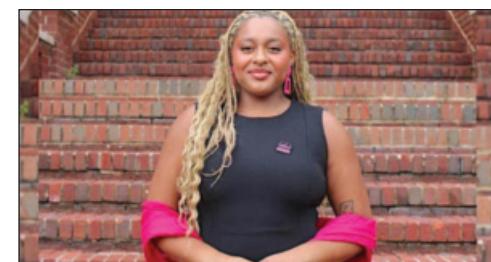




SPORTS

Elizabethtown youth invited to prestigious baseball event



COMMUNITY FOCUS

Howard senior to star in Netflix's sequel to a "A Different World"

The Triangle Tribune

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Ameshia Cooper Chester for Judge at Ivy Community Center

Ameshia Cooper Chester, green dress, kicked off her campaign last week for North Carolina Superior Court judge at the Ivy Community Center in Durham. "I'm so grateful to everyone who showed up, sent encouragement, and believes in building a court system rooted in compassion and accountability," she said.



FACEBOOK



Ligon Principal Darren Williams addresses alumni and parents.

John W. Ligon alumni fear losing school's history amid renovation talks

By Kylie Marsh

Kylie.marsh@triangletribune.com

RALEIGH - Tensions flared at a community listening session last week surrounding the renovation of John W. Ligon Middle School.

The meeting, called by Wake County Board of Education member Toshiba Rice, was meant to gather feedback about moving forward with renovations for the historically Black school.

John W. Ligon was a celebrated pastor, educator and leader throughout the state. The John W. Ligon Junior-Senior High School opened in 1953 to provide an alternative to the crowded Washington Graded and High School, of which Ligon was a principal.

Originally constructed with a budget of \$1 million, Wake County has now allocated approximately \$141 million to renovate the site. The school was marked for

renovation in 2022 as part of Wake County's seven-year Capital Improvement Plan.

Much has been said about the historic contributions the school made to the Southeast Raleigh community and Wake County and is deemed by Preservation Raleigh to be a "Place in Peril." The school was renowned for its teaching staff who "didn't just pass you along," as one alumni shared.

Please see LIGON/2A

President Trump's big ugly bill strips nursing of professional status

By Stacy M. Brown

BLACK PRESS USA

The Trump administration has declared that nursing is not a professional degree, striking directly at the heart of America's health care workforce and landing hardest on Black women, who make up nearly 13% of the national health care labor force and almost 10% of registered nurses.

The administration frames the move as a technical adjustment to loan classifications. For Black

women and the communities that rely on them, the consequences are far more severe.

"This is a gut punch for nursing," Patricia Pittman of George Washington University stated. "Education from ADN to BSN and beyond is the single best way to retain nurses, especially in underserved communities."

Under the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, nursing, physical therapy, physician assistants, and other frontline health professions have been stripped of pro-

fessional degree status. Students in these fields can borrow only \$20,500 per year with a total cap of \$100,000.

Students in law, dentistry, medicine, and other protected fields can borrow up to \$50,000 per year and \$200,000 total. Nursing students report tuition and clinical training costs that far exceed the new caps, leaving many unable to continue their education.

The American Association of

Please see TRUMP'S/2A

Candidate filing in NC makes a high-profile primary official

By Lynn Bonner and Galen Bacharier

NC NEWSLINE

A North Carolina political race that has been brewing for years became official Monday, with Rockingham County Sheriff Sam Page filing to run against Senate Leader Phil Berger in the Republican primary in the district that includes Rockingham and part of Guilford.

Candidate filing started Monday. When it ends at noon on Dec. 19, it'll be clear where primary elections will be and who will glide into office unopposed next year.

The conflict between Berger and Page burst into public view with Berger's support in 2023 for expanding casino gambling in the state and building one in Rockingham County. Berger has since called that proposal dead, but that hasn't dulled the sharp accusations the two campaigns have traded this year.

Berger was elected to the state Senate in 2000. He is in his eighth term as Senate leader, formally Senate president pro tem, and is one of the most powerful politicians in the state. No other candidates had filed to run in Senate District 26 by Monday afternoon.

A Democratic primary that produced one of the closest results in the state in 2024 is headed for a rematch. Longtime former Rep. Michael Wray is challenging the current occupant of the NC House District 27 seat, freshman Rep. Rodney Pierce. In 2024, Pierce defeated Wray in the district that includes Halifax, Warren and Northampton counties by 34 votes, or less than a percentage point. Pierce went on to run unopposed in the general election.

In Guilford County, Angie Williams-McMichael of High Point is running against Rep. Amanda Cook in the Democratic primary in House District 50. Cook was appointed to the seat a few weeks ago to replace former House member Cecil Brockman. Brockman resigned after being charged with sex crimes involving a minor, charges he has denied.

Rep. Keith Kidwell, R-Beaufort, one of the most conservative members of the state House, has drawn a primary challenge from Darren Armstrong of Belhaven in House District 79.

Who will run in the new 1st Congressional District? Republicans are aiming to turn the northwest 1st U.S. House District red in 2026, thanks to a new congressional map approved by the legislature and upheld by a federal court. Which Republican will vie for that seat?

Its current occupant, Democratic U.S. Rep. Don Davis, said Monday he will run in the redrawn district despite new boundaries that strongly favor a Republican. Davis no longer lives in the district — he was drawn out of it by Republican map-makers and now resides in the neighboring 3rd district. But members of Congress are not required to live in a district to represent it.

"Many feel Washington, D.C., isn't serving their needs, and the redistricting battle clearly proves it," Davis wrote on social media Monday.

