



SPORTS
**Former UNC star
re-signs with North
Carolina Courage**



COMMUNITY FOCUS
**Black- and veteran-
owned restaurant
opens in Durham**

The Triangle Tribune

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VOLUME 27 NO. 50

Week of December 14-20, 2025

\$1.00

Town of Zebulon Installs its First Female Mayor



DON MIAL

Zebulon-elected Mayor Jessica Harrison took her oath of office, becoming the first female mayor in Zebulon history.



KYLIE MARSH

Supporters for Amanda Wallace traveled from across the country.

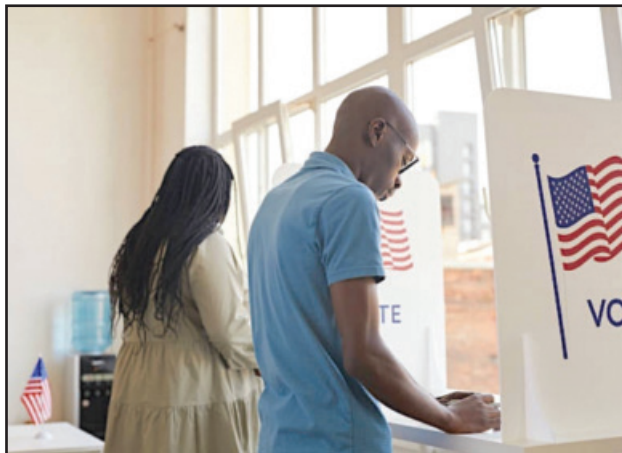
Durham County's no-contact order against activist draws national attention

By Kylie Marsh
Kylie.marsh@triangletribune.com
DURHAM - The fifth floor of the Durham County Justice Center was packed on Friday morning. People flew in from California, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Massachusetts, New York, Maryland, Connecticut, Rhode Island and Florida in support of Amanda Wallace, founder of Operation Stop CPS. Wallace was served with a no-contact order pursuant to the

North Carolina Workplace Violence Prevention Act filed on behalf of Maggie Clapp, director of the Durham County Department of Social Services. Durham County District Court Judge James Hill approved the order against Wallace with specific conditions, including that Wallace not be allowed to use amplified sound when protesting and must remain at least 50 feet away from the Durham County Department of Social Services Building when protest-

ing, and that no minors be present. Hill also ruled, however, that Wallace is allowed to send emails to Clapp, as well as attend DSS board meetings. "I'm feeling like we already won," Wallace said, expressing gratitude to the community that showed up in support of her case and the movement for the abolition of the family policing system. "What happened today was an attack on freedom of

Please see **DURHAM/2A**



FILE PHOTO

Black leaders still mobilizing for mid-terms despite NC gerrymandering

By Eric Tegethoff
PUBLIC NEWS SERVICE

A federal court decision allowing North Carolina to establish a new congressional map ahead of the 2026 midterms is a hurdle to representation for the state's Black population, according to civil rights advocates. But Black leaders in the state aren't throwing in the towel. The U.S. District Court decision is a win for Republicans, who are aiming to add a seat for the party in the U.S. House. It's part of a larger effort to redraw maps in favor of Republicans in states across the country after a call from President Donald Trump to do so before the midterms. The judges in the North Carolina case said they wouldn't weigh in on the bias of the new map, but Deborah Maxwell, president of the NAACP North Carolina State Conference, noted that the reshaping of two districts dilutes the power of Black voters in eastern North Carolina. "It's really odd that they would say that - that they did not choose it because of race," she said, "but you chose the area to eliminate a potential Black congressperson, which that area has had for decades." The judges wrote that "plaintiffs have not made a clear showing that they are likely to succeed on the merits of any of the claims advanced in their preliminary injunction motions," meaning the map will go into place for next year's election. Maxwell said the NAACP North Carolina State Conference and other plaintiffs have not yet decided whether to appeal the case to the U.S. Supreme Court. She wonders why changing the voting map was important to lawmakers when they have yet to approve the budget for next year. "They refuse to come back to Raleigh at the request of the governor to work on the budget, but yet they could quickly write this map up," she said. "So, there's some misplaced priorities by some misplaced individuals who go to the North Carolina General Assembly." While the new map decreases chances that a candidate preferred by Black voters will win in the First Congressional District, Maxwell said she hasn't lost hope. "What happens next is what we were going to do anyway," she said, "continue to educate, mobilize and organize for the midterm elections."

