonitta Best
editor@triangletribune.com

The full HBCU season kicked off Thursday night with several matchups.

MEAC newcomers Michael Vick and DeSean Jackson made their debuts on ESPN platforms. Delaware State traveled to Delaware and Norfolk State hosted Towson.

In the CIAA, Livingstone headed to the University of Charleston and Virginia State traveled to Barton College.

Alcorn State vs. Northwestern State was the SWAC's Thursday night lineup, and Bethune-Cookman vs. Florida International was the Friday night contest.

The MEAC-SWAC rivalry continues this weekend with Howard at Florida A&M, while the

CIAA-SIAC have five head-to-head battles over the weekend.

August 30 showcases Albany State vs. Shaw, Morehouse vs. Johnson C. Smith and Fayetteville State vs. Benedict.

On Aug. 31, it's two classics: Miles vs. Virginia Union in the Black College Hall of Fame Classic, and Tuskegee vs. Winston-Salem State in the Red Tails Classic.

N.C. Central (1-0) vs. New Hampshire (0-0)

Coach Trei Oliver kept his unbeaten streak in classics and bowls alive after challenging his team at halftime of the MEAC-SWAC Challenge.

Leading by three, the Eagles' defense held Southern scoreless in the second half. Even more impressive, the unit held preseason All-American defen-



NCCU

NCCU coach Trei Oliver keeps his unbeaten streak alive.

sive end Kkelby Givens to two total tackles. "I've been trying to tell you we

have a good offensive line. They (players) read you all and Please see **NCCU/7A**

COLLEGE CORNER

NCCU, Shaw begin seasons with new coaches

The CIAA is moving its indoor track and field championships to a new venue. Tryon International Indoor Complex in Mill Spring, North Carolina, will host the event Feb. 15-16, 2026.

WOMEN

N.C. Central

The Jonathan Paulk era begins.

Paulk, who was a NCCU assistant volleyball coach from 2016-18, returned in March as its new head coach after leading Shaw for five seasons and two CIAA championships.

The Eagles' last winning conference record was 9-5 in 2021. They lost to Howard in the tournament semifinals. They've dropped the first match in every tournament since then.

NCCU opens the season this weekend in the Hampton Inn and Suites Seahawk Classic against Virginia Tech, Lindenwood and UNC Wilmington. The home opener is Sept. 2 against Gardner-Webb.

Shaw

Soccer opens the season Sept. 4 at Ferrum College, as it tries for a third consecutive USCAA Small College National Championship.

Interestingly, the football team travels to Ferrum on Sept. 13. And, like football, both the women and men play their home soccer matches at Durham County Memorial Stadium. The ladies have a packed schedule with four matches on the road: Sept. 4, 6, 10 and 12.



COURTESY

Can Shaw volleyball maintain its dominance under a new coach?

In volleyball, former Shaw standout Jailynn Hunt begins her reign as the new head coach. Hunt has some

BIG shoes to fill - not only from Paulk but also his

Please see **NCCU/7A**



Shaw gets a big season-opening test.

NCCU, Shaw home openers in Durham

Continued from page 6A
listen to what you say,” Oliver said on the MEAC Monday teleconference. NCCU opens its home schedule this weekend against another team from Durham - in New Hampshire. The Wildcats will be playing their first game and looking for revenge from 2022’s 45-27 home loss.

The Eagles’ defense allowed 250 yards rushing against Southern that Oliver called “crazy.” NCCU travels to Old Dominion next Saturday for the third matchup ever between the two.

Shaw vs. Albany State
The Lamar Manigo era is here. And what a way to open the season. The Bears host preseason SIAC favorite Albany State and star junior quarterback Isaiah Knowles at Durham County Stadium. Knowles passed for 2,555 yards and 32 touchdowns last season.

“We’re excited and ready to go,” Manigo said. “We only had 45 guys in the spring (practice), but we brought in 50 more. We had a good fall camp on both sides of the ball.”

According to the Bears roster, 32 of the 80 players are transfers, seven are

seniors and six are graduate students. Redshirt freshman quarterback Justin Wheeler will start this weekend. Wheeler was the only quarterback in spring camp and kept his job in the fall, Manigo said. True freshman Alexander Marsh, a Southeast Guilford High graduate, is the backup.

Sophomore running back Christian Rutledge returns to the backfield. Rutledge primarily returned punts and kickoffs last season.

“Last year was more about opportunity, this year is a statement year,” he said. “There is a lot of hype going into this game. Our offensive line is fast and physical, and I’m excited to run behind them.”

Junior defensive back Thomas Thompson Jr. said he’s looking forward to going up against Knowles.

“He’s a good quarterback, and we’re looking to stop all that. We want to show up on the field and let everybody know we’re here. You’re going to know Shaw is good,” he said.

The Bears have one of the earliest bye weeks ever.