On the other side of the aisle, a contested primary is likely. Just one candidate has filed for the seat as of Monday: state Sen. Bobby Hanig, a Republican who has emerged as a rare dissenting GOP voice in the Senate on issues like a ban on shrimp trawling.

"I've always been very vocal when it comes to people coming after folks in my district," Hanig told reporters. "People bring me to Raleigh to defend them and make sure that we're taking care of them."

Will President Donald Trump weigh in on the GOP primary? "We'll see," said U.S. Rep. Richard Hudson, who

Please see CANDIDATE/2A

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5007 Southpark Drive,

Suite 200-G

Durham, NC 27713

(919) 688-9408

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Publisher: Gerald O. Johnson

Managing Editor/Sports Editor: Bonita Best

Advertising: Linda Johnson

info@triangletribune.com

www.triangletribune.com



Ligon alumni fear losing school with renovations

Continued from page 1A

Participants were asked to reminisce on their favorite memories of attending Ligon, but they weren't interested.

What they wanted was clear information on what is proposed for the site's renovation, which officials present could not provide.

Ligon Principal Darren Williams gave a brief overview of the needs of the school, which range from leaks, mold, a decaying HVAC system that causes a 15-degree variation in temperatures across the building, and a lack of square footage compared to the Wake County Public Schools standards.

What community members heard was the school must be torn down.

Desmond Dunn, a consultant hired by Wake County, said this is not the case.

Dunn, a Ligon alumnus, also sent his daughter to the school.

Though the meeting began with community agreements to remain respectful of all perspectives, concerned alumni stood up and spoke on their concerns when not provided with a microphone.

They said Needham B. Broughton High School, built in 1929 for white students, is not at risk of demolition.

"Broughton was built out of stone. We weren't given stone. We were given scraps," Dunn said, reminding community members that, due to segregation, subpar building materials were used to erect the school. "Right

now, in the chorus room, there is a trashcan collecting water."

Dunn added there may not be another chance for the county to allocate \$141 million to the school. "Whatever we do needs to last my entire lifetime," he said.

Community members also raised concerns about a "lack of transparency" between the county and its residents.

Wake released a Request for Proposals and has been working with LS3P architecture firm, ahead of community information sessions.

"How many people in this room were involved in meetings?" a man asked.

Rice agreed there has indeed been a lack of transparency, and she called the meeting to start over on the right foot.

Wake County Public Schools Superintendent Robert Taylor acknowledged the significance Black schools have to the community, and the care and intention that is required behind any renovations of important historical landmarks.

There are three proposals for Ligon:

* Renovate the site

* Demolish the school

and build a new one

* Move the original building to the football field, build a new one on its original site, demolish the old one on the football field and then build a new football field.

Resident Daniel Coleman provided a written statement denouncing the third proposal of relocating

Ligon to the football field (called "the bottoms" by its students).

"[The legacy of Ligon] should not be pushed down the hill into the place where, for generations, those with the fewest resources lived, and what many of us still call 'the bottoms,'" he said.

"We need a clear and straightforward message," Taylor added. "This isn't about politics, it's about trust." He assured community members that there is no plan set in stone right now. The purpose of the session was to get feedback and hear concerns from alumni.

Taylor also proposed dates for further listening sessions between January and March.

"What we readily admit is that we haven't always been as clear and transparent as we should be," he said. "And that is not deliberate."

While Ligon alumni in attendance were predominantly Black, current and prospective parents were mostly white women who raised concerns that whatever decision is made, they will risk sending their students to a satellite location for learning.

"It's hard to have confidence in what our city or county are doing when we always get shortchanged," an attendee said. "You took the park from us; you took the school from us. We've always been told that we're gonna get progress, but progress always comes with a cost to us."

Candidate filing in NC makes primary official

Continued from page 1A

heads the national campaign arm to elect House Republicans.

"We'll stay in contact as candidates emerge in the 1st district, and we'll see," he said. "He may decide not to endorse, he may endorse."

Hudson has also drawn an early official opponent — Democrat Nigel Bristow, chief probation and patrol officer in Anson County, filed for the 9th district on Monday. He ran against Hudson and lost in 2024.



STOCK ART

Trump's big ugly bill strips nursing of pro status

Continued from page 1A

Colleges of Nursing issued a direct warning.

"Excluding nursing disregards the rigorous education, licensure, and direct patient care that define our profession," the organization stated. "This decision threatens the health care of patients in communities across the country."

The nation already faces a shortage of hundreds of thousands of nurses. Graduate degrees are required for advanced practice roles. Without meaningful access to federal loans, fewer students will enter or complete these programs. Black women, who rely on student loans at far higher rates than white students, now face a barrier to finan-

cial mobility and advancement in the nursing profession.

Research shows that Black nurses often serve in underserved rural and urban communities. Studies of Black nurse practitioners describe persistent racism, heavy workloads and limited institutional support. Participants in one national qualitative study described

taking additional time to address inequities and care for patients facing social and economic barriers while contending with organizational barriers and burnout.

Kim Brundidge, a doctoral nursing student and practicing nurse, described the consequences for the next generation of providers. "If students are not

able to afford advanced education, the quality and number of nurses entering the workforce will decline," she said.

Local and national nursing groups are preparing challenges to the reclassification. Leaders across the field warn that the bill undermines the country's ability to meet basic health care needs.

"In many communities across the country, advanced practice registered nurses ensure access to essential and high-quality care that would otherwise be unavailable," Jennifer Mensik Kennedy of the American Nurses Association said. "Limiting nurses' access to graduate education threatens the very foundation of patient care."

Which North Carolina laws took effect on Dec. 1

By Galen Bacharier

NC NEWSLINE

A bundle of new North Carolina laws, including packages of changes to criminal punishments and the state's pretrial release process, took effect on Dec. 1.