###

Wake County's only women's day shelter needs a bigger facility

By Kylie Marsh
Kylie.marsh@triangletribune.com
RALEIGH - As the weather outside is frightful, The Women's Center is experiencing one of its highest traffic times of the year. The center is one of the only day shelters of its kind in Wake County. In a year's time, almost 2,000 single women 18 and over will enter its doors on New Bern Avenue in Southeast Raleigh to do laundry, eat a hot meal, get free essential personal care and clothing items, and take a

shower. TWC serves approximately 115 women per day Monday through Friday, thanks to over 10,000 hours of volunteer work, coordinated by a staff of just seven people. "We're trying to work smarter, not harder," executive director Amy Smith said. The Women's Center fills the gaps between services provided by other shelters that provide beds for overnight stays. A hot breakfast and lunch,

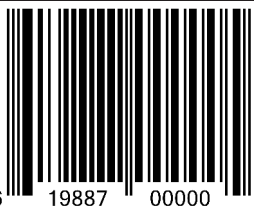
provided by local businesses or individuals, is served from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Smith says women are gone by 2 p.m. because they usually need to catch the hour-and-a-half bus ride to other shelters to start lining up for beds. The dining room, also outfitted with computers, printers, scanners and phones for use, next to what Smith refers to as "the world's smallest kitchen," fits approximately 50 people.

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Durham County’s order draws national attention

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speech.

“The only witness that they had was the director of Social Services, and the only evidence they had were her feelings; ignoring the feelings of countless families that continue to voice that this is what's happening to them. We're not making up these words.”

Clapp testified that Wallace appeared at DSS events, board meetings and on the sidewalk outside of Clapp's apartment, often in protest.

Specifically, Clapp said Wallace “accused [Clapp] of being a kidnapper of Black children.” Clapp also testified there were frequently other people accompanying Wallace.

Clapp described emotional distress on separate occasions when seeing Wallace alleging that Wallace's appearance on a public sidewalk adjacent to her apartment was an “escalation.”

In cross-examination, Wallace's attorneys asked Clapp to clarify that, although she has known Wallace for approximately two and a half years, there has not been any actual violence between the two.

Wallace's attorneys presented Dr. Sarah Katz as an expert testimony in Wallace's defense. Katz is a clinical professor of law at Temple University Beasley School of Law and a published scholar of family justice law.

Katz said the terms “kid-

napping” and “genocide” are used to describe the personal experiences of families involved in the family policing system. She also clarified that the United Nations' definition of the word genocide “includes the forcible removal of children from one group to another.”

Despite being adamant that he would protect freedom of speech and quoting the French philosopher Voltaire, Hill ruled against specific use of “kidnapping” and “genocide.”

“When you allege someone to be a kidnapper, that is accusing someone of a crime. Kidnapping is a felony,” he said.

(Read the entire article on our website.)



File photo of a memorial plaque for Darryl "Tyree" Williams at his mom's home in Wendell.

Raleigh settles in police Taser death of Darryl Williams

By Aaron Sánchez-Guerra
WUNC

The city of Raleigh settled out of court for nearly \$1 million after the family of Darryl "Tyree" Williams sued the Raleigh Police Department nearly two years ago.

The city will pay \$975,000 to Sonya Williams, who oversees her son's estate, as part of a Dec. 1 settlement agreement signed by the Raleigh City Attorney's Office. "Tyree" Williams was tased repeatedly before dying in police custody on Jan. 17, 2023.

Local civil rights group Emancipate NC represented Sonya Williams and previously sued the city, the four officers involved and former Police Chief Estella Patterson in 2024, seeking \$25 million in damages — the most ever sought in a Raleigh custody death — with the support and legal counsel

from prolific civil rights attorney Ben Crump and attorney Kenneth Abbarno.