They return to the field Sept. 13 at Ferrum College.

Watchlist
Fifteen quarterbacks are on the 2025 Quarter Phi Back National Watchlist for HBCU quarterbacks. The trophy is the only national award to honor Black quarterbacks at both the collegiate and high school levels.

Clark Atlanta QB David Wright Sr. is the only player to make the list all four years.

1. David Wright, CAU
2. Isaiah Knowles, Albany State
3. Torrence Bardell, Langston
4. Jacobian Morgan, Jackson State
5. Kamren Ivory, Miles
6. Cam’ron Ranson, Bethune-Cookman
7. Jamir Dismukes, Allen
8. Daylin Lee, Winston-Salem State
9. David Buggs, Florida Memorial
10. Ty’Jarian Williams, Mississippi Valley State
11. Cornelious Brown, Alabama A&M
12. Myles Crawley, Grambling State
13. Kevin Taylor, Bowie State
14. Kareem Keye, Alabama State
15. Jalen Daniels, Norfolk State

Team North Carolina transplants share stories

Continued from page 6A
don’t want you to leave me,” she said to her Duke medical team. “I don’t know what is going to happen.” Cross and her husband remained in Durham for approximately one month after her procedure.

Ellis, a Winston-Salem resident, shared his story in a book, “Because of Organ Donation: The Ripple Effect of Hope Continues.” He discussed organ donation importance, and implications for communities of color, in which he acknowledged a supply and demand discrepancy between prospective donors and those needing transplants.

“There’s going to be no transplant there for you,” he said.

Stormi Murtie, a kidney

donor from Hayesville, put transplant needs in a larger picture. More than 100,000 people nationally are on a transplant waiting list.

“Today, 13 people are going to die,” Murtie said, before denouncing how misinformation leads people to withdraw as organ donors. “They’re not doing their research. They’re not following science. I am healthier today than before I donated.”

Johnson, meanwhile, is still doing his research. This July 2024 kidney transplant recipient spent four years on dialysis, during which he earned his doctorate in occupational therapy from Methodist University. Johnson extends his scholarly and professional practices in

the greater Charlotte area to deepen others’ understandings of occupational therapy’s roles in transplantees’ journeys.

“That is one of my biggest pushes, research wise, to continue to show the impact that we can have to increase independence and save others’ lives,” he said.

Slade of Burlington is on course for more games - basketball, bowling, ping pong, track & field and more - after missing his son’s middle school football game on Oct. 28, 2010. That day, he got the call for a heart transplant. Missing that one game offered Slade the lifeline to more games, including quests to collect souvenir pins from Transplant Games athletes from all 50 states.

NCCU, Shaw begin seasons with new coaches

Continued from page 6A
predecessor, the late Dishondra Goree. The Bears program has earned respect in all of Division II.

Shaw was picked to finish second behind Fayetteville State despite beating the Broncos for the CIAA championship.

Khamare Steppe was the only Bear named to the preseason all-conference team.

Hunt hired another Shaw alumna, Emma Celentano, who played under Paulk. She also turned the University of Mount Olive program around in five seasons as head coach. The defending champs open the season Sept. 6 against Sweet Briar College at Spaulding.

N.C. A&T
The Aggies released their nonconference basketball schedule. Two CIAA teams and two MEAC are among the 12-team schedule.

A&T hosts Shaw and Winston-Salem State in November, and travels to archrival NCCU and Norfolk State in December. North Carolina visits Cor-

bett Sports Center Nov. 20.

MEN
N.C. Central
Veteran coach Curtis Pittman has joined the track and field staff. He will work with the distance runners and assist in cross-country.

Pittman has over 30 years of experience, including stops at Hampton, Grambling State, Howard, Bethune-Cookman and Arkansas-Pine Bluff.

“The level of experience and knowledge he brings to the program will help elevate us to the next level in the conference,” said Fabienne Swepson, interim director of track & field/cross-country.

The cross-country season begins Sept. 2 at a Tri Meet on Duke’s campus. N.C. A&T also will participate.

Shaw
The men open their soccer season with six road matches, beginning Sept. 6 at Southern Wesleyan. Their first home match is Sept. 26. Shaw is coming off a 4-9 season.



COURTESY

Will Paulk’s golden touch extend to N.C. Central?

N.C. A&T
The men’s nonconference basketball schedule features South Carolina, South Carolina State, Morgan State, NCCU, Howard and Maryland Eastern Shore.

Goodbye. Hello. (Basketball)
* Alabama A&M guard Kailyn Nash to Morgan State

The Best in HBCU Sports
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LABOR DAY ACTIVITY SHEET

Hi everyone!

It's September and we all get to take a day off from our jobs to celebrate Labor Day! I think I will spend my day off flying my kite!

WHAT IS LABOR DAY?