That includes "Iryna's Law," a Republican-led measure that limits pretrial release options for those accused of violent crimes, ramps up scrutiny of court magistrates and attempts to jumpstart the state's death penalty process. The law requires secured bond or GPS-monitored house arrest for defendants accused of "violent offenses," as lawmakers aim to prevent magistrates from releasing repeat offenders before trial. And court magistrates who oversee those hearings are now subject to suspension by state Supreme Court Chief Justice Paul Newby.

"Iryna's Law" also aims to streamline aspects of the death penalty and open the possibility of resuming executions. Lethal injection remains the state's default method of execution, but has been on pause for almost two decades amid continued legal and regulatory challenges. Under the new law, if a court finds the method to be unconstitutional, the state would be required to adopt another method. That could include the electric chair or firing squad. Stein has said "there will be no firing squads in North Carolina during my time as governor."

Another criminal justice law also took effect Dec. 1, creating new criminal penalties and increasing the punishment for existing penalties. It also makes changes to post-conviction

court motions, the release of firearms to defendants and out-of-state domestic violence orders.

The "Public Safety Act of 2025" also:

* Creates new felony charges for exposing a child under 16 years old to a controlled substance.

* Makes all instances of solicitation of minors by computer into more severe felonies.

* Allows an out-of-state resident to pursue a protective order against another person for acts that have occurred within the state.

* Creates the felony crime of "habitual domestic violence" if a person has repeated convictions of domestic violence. The new felony is a more severe violation than the defendant's most recent violation.

* Increases severity of felonies for possession and sale of fentanyl and carfentanil.

* Requires defendants to file motions for relief after conviction within seven years of one of the events that led to that conviction.

* Allows a sheriff to release surrendered firearms to a defendant without a court order if the defendant is not otherwise barred from having them. The sheriff must conduct a criminal history check before doing so.

OTHER NC LAWS

TAKING EFFECT

* **More new criminal penalties:** Creates a variety of new criminal penalties, including the unlawful sale and possession of embalming fluid and larceny of gift cards. Also increases punishments for other offenses, including larceny of mail and assaulting a utility or communications

worker.

* **Online sexual exploitation:** Requires online sites to establish procedures to remove pornographic images upon request. Allows the attorney general to pursue action against users or site operators who violate the law. Also requires the state registrar to maintain copies of previous birth certificates when a person requests to have their sex changed on their certificate.

* **Auditor investigations:** Allows the state auditor to audit or investigate any entity that receives state or federal dollars. The bill was vetoed by Gov. Josh Stein and overridden by lawmakers.

* **Nondiscrimination in disaster recovery:** Makes it a felony to discriminate based on political affiliation while providing disaster recovery assistance.

* **Squatter removal:** Allows property owners to pursue an expedited process to remove squatters.

* **Tinted windows:** Removes window tinting from state safety inspection requirements. Drivers with tinted windows must roll down the window when a law enforcement officer approaches.

* **Nonprofit records disclosure:** Bars public agencies from collecting or releasing unnecessary information about 501(c) nonprofit organizations' donors, members or volunteers. It was vetoed by Stein and overridden by lawmakers.

* **Continuing care retirement communities:** Makes a number of changes to licensure, certification and other regulations for continuing care retirement communities.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

DEMO DAY

2025 Innovate Durham Demo Day is Dec. 11, 6-8 p.m., American Underground, 201 W. Main St. Contact: Sabria Futrell at sfutrell@dconc.gov.

MARKET

Durham Night Market is Dec. 11, 5-9 p.m., Ameri-

can Tobacco Campus, 390 Blackwell St.

CHAMBER

The Men of Southeast Raleigh and The Black Chamber of Raleigh present Southeast Raleigh Legacy Gala Dec. 14, 6-10 p.m., 3511 Maitland Drive. Tickets: eventbrite.com.

OPENINGS:

* The Up Down Market launches Dec. 13, 2-6 p.m., at GeerHouse, 620 Foster St. The event is free, but registration required at www.eventbrite.com.

Send business briefs to info@triangletribune.com.



Tax refunds expected to rise by about \$1,000 next year – for some, not all

By Stacy M. Brown
BLACK PRESS USA

Federal tax refunds are positioned for a sharp rise next year, with new projections showing that the average payment could increase by about \$1,000 for millions of Americans.

Analysts expect the typical refund to reach roughly \$4,151 for the 2026 filing season, a major jump from the \$3,151 average taxpayers received during the 2025 season.

"When people go to file, they'll be surprised by really, really large refunds," Don Schneider, deputy head of U.S. policy at Piper Sandler and one of the report's authors, said in a recent podcast about the analysis. "In a typical year, we might have about \$270 billion in tax refunds, and it'll be that plus another \$90 billion."

Analysts expected a spike to come after the Trump administration's

sweeping tax and spending law was signed in July. The law eliminates federal taxes on some overtime and tipped income and lifts the state and local tax deduction cap from \$10,000 to \$40,000.

All changes were made retroactive to 2025, setting up larger refunds when taxpayers file in early 2026.

Because most Americans receive their refunds within about 21 days of filing, the size of those payments often carries significant weight in household budgets. Next year could bring one of the biggest refund seasons on record.

The benefits will not be evenly shared. Piper Sandler's analysis shows middle and upper-middle income households, those earning between \$60,000 and \$400,000, stand to gain the most.

That finding matches a Tax Policy Center review that esti-

mated people earning more than \$217,000 receive six of every 10 dollars in new tax breaks created by the July law.