The settlement agreement, signed on Dec. 1, states that the city and the officers involved in Williams' death deny all alleged wrongdoing. Sonya Williams previously told WUNC that the lawsuit was her hope for justice in her son's death, which she exclusively attributed to the police officers' accused excessive force. She said that included using a Taser on Williams, even while handcuffed, while attempting to detain him for alleged drug possession.

The case was unique: there weren't any guns fired, Williams was unarmed, and officers were never attacked or harmed. Police body cameras captured everything, including his screams and pleas for officers to stop tasing him.

A video summary of the body-worn camera footage of the incident was uploaded to the Raleigh Police

Department's YouTube account weeks after the in-custody death. "He told them, 'I got heart problems,' and then they tased him again," Sonya Williams said in a 2024 interview. "That's ... that's murder."

The settlement amount is among the highest paid by Raleigh in the death of a person in police custody. The highest amount paid was \$1.25 million to family of Soheil Mojarrad, a man with mental health issues who was killed by a Raleigh police officer in 2019.

The city will pay the settlement through its self-insured program and additional money will be paid through its excess insurance carries, city attorney Karen McDonald said in an statement to WUNC.

In the months after Williams' death, Wake County District Attorney Lorrin Freeman ruled that the officers' actions did not violate state law, and she would not file charges against them.



The Women's Center in Raleigh is bursting at the seams.

Wake County’s only day shelter needs more space

Continued from page 1A

The room is sometimes so packed during mealtimes that women line up outside the door, waiting for a spot at a table.

TWC also includes a warehouse area stocked to the brim with personal care items, clothing that's either for comfort or appropriate for job interviews, hair and makeup. There is always the need for new and gently-used suitcases, as the women must take all of their possessions with them.

Two large shipping containers in the back parking lot serve as overflow storage space for donations. "We're very dedicated to keeping things out of the landfill," warehouse volunteer Amy Covington said. Donations are not just limited to women's items.

"We want everyone to be comfortable and be their most authentic selves," Smith said. "We help anyone who identifies as a woman. We're here to help each other and keep each other safe." TWC's list of needs on its website in-

cludes men's and women's clothing, underwear and shoes.

Downstairs is the private respite area, which has 11 beds, with closets and privacy curtains. Five beds are reserved for referrals from WakeMed Community Health.

"They can be here and just be," Smith said. "Other places you have to be doing something. If you're at a library, you need to be working on a computer or reading or checking out a book."

Traci Kelly, director of development and communication, said women who come through TWC's doors are facing housing insecurity due to health-related issues: medical debt, mobility issues and chronic illness. Gentrification is also pushing women out of housing.

Smith added that the population they're seeing is consistently getting older.

"A lot of women on disability or Social Security only get \$967 a month," she said. This leaves next to nothing for other daily necessities like transportation, medication and groceries.

Sixty-two percent are women of color. The zip code in which the center is located also has the highest amount of overdoses in Wake County. That's why there's a box outside the center's front doors stocked with fentanyl test strips and Naloxone, a rescue drug for opioid overdoses.

It's also the zip code with the most COVID-19 deaths. Many of the women grew up within the same area, Smith said, but others are coming from out of town, lured by a man they met online with promises of a dream life.

Last year, TWC successfully placed 26 women in transitional housing, and was able to permanently house 17 women, along with 22 women housed through community partners. There's a budget of approximately \$1.3 million in private donations, as well as city and county allocation. But Smith says they really just need a bigger space to serve more women.

Access to a good education is a civil right

By Kimberly Jones
BEACON MEDIA

When I was 16, I heard a story that changed everything. I was attending a youth leadership conference, and the speaker was Evelynne Villines. Villines was a powerful figure in the fight for disability rights who had advised U.S. presidents, served on national commissions, and was a public advocate for the landmark Americans with Disabilities Act, signed in 1990.