In America, Labor Day is a holiday held in honor of the working people in the United States. It is usually observed on the first Monday in September. It was created by the labor movement and became a federal holiday in 1894.

WHAT BLACK CHILDREN NEED TO KNOW ABOUT CELEBRATING LABOR DAY

The Colored National Labor Union was created.

During the Great Migration, over a million Black Americans moved from the south to the north in search of a better life, better jobs. In Elaine, Arkansas, white law enforcement officials and vigilantes attacked labor union officials and members, killing hundreds of Black Americans.

A Philip Randolph, noted civil rights leader and labor organizer, fought for equal protection of Black workers by gaining recognition of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters by the Pullman Car Company, the American Federation of Labor (AFL), and the U.S. government.

LABOR DAY COLORS

Labor Day's colors are those of the American flag - red, white and blue.

HOW TO CELEBRATE LABOR DAY

- Attend a Labor Day parade
- Attend a Labor Day party
- Enjoy a football game
- Take a day trip somewhere
- Check out Labor Day sales
- Spend the day doing something you enjoy

"DID YOU KNOW" TRIVIA

- Canada celebrated Labor Day before the United States
- Oregon was the first state to observe Labor Day
- Fashion designer, Coco Chanel, broke the "no white after Labor Day" rule
- New York City still has a Labor Day parade
- Labor Day is always on a Monday so employees can enjoy a three-day weekend

SPEAK THE TRUTH!

T for true, F for false.

___ The 13th amendment abolishes slavery or involuntary servitude.

___ Canada was the first to make labor day a holiday.

___ May day is another name for Labor Day.

___ Labor Day is always on the second Tuesday in October.

COLOR THE STARS RED, WHITE AND BLUE!

FILL IN THE BLANK

Fill in the blank with the correct word.

Canada _____

Oregon _____

still has a Labor Day parade.

During the _____ millions of Black Americans migrated from the south to the north.

_____ celebrated Labor Day before the United States.

_____ was the first state to observe Labor Day.

LABOR DAY FUN!

On Labor Day, I plan to _____.

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FILL IN THE BLANK

New York City
Great Migration
Canada
Oregon

LABOR DAY, 9/01/25 #218 WWW.JOEYOUNG.ORG KEMET ACTIVITY SHEETS © 2025 BY JOE YOUNG

Raleigh entrepreneur earns H&R Block's Fund Her Future business grant

Irene Bekoe, below, the founder of Raleigh-based That Good Good Shea, was named a recipient of H&R Block's national Fund Her Future small business grant and will be awarded \$10,000 and one year of Block Advisors small business services. Bekoe draws on her Ghanaian heritage and personal eczema journey to create a shea butter body care line that nourishes skin and helps fund menstrual product access for girls in the regions where her ingredients are sourced.

The highly competitive program, which received over 8,000 applications, was created to close the funding and support gap between female- and male-run businesses. All six of the 2025 recipients are united by a powerful mission: to serve and uplift their communities, whether across the street or around the globe.



COURTESY



COURTESY

New principal Cheryl Isaac

Durham Community School begins school year with new principal

STAFF REPORTS

DURHAM - To quote William Butler Yeats, "Education is not the filling of a pail but the lighting of a fire." Cheryl Isaac would agree.

With over 30 years in education, Isaac began the 2025-26 school year as the new principal of the Community School of Visual and Digital Arts in Durham. All too often, she says, "teachers expose students to material, but they don't teach them to master it. We are teaching for mastery."

A public charter school, CSVDA was founded in 1998 to serve students in grades kindergarten through eighth grade who are deemed at risk for academic failure based upon federal and state criteria. Most of the student population is economically disadvantaged and eligible to receive free or reduced-priced lunches.

Focusing on the positives, CSVDA aims to pro-

vide an enriching learning experience that adheres to North Carolina's standard course of study. Therefore, students who come from Alamance, Orange, Durham and Wake counties are covering the same coursework as they would in their home districts' public schools.

Whether they start in kindergarten or later, students must apply to CSVDA. The school accepts new-student applications in January for the upcoming academic year. Only students who reside in North Carolina are eligible. Also, those entering kindergarten must be 5 years old by Aug. 31.

If the number of applicants exceeds availability, a lottery determines who gets in. If a child does not make the cut, a new application will be necessary for any other attempt. Once a child is a student of CSVDA, though, no other annual application is re-

quired.