High earners will see some limits. The expanded \$40,000 SALT deduction begins to phase out for households earning more than \$500,000. Lower-income filers are also unlikely to benefit because the higher SALT cap only helps people whose state and local tax bills exceed the standard deduction.

Filers must itemize to claim it, which tax experts note is less common among lower-income households.

Schneider said the impact falls primarily on households in the middle of the income distribution rather than those at the lowest or highest ends.

"This isn't going to the very bottom of the distribution. It isn't going to the very top of the distribution either," he said.



Durham County files no-contact order against activist

By Kylie Marsh
Kylie.marsh@triangletribune.com

DURHAM – Amanda Wallace, above, is not new to facing legal action for her activism. As founder of Operation Stop Child Protective Services, Wallace frequently shows up to hold public employees accountable.

Pursuant to the Workplace Violence Protection Act, Durham County has filed a no-contact order against Wallace, alleging that she has harassed Durham County Department of Social Services Director Maggie Clapp.

"We have been attempting to have conversations with Maggie," Wallace said. "She refuses, and we continue to raise awareness in the community about the fact that she is the leader of the Department of Social Services, and she is not leading it well."

The hearing is Dec. 5, 9:30 a.m., at Durham County Courthouse.

Wallace sees the action as political repression. "These are the tactics of the state," she continued. "When they get to pulling these types of tactics out of the bag, that means we are close. That means they feel the pressure, and they feel the heat."

The no-contact order alleges Wallace has "made derogatory comments," and that "Maggie Clapp has been tormented, terrorized and/or terrified, and said actions serve no legitimate purpose."

Clapp oversees the Child Welfare Unit, which makes legal requirements of parents and guardians to attend parenting classes, substance abuse treatments and mental health treatments. Children can be removed from the home due to neglect or a dangerous environment.

Operation Stop Child Protective Services is a grassroots organization which alleges that "in every state, child protective services essentially acts as a kidnapping gang to keep Black people powerless politically, economically and socially." The no-contact order also alleges that Wallace accused Clapp of being a "kidnapper" and committing acts of genocide.

"What they said was 'interfering in county business.' When the county business is stealing children from their families due to poverty, somebody has to say something," Wallace said.

This is not the first time

the County has attempted this action, but the case was tossed out by the N.C. Court of Appeals in 2022. Then-director of Durham County DSS Ben Rose left his position.

Wallace says there is fear that if Clapp vacates the position, a "vacuum in leadership" will open up. "That's what they're worried about," she said.

Wallace has faced other charges – accessing a government computer, and trespassing in Person County, New Hanover County and Durham County. Recently, the Workplace Violence Protection Act was strengthened, including specific limitations to the type of public demonstrations at workplaces that are protected – expanding protections for employers but not employees. Certain forms of mass picketing, which may obstruct the carrying out of work duties, are now unlawful conduct under the amendments.

Wallace voiced concern that freedom of speech and protest rights are threatened. "It's the First Amendment, freedom of speech to be able to redress the government.

That's what it's there for," she said.

Funding changes could push more homeless

By Greg Childress
NC NEWSLINE

Nearly 3,000 North Carolinians could lose housing under changes to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's competitive grant program for permanent housing, according to an estimate by the National Alliance to End Homelessness.

The alliance and other advocates are bracing for HUD reforms that will dramatically change the way the federal government funds permanent housing assistance programs.

The changes could cost the state more than \$24 million in funding for programs that house people experiencing homelessness, the organization told N.C. Newsline.

Nationally, more than 170,000 people could be at risk of homelessness due to changes to the \$3.9 billion grant program, the alliance said.

"Without that funding, it means services are disrupted, if not stopped altogether," said Marcy Thompson, the alliance's vice president of programs and policy. "If they [service providers] can't continue operating, landlords don't get rent. It creates a lot of distrust within the community."

At issue are federal Continuum of Care grants, which is the largest federal grant program specifically for assisting people experiencing homelessness. The competitive grants are awarded on a two-year cycle, but HUD has required a new competition one year into the funding cycle.

"What we know is, there

was originally a two-year promise," said Liz Carbone, project specialist with the North Carolina Coalition to End Homelessness. "That promise has been walked back."

Carbone said the new competition could delay funding until spring for some awardees, leaving nonprofits scrambling to fill funding gaps to pay rent.

"We know that conservatively, best case, we will not see awards in our state until the end of May," Carbone said. "The funding delay alone is going to be so deeply painful for our state."

Most communities do not have the resources on hand to fill funding gaps if there are significant delays in grant awards, Carbone said. "If communities feel the need to assume these programs and keep them going, which I think most communities will, that's a cost to the local taxpayer."

Federal money for homeless programs is dispersed through 12 Continuums of Care in North Carolina. Most are focused on larger cities such as Asheville, Charlotte, Durham, Raleigh and Wilmington.

The controversial program changes come as HUD breaks from the long-favored "Housing First" approach, which prioritizes providing immediate access to permanent housing without prerequisites. HUD is moving to a transitional housing approach that includes work and sobriety requirements.

"These long-overdue reforms will promote independence and ensure we are supporting means-

tested approaches to carry out the President's mandate, connect Americans with the help they need, and make our cities and towns beautiful and safe," HUD Secretary Scott Turner said in a statement announcing the changes.

A new scoring criteria penalizes nonprofits competing for federal grants if they are located in areas that don't, for example, have public camping bans in place. A statewide bill in North Carolina to enact such a ban stalled in the state Senate but some local municipalities have such bans in place.

In July, President Trump issued an executive order that directed the HUD secretary and other cabinet secretaries to "determine whether priority" for grants may be given to grantees in states and municipalities that actively enforce prohibitions on urban camping and loitering, open illicit drug use and urban squatting.