Confined to a wheelchair by polio, Evelynne won the lead singing role in a school production. But when the time came, she was forced to remain off-stage, singing from the shadows. Instead of having the spotlight, a nondisabled peer, one who "looked the part," stood center stage, lip-syncing to her powerful voice.

That visual, a talented young woman deliberately veiled, a voice separated from its rightful owner, struck me, even as a teenager. It showed me that exclusion is not always loud; sometimes it's a seemingly innocent policy change that separates a child's gifts from the opportunity to share them.

Villine's story planted the enduring seed of my commitment to equity: our work must be to tear down every curtain of exclusion and relentlessly affirm every child's right to the spotlight. This memory is precisely what alarms me about the recent, sweeping layoffs in the U.S. Department of Education, particularly those gutting the Office of Special Education Programs and the Office for Civil Rights.

The U.S. Department of Education provides essential services that directly affect North Carolinians. It's not just a far-off bureaucracy; it's a major source of funding, with



federal money making up about 20% of our state's public school budget.

This means over \$3 billion annually helps pay for programs for low-income students and those with disabilities. The special education office and the civil rights employees are key parts of this. Special education ensures that students with disabilities get the education they're legally entitled, and the civil rights office makes sure our schools don't discriminate.

Gutting these offices puts vital services and protections for our most vulnerable students at risk. This could mean fewer teachers and resources for students in high-poverty or rural districts, and a lack of oversight for civil rights issues, leaving families with little recourse if their children face discrimination. This is a direct assault on the principles of equity and civil rights that form the bedrock of our public education system.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act is

not an optional suggestion; it is a law that guarantees a "free appropriate public education," which is mandated by federal law, to millions of students. Special education employees were the keepers of this promise, monitoring states, managing billions in grants and providing the guidance that ensured compliance. Without this oversight, FAPE risks becoming a fragmented "guideline" dictated by local budgets, rather than a child's legal right.

I have spoken with special education teachers who are deeply concerned that this lack of federal accountability will leave the fate of student protections in the hands of local school boards, whose members may prioritize political agendas over legal obligations, causing students to suffer. This unraveling of accountability will fall heaviest on the shoulders of our most vulnerable students and families, especially those in underfunded, rural school districts.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

CHAMBER
Greater Durham Black Chamber of Commerce Black Holiday Social & Toy Drive is Dec 18, 5-7 p.m., Hilton Durham, 3800 Hillsborough Road. Bring an unwrapped kid's toy.

CELEBRATION
E3 Durham will host its end-of-year celebration and vendor bazaar Dec.

18, 5-8 p.m., echo Space, 112 Broadway St. Register: www.e3durham.org.


AWARD
Better Business Bureau of Eastern Carolinas announces a new Women-in-Business Award. A \$1,000 grant will go to a female business owner or entrepreneur. Learn more at www.cognitofirms.com/B


BForms. Deadline: Jan. 5.