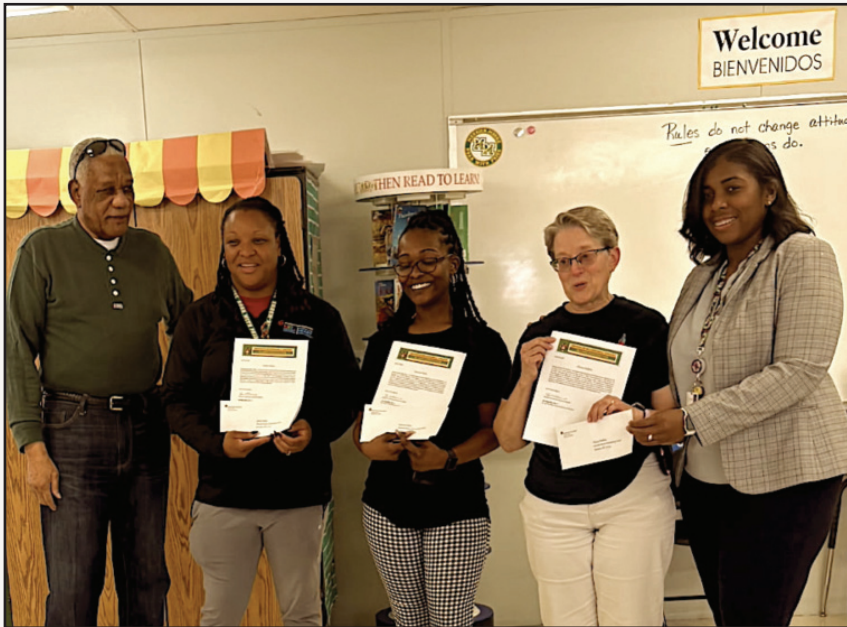
Fewer students and smaller classes overall compared to other public schools foster a unique atmosphere. To promote unity, CSVDA has a "One Falcon" initiative that includes mandatory school uniforms, but the camaraderie far surpasses everyday school spirit.

"One of the major things we have going is how teachers build relationships with students," Isaac said. "There's a sense of family in this building."

Parents, too, are highly involved.

"We have a working family population," Isaac continued, "but if you need them to be here, and you reach out to them, they are willing to do whatever they can for their children and school to make it a better place. We are a word-of-mouth, family-oriented school. People who have gone to school here often want their kids to enroll."

Merrick-Moore Board grants three teachers



COURTESY

The Merrick-Moore Alumni Board of Directors recently bestowed monetary grants to three Durham Public Schools teachers. "The Charles E. Daye Grant" is named after the first president of the Merrick-Moore-Mill Grove Alumni Association. Sophia Wilson, health and physical education, received \$345.61 for golf supplies. Destanie Davis, a second grade teacher, garnered \$300 for writing supplies. Theresa Dobbins, a kindergarten teacher, was awarded \$171.18 for classroom supplies for a total of \$816.79. The grant helps any school as determined by the board of directors.

BOOK

Young Jamaican man tries to overcome toxic masculinity

My Own Dear People
By Dwight Thompson
Akashic Books,
\$18.95 PB

In high school in Montego Bay, Jamaica, teenager Nyjah Messado witnessed the rape of Maude Dallymeyer, a teacher trainee. Some of the boys who committed the assault are his friends, and he's soon torn between the masculine code at the all boys' school and his own conscience.

This guilt haunts him during his years away at college. It continues to weigh heavily upon him when he returns home, and Nyjah finds it increasingly difficult to spend time with his best friend, Chadwell, who participated in the rape. A unique chance to re-

unite with Maude gives Nyjah the opportunity to admit his complicity as a do-nothing witness and ask for forgiveness. But will he take it? And will she accept it, or will his own journey for inner peace only renew her trauma?



"My Own Dear People" is a multilayered story exploring both the effects of toxic masculinity and the bonds of friendship. We see Nyjah trying to come to terms with his own place in multiple in his family; at school, with its colonial Eurocentric ethos; and within the religion and politics of Montego Bay and the city's criminal gangs. Through his time away at college, he is beginning to develop his own sense of accountability and an understanding of the life he is living.

The novel takes us through a sweeping movement between the younger and more mature selves of from the homophobia prevalent in Jamaican boys' schools and the institutionalized form it takes to the paranoia and denial surrounding adolescent sexuality to the corruption of a society that runs so nakedly on power relations and social class.

"My Own Dear People" looks unflinchingly at proclivities toward cruelty, particularly toward women and LGBTQ+ people. Thompson elevates the tradition of the coming-of-age novel by boldly examining how sexual predation crosses both gay and straight worlds.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Thompson is the award-winning author of "Death Register" and has published short stories in PREE and the Caribbean Writer. He was born and raised in Jamaica and currently works at an international school in Hiroshima, Japan.

Crème de la Crème Schools celebrates grand opening in Cary



FACEBOOK

With child care options in short supply across the Triangle, Crème de la Crème Schools is stepping in to meet the need. The early learning provider celebrated its grand opening last week in Cary, offering families a unique blend of research-based academics and enrichment programs for children ages 6 weeks to 5 years. The school at 6560 Tryon Road has immediate openings available.