The policy changes also penalize nonprofits for promoting diversity, equity and inclusion or "gender ideology extremism," and for the alleged "misuse of and abuse of taxpayers' dollars on illegal aliens."

"Some of the things that HUD is essentially penalizing organizations and communities for are things that were required of them in the last administration," said Marcy Thompson at the National Alliance to End Homelessness. "There's no community, no organization that is not at risk of being impacted here."

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Dexter Avenue King Memorial Baptist Church

BAPTIST PRESS



A memorial to the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

HMB staffer to lead church Martin Luther King served at for six years

By Laurie A. Lattimore

BAPTIST PRESS

This story was first published on Jan. 15, 1997.

MONTGOMERY, Ala. — Michael Fox Thurman isn't intimidated by Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy at Dexter Avenue King Memorial Baptist Church in Montgomery, but the congregation's new pastor is well aware of the awesome responsibility ahead of him.

"Dr. King was a humble man, and he would not want me to be intimidated by him," said Thurman, a Montgomery native. "But the heights that he reached — I can only stand in the shadows. I'm awed more than anything."

Thurman is the 26th pastor of the 119-year-old church whose claim to fame is King, its pastor from 1954-60 and leader of the Civil Rights Movement during the 1950s and '60s. A national holiday will be observed Jan. 20 in honor of King, who was assassinated April 4, 1968, in Memphis, Tennessee.

In spite of Dexter Avenue's fame, Thurman is de-

termined to move the church into the 21st century, building on its past to launch into the future. "It is a tremendous challenge to bear such a tradition, but it's an exciting opportunity to contribute not only to an historical institution but to also lead that institution into the next century," he said. "It carries such an awesome responsibility."

Thurman was called to Dexter Avenue Nov. 19 and has been preaching every Sunday since Dec. 15. He works in Atlanta during the week and at Dexter on the weekends. He and his wife, Patricia, and two children will move to Montgomery in March. "I am following a long line of very capable, prominent and powerful leaders of this church who brought many gifts and talents," he said. "Somehow, God chose to bring me here, so I will use the gifts and talents God gave me."

While Thurman considers his new post a humbling experience, he deems it an honor to

stand in the pulpit once belonging to a man Thurman credits with much of his ability to be successful in America today.

Thurman, 35, was just an infant during King's prime in his fight for racial justice in America, but King's influence is still a powerful and motivating force for Thurman.

"A lot of what I do now came about because of King's efforts. Every time I use public transportation, I think of him. Every time I drink from a water fountain, I think of him. Every time I vote, I think of him," Thurman said, noting the Civil Rights Movement initially was a church movement, with Black churches then providing the stabilizing force during the struggle.

Racial equality in the last 40 years has made "phenomenal" strides, but the struggle for justice is ever present, Thurman said. "We eliminated segregation, but we did not bring about integration. The race issue will be with us forever. It is only in Christ that the battles over race and stereotypes can be broken down."

Mixed Nut Sampler



Holiday goodies perfect for gifting for nut lovers

FAMILY FEATURES

Gadgets and gizmos may be all the rage, but stuffing stockings with holiday gifts can be as simple as delicious goodies that highlight the flavors of the season. When seeking that special surprise for a special someone, look no further than a customizable combination of festive snacks.

Whether selecting a unique ready-to-go hostess gift, crafting the perfect combo for every person on your list or picking up hard-to-find ingredients for holiday treats, Nuts.com can deliver something for everyone and every need. Its convenience makes it an ideal destination for hosting and gifting, no matter your budget.

Give a gift box filled with favorites, curate your ultimate party tray or build the trail mix of your dreams with thousands of snacks, treats and ingredients to choose from, all without the hassle of heading to the store.

Consider these unique gift ideas and find more by visiting Nuts.com.

MIXED NUT SAMPLER

Perfect for family and friends who like to entertain or to elevate your own gathering, the large mixed nut sampler is a bountiful tray with two pounds of premium goodies. It includes a little something for everyone with jumbo pistachios, milk chocolate peanuts, milk chocolate raisins, butternut peanuts,



Winterland Wonder Cheer



Custom Holiday Tray

jumbo roasted and salted cashews, and more.

WINTER WONDERLAND CHEER

Delicious snacks can taste just as good as they look, especially when they offer the friendly flavors of the season. Give a festive Box of winter wonderland with three pounds of tasty goodies including salted pistachios; dark, peppermint malt balls; chocolate-covered sunflower seeds and additional tasty, crun-

chy treats.

CUSTOM HOLIDAY TRAY

If you just can't find the right gift for that special someone who has it all, a custom tray may be the perfect fit. You can mix and match from 150-plus available morsels and sweets to create the five-snack tray of your loved one's dreams. The options are nearly endless, including cinnamon gummies, Turkish figs, chocolate-covered espresso beans and beyond.

RECIPE OF THE WEEK



Fall into fresh ideas for autumn entertaining

FAMILY FEATURES

Crafting cozy crowd-pleasers is a must for hosting, especially during the cooler fall months. Give your crowd something to celebrate, regardless of the occasion, with comforting sides and appetizers that warm loved ones from the inside-out.

Always a healthy snack, fresh California grapes can also be the versatile ingredient you need for elevating dishes for get-togethers and parties. In addition to providing a juicy burst of flavor and pop of color, roasting grapes in recipes like these intensifies their flavor as the natural sugars caramelize.