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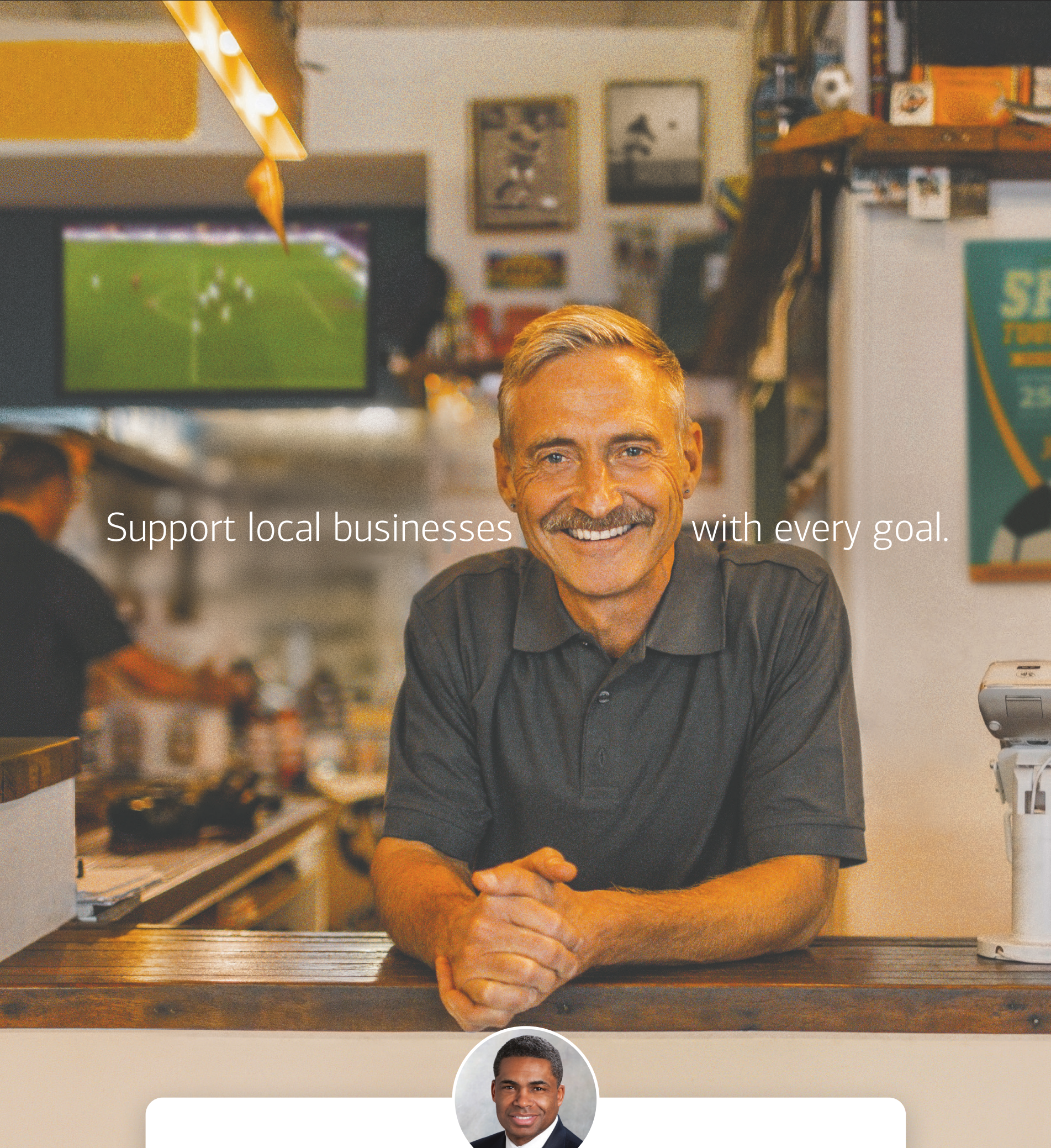
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LEGAL NOTICES

IN THE GENERAL COURT OF JUSTICE
SUPERIOR COURT DIVISION
BEFORE THE CLERK
25SP000144-310

NOTICE OF LIEN HOLDER'S SALE OF REAL PROPERTY

In the Matter of Foreclosure of a certain Claim of Lien claimed against Malik Salaam Muhammed Trustee of the Malik Salaam Muhammed Revocable Trust dated 8/9/2024, and Recorded in the Office of the Clerk of Superior Court of Durham County, North Carolina as 24M001682-310,

Michael J. Geiseman, Substitute Trustee,

Under and by virtue of the power and authority contained in that certain Declaration of Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions for Colony West Professional Park Association, Inc. recorded in the Office of Register Deeds of Durham County, North Carolina at Deed Book: 1312; Page: 537, and as supplemented and amended, and because of default in the failure of Malik Salaam Muhammed Trustee of the Malik Salaam Muhammed Revocable Trust to carry out or perform the stipulations and agreements therein contained, with particular reference to the covenant to pay assessments for the real property located at 20 West Colony Place, Ste. 280, Building 20, Durham, North Carolina 27705 and pursuant to the Order of Clerk of Superior Court of Durham County, North Carolina entered in the above-captioned foreclosure proceeding, the Trustee will expose for sale at public auction on **December 17, 2025 at 10:00 a.m.** at the usual place of sale at the Durham County Courthouse, that certain real property (including any improvements thereon) located at 20 West Colony Place, Ste. 280, Building 20, Durham, North Carolina 27705, Durham County, North Carolina, and more particularly described as all of See attached for Exhibit A..