If a warm medley of color

$\frac{3}{4}$ -teaspoon sea salt
3 cups red Grapes from California
1 pound orange sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into 1/4-inch slices
 $\frac{3}{4}$ -cup thinly sliced onion

freshly ground pepper, to taste

snipped fresh basil

Heat oven to 425 F. In large bowl, combine oil, vinegar, salt, grapes, sweet potatoes and onion, tossing well to coat. Place on large baking sheet and spread in single layer.

Bake 30 minutes, or until potatoes are tender, stirring halfway through cooking. Sprinkle with freshly ground pepper, to taste, and fresh basil.

Sheet Pan Roasted Grapes and Sweet Potatoes

Servings: 6

3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar

AROUND THE TRIANGLE

RALEIGH VETERANS

The next Veterans and Coffee is Dec. 9, 10:30-11:30 a.m., John "Top" Green African American Cultural Center, 401 MLK Jr. Boulevard.

TALENT

Youth & Young Adult Talent Show is Dec. 13, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., 1425 Promise Beacon Circle.

POP-UP

Holiday Market Pop-Ups is Dec. 13, 1-5 p.m., 7449 Six Forks Road.

CHRISTMAS

"THIS CHRISTmaS" HBCU edition is Dec. 13, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., Spaulding Gymnasium on Shaw's campus, 118 E. South St.

BOOKS

African American Book Fair is Dec. 14, 2-6 p.m.,

"Top" Greene African American Cultural Center, 401 MLK Jr. Boulevard, Dec. 13, 6-9 p.m., West End Billiards, 601 W. Main St., Suite A.

MARKET POP-UP

Black Farmers' Market Holiday Pop-Up is Dec. 17, 6-8:30 p.m., The Durham Hotel, 315 E. Chapell Hill St.

DURHAM HOLIDAY

Durham Fire Department's Toys and Books for Rides event is Dec. 7, noon to 4 p.m., Durham Central Park.

PARTY

"Funkin' All The Way: A Juke Joint Christmas" is Dec. 13, 6-11 p.m., Phoenix Event Center, 810 Fayetteville St. Tickets: www.tixtree.com.

REUNION

Durham High School Football Reunion Bash is

CELEBRATION

Together for Resilient Youth celebrates its 25th anniversary Dec. 13, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., Durham Technical College, Building 10. Register: TRY25.eventbrite.com.

MARKET

Durham Craft Market's Holiday Market is Dec. 14, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., 501 Foster St.

CHAPEL HILL SCREENING

A screening and discussion of "13th" by Ava DuVernay in recognition of Abolition Day is Dec. 10, 5-7:30 p.m., Seymour Center, 2551 Homestead Drive, Durham. Register: www.orange-countync.gov/Abolition-Day.

2 coaches named Jackson: 1 honored 1 snubbed

Two first-year HBCU Division I-FCS coaches boasted at their football media day how they fully expected to be in the conference championship game at the end of the season.

One head coach came from a winning program, leading his Division II team to back-to-back playoff appearances, an undefeated season and a trip to the NCAA national championship.

His preseason prognostication rubbed some the wrong way. Who was he, a former DII coach almost

guaranteeing a conference championship with a program that hadn't won a title since 2009. Didn't he know where he was? Oh, he knew all right.

BONITTA BEST Prairie View A&M coach Tremaine Jackson and the Panthers will face off against HBCU defending champion Jackson State this weekend in the SWAC Championship Game for the right to meet South Carolina State in next weekend's Cricket Celebration Bowl.

This week Jackson was named the SWAC football coach of the year, as voted on by the coaches and sports information directors.

The second coach had no prior head coaching experience - only name recognition from his playing days in the NFL. He was taking over a program that hadn't finished above .500 since 2012.

His preseason prognostication rubbed some the wrong way. Who was he, a no-experience wannabe thinking he could outcoach anybody?

Delaware State coach DeSean Jackson led the Hornets to their best record (8-4) since the 2007 season and one win away from a trip to Atlanta.

Last week Jackson was... DISSED by MEAC coaches and sports information directors. The coach of the year award was given to SCSU coach Chennis Berry.

Yes, the Bulldogs defended their MEAC title and went undefeated in the conference for the second straight year. And, yes, it's harder to be the hunted than the hunter. Still, they were SUPPOSED to win, so who is really surprised.

With Norfolk State and Michael Vick getting most of the headlines, the Hornets were barely expected to equal their win total of two over the last two seasons (2-21).

Critics said DSU wasn't as good as its record. O-O-O-Okay, so it didn't beat N.C. Central, Norfolk State, Morgan State and Howard? The Hornets defeated the same teams as S.C. State, just not the Bulldogs.

Their seven-win turnaround from last season was the best by an FCS team this year. But those petty petunias in the MEAC just couldn't stomach giving Jackson his deserved award.

We H-B-C-YOU When you leave an HBCU a winner, fans and alumni never forget you.

Jerry Mack took NCCU to its first Celebration Bowl in 2016 before getting robbed of the win. He put life back into the program that had become a joke.

After stops at Tennessee and the NFL's Jacksonville Jaguars as running backs coach, Kennesaw State got its man. The Owls are 9-3, 7-1 CUSA, and will play in the conference championship against Jacksonville State Dec. 5. The nine wins are the most since 2021's 11-2 season, and they're going bowling for the first time since then.

Willie Simmons built a

Please see JACKSON/7A

The Triangle Tribune Sports

December 7-13, 2025 | 6A

Elizabethtown youth invited to prestigious baseball event



STAFF REPORTS

ELIZABETHTOWN - Jabari Adams-Peterson, a talented young athlete from the Elizabethtown/Baldwin Branch Community, has been invited to attend an elite baseball event December 27-31, bringing together superior youth players from across the United States and around the world to League City, Texas.

This invitation represents a significant achievement and reflects Jabari's hard work, dedication, and outstanding performance both on and off the field.

The event offers participants the opportunity to train, compete, and showcase their skills among some of the most promising and talented young players in the sports world.

Jabari's selection not only highlights his individual accomplishments but also brings pride to the entire community and DreamWorks Christian Academy, where he is a seventh grader. His participation serves as an inspiration to other young athletes and a reminder of the incredible talent that exists within our local programs.

HBCU FOOTBALL

Another ex-NFLer hired as HBCU coach

By Bonitta Best
editor@triangletribune.com

South Carolina State coach Chennis Berry was named MEAC coach of the year. Bulldogs lineman Roger Smith was voted offensive lineman of the year and Morgan State's Raymond Moore III earned rookie of the year. The MEAC offensive and defensive players of the year will be announced Dec. 9 on ESPN+.

N.C. Central

Four Eagles made the MEAC All-Conference First Team Offense: Walker Harris, Chauncey Spikes, Luke Bracey and Trevon Humphrey.

Six were voted to the first team defense: Thomas Johnson, Jelani Vassell, Tomondrey Braxton, Brandon Bowman, Kaleb Robison and Mekhi Wall.

Four players are on the second team offense: Chris Moseley,

Chance Peterson, A.C. McMoore and Ja'Quan Sprinkle.

And three made the second team defense: Donquarius Parker, Max U'Ren and Isaiah Lawson.

Southern

New coach Marshall Faulk has something to build on for next season after the Jaguars' upset of Grambling State in the 52nd Bayou Classic.

Southern was 1-10 and on a nine-game losing streak, but that's why they're called rivalries. The Tigers (7-5) still finished with their best overall record since 2017's 11-2 season.

Faulk was officially named on Nov. 29 after coaching at Colorado as running backs coach. He was the 2000 NFL most valuable player and is in the NFL and College Football Halls of Fame.

He replaces Terrence Graves,



who was fired in October after a 1-6 start. Fred McNair was named interim. Graves has since been rehired by the university in the athletics department. The position, which begins Jan. 1, is just a way to pay Graves his salary for October, November and December. He will receive \$75,000 a month plus benefits, according to multiple reports.

Faulk's hire puts HBCU coaching vacancies at five: Hampton, Savannah State, Winston-Salem State, Langston and Bowie State.

Eddie Robinson

Two HBCU coaches are among the 15 finalists for the 2025 Eddie Robinson Award, pre-

Please see HBCU/7A

COLLEGE CORNER



KEVIN DORSEY

N.C. A&T center Chaniya Clark was unstoppable against North Carolina Central

NCAT women rally to defeat archrival

WOMEN

N.C. Central
The rivalry is back - ALL week!

First, the ladies went at it. North Carolina A&T visited McDougald for the first time in three years Tuesday night.

A 17-0 run by the Aggies in the third quarter reversed a deficit into a lead they never relinquished in a 73-67 win. Najah Lane led NCCU with 13 points.

A&T center Chaniya Clark

had a monster game of 20 points and 13 rebounds.

Fortunately, since the game was at NCCU, more fans could watch on ESPN+ cause who has FloSports, eh?

The Eagles have a few days to breathe before heading to South Carolina Dec. 7 for a noon matchup. CC smells upset! OK, maybe not.

Please see NCAT/7A

Women's basketball trailblazer earns NCAA Ford Award

NCAA.ORG

Charlene Curtis broke through first, then turned around to help others. The list of firsts was long, too.

First Black woman to play basketball at Radford.

First Black women's basketball head coach at Temple.

First Black women's basketball head coach in the Atlantic Coast Conference.

Each milestone became a marker for someone else to find, a path easier to traverse. "You can't be what you can't see. She gave us an example at a time where there weren't many," said Natasha Adair, Syracuse women's basketball's associate head coach, who described Curtis as a mentor.

"She deserves a lot of credit for being one of several to set the table for the women that we see having success at those levels now," said LaChina Robinson, a former player for Curtis at Wake Forest and current basketball analyst.

To recognize the impact of Curtis, who died of cancer in 2022, the NCAA posthumously

honored her with the Gerald R. Ford Award. The honor recognizes individuals who provided significant leadership as advocates for intercollegiate athletics throughout their career.

Curtis became the first 1,000-point scorer at Radford, where she played shortly after the passage of Title IX in 1972. After serving as an assistant coach at UConn, she returned to southwestern Virginia to coach her alma mater from 1984-90, leading the program to four Big South regular-season titles and three tournament championships.

She later coached at Temple from 1990-95 and led Wake Forest from 1997 to 2004. She followed with 11 years supervising ACC women's officials and stints coordinating crews for the Big South Conference, Colonial Athletic Association and Southern Conference, where her impact included expanding staff, introducing instant replay and creating standardized training clinics.

Beyond her resume, Curtis

Please see FORD/7A

HBCU NEWS

Howard senior to star in Netflix's HBCU sequel

N.C. CENTRAL

NCCU will conclude a record-setting fall semester by celebrating its 146th commencement exercises on Dec. 12 in McDougald-McLendon Arena.

The graduate and professional ceremony begins at 9 a.m., followed by the baccalaureate ceremony at 2 p.m. The fall ceremonies will feature two leaders whose journeys embody courage, innovation and service, values that mirror the spirit of NCCU's graduates.

A corporate board director, investor and former CEO, Anne Sempowski Ward has led some of the world's most recognized brands, including Coca-Cola, EBONY and Clairol. As chairwoman of CURiO Brands, a growing portfolio of beauty, wellness and home fragrance

companies, Ward has guided the company to quadruple in size under her leadership.

A strong advocate for women in sports, Ward is an owner of the WNBA's Chicago Sky and two United Soccer League franchises.

From the football field to the financial frontlines, Rob Robertson has built a career defined by perseverance and purpose. A former NFL fullback for the Baltimore Ravens, Robertson brings more than 24 years of experience in the financial services industry, specializing in home lending and market expansion.

Robertson is senior vice president and head of strategic sales at First Citizens Bank in Raleigh.

To ensure the safety of guests and graduates, NCCU will conduct security screenings and enforce its clear bag policy. Exceptions will be made for medical and baby needs.

HOWARD

Kennedi Reece, a 22-year-old musical theatre major in Howard University's Chadwick A. Boseman College of Fine Arts, will star in the highly anticipated sequel to the classic television show "A Different World."

The show, which aired from 1987-93, followed the lives of several students attending a fictional historically Black college located in Virginia.

Reece will play Hazel in the upcoming Netflix series, which will take us back to Hillman College once again with a new class. However, this current Howard student hadn't dreamed of attending an HBCU; she'd had her sights on the likes of South Carolina, UCLA, Vanderbilt and New York University to study psychology. "My dad went to Morehouse," said Reece, noting that he'd ask her to add a few HBCUs to her applications. "So, I applied to Howard and Spellman, and I got into both."

It wasn't until she found herself on UCLA and Vanderbilt's waitlists, with an additional acceptance letter from the South Carolina, that she decided to attend Howard. "I've grown up in PWIs my entire life," she began, noting how much her father loved his HBCU and the fact that her best friend and future roommate was also attending the university. "I was like, 'you know what, let me go to Howard. Let me be around people who look like me; I'm sure it'll be good.'"

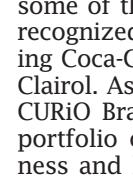
Sempowski



Robertson



Reece



Durham entrepreneur attends MEDICA 2025

Tommy McNeill, second from right, founder of Mid-South Medical, joined delegates from about 70 countries last month when he attended MEDICA 2025 in Düsseldorf, Germany. Held annually since 1969, MEDICA, the medical industry's largest international trade fair, welcomed several thousand exhibitors this year. In addition to learning about the latest innovations and hearing from respected leaders in business, research and policymaking, McNeill and others introduced the benefits of the HotDog Patient Warming device to product representatives and decision makers.

Represented by McNeill's company, Mid-South Medical, LLC, and manufactured by Augustine Surgical, Inc., the HotDog Patient Warming System delivers under-and-over body warmth to perioperative patients via a flexible, lightweight conductive polymer fabric. Numerous studies have proven that the HotDog's method is more effective than forced air or underbody warming alone.

Having partnered with Augustine Surgical to introduce the product to East Africa, where he established a distribution network, McNeill said: "Hospital infection rates are a major concern everywhere. Whether in Tanzania, Turkey, Cypress, Germany, Japan or the United States, Augustine Surgical International Partners eliminate the risk with a system that maintains normal body temperature during critical surgical procedures."

Visit <https://www.midsouthmedicalllc.com>.



Tommy McNeill, second from right, is founder of Mid-South Medical.

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Wake County Commissioners elects new chair, vice chair

STAFF REPORTS

The Wake County Board of Commissioners has elected new leadership. Commissioner Don Mial will serve as board chair and Commissioner Safiyah Jackson as vice chair.

"I'm honored to serve alongside the other dedicated public servants on this board," Mial said. "Together, we'll drive progress on Wake County's top priorities, from affordable housing to public safety, while investing in the

parks, libraries and shared spaces that connect us."

Mial was first elected to the board in 2021.

He is vice chair of the Public Safety Committee and a member of the Growth, Sustainability, and Economic Strength Committee. Jackson was appointed to the board in 2025.

She is the liaison to the Wake County Housing Authority and Passage Home Boards and chairs the Affordable Housing Committee.

tee. She holds an extensive professional background and is the chief strategy officer for the North Carolina Partnership for Children.

"Wake County is a dynamic community in a pivotal moment of growth; I'm excited to contribute my fresh perspective as a new leader to the board," she said. "Over the coming year, I look forward to working together with the chair and my fellow commissioners to enhance the essential services that support our 1.2 million residents every day."

Both leaders will serve through December 2026.

Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Durham Beta Phi Chapter



COURTESY
Veterans members of the Durham Beta Phi Chapter of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Inc. were honored last month on Veteran's Day.



Spectrum donates additional \$20k to Passage Home

STAFF REPORTS

RALEIGH — Spectrum gifted Passage Home an additional \$20,000 through its Spectrum Community Center Assist, the company's \$30 million philanthropic initiative to revitalize local community centers and invest in job training programs in underserved rural and urban neighborhoods where Spectrum operates.

Spectrum funding will support Passage Home's Workforce Development program that provides services to help individuals enter and advance in the

workplace through job placement assistance, training and education.

A check presentation was held at Passage Home's Thanksgiving food donation event last month.

"The long-term partnership we created with Passage Home is making a real difference in the lives of local residents by giving them the skills, tools and updated facilities they need to improve their economic situation," said Rahman Khan, group vice president, Community Impact for Charter Communications, which operates the

Spectrum brand of connectivity services. "Already thousands of people around the country have participated in SCCA in the neighborhoods we serve, and we look forward to working with Passage to provide essential job training in a safe and revitalized space."

The \$20,000 donation is the third for Passage Home through the Spectrum Community Center Assist program, bringing total Spectrum support for the organization to \$102,000 over the past three years.

Coming in 2026...
52 Weeks of Black Brilliance