The sale shall be made subject to all prior liens, restrictions and easements of record, as well as unpaid taxes and assessments, if any. The record owner of the above-described real property as reflected on the records of the Durham County Register of Deeds not more than ten (10) days prior to the posting of this Notice is Malik Salaam Muhammed Trustee of the Malik Salaam Muhammed Revocable Trust. Pursuant to N.C.G.S. §45-21.10(b), any successful bidder may be required to deposit with the Trustee for the Association, immediately upon conclusion of the sale, a cash deposit of five (5%) percent of the bid or \$750.00, whichever is greater. If the successful bidder fails to make the required deposit, the property will be immediately reoffered for sale. Any successful bidder shall be required to tender the full balance of the purchase price so bid in cash or by certified check at the time the Trustee tenders to him a deed for the property or attempts to tender such deed, and should said successful bidder fail to pay the full balance of the purchase price so bid at that time, he shall remain liable on his bid as provided by N.C.G.S. §45-21.30. This sale shall be held open ten (10) days for upset bids as required by law.

If you are a tenant residing in the property, be advised that an Order for Possession of the property may be issued in favor of the purchaser. Also, if your lease began or was renewed on or after October 1, 2007, be advised that you may terminate the rental agreement providing written notice of termination to the landlord, to be effective on a date stated in the notice that is at least 10 days, but no more than 90 days, after the sale date contained in this Notice of Lien Holder's Sale of Real Property, as may be amended, provided that the Respondents(s) herein has/have not cured the default at the time the tenant provides the notice of termination.

DATE: November 17, 2025

Law Offices of Jonathan W. Anderson, PLLC

By: Michael J. Geiseman, Substitute Trustee
2021 Fairview Road
Raleigh, North Carolina 27608
Telephone: (919) 578-3075

Exhibit "A"

Unit No. 280 in Building No. 200 in Colony West Professional Park, an office condominium located in the County of Durham, State of North Carolina, as designated and described in the Declaration of Unit Ownership under the provisions of Chapter 47A of the North Carolina General Statutes (the "Declaration"), dated the 17th day of September, 1986, recorded in Book 1312 at Page 537, and amended in Book 1483, Page 822, Durham County Registry, together with a 0.03044 (3.044%) undivided interest in the common areas and facilities declared therein to be appurtenant to said Unit, which undivided interest shall automatically change in accordance with the terms of said Declaration and together with any additional common areas that may be provided for in Amended Declarations filed of record pursuant to the provisions of the Unit Ownership Act, in the undivided interest as set forth in such Amended Declarations, which undivided interest shall automatically be deemed to be conveyed effective on the recording of such Amended Declarations as though conveyed hereby. The land upon which the buildings and improvements are located is situated in the County of Durham, State of North Carolina and is fully described in the Declaration of Colony West Professional Park recorded in the Office of the Register of Deeds of Durham County in Book 1312 at Page 537, and amended in Book 1483, Page 822, to which reference is hereby made for a more particular description of same. The said land is also shown in Plat Book 99 at Page 186, and in Condo Drawer 4 at Page 1 in the Office of the Register of Deeds of Durham County, North Carolina, to which reference is also hereby made for a more particular description. Grantee, by accepting this Deed, hereby expressly assumes and agrees to be bound by and comply with all of the covenants, terms, provisions and conditions set forth in the Declaration, the Bylaws of Colony West Professional Park, and the Rules and Regulations made thereunder including, but not limited to, the obligation to make payments of assessments for the maintenance and operation of the Colony West Professional Park which may be levied against such unit. The unit conveyed hereby shall be used only for office or business purposes.

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‘Blue Christmas’ not inevitable after a loved one’s death

By David Roach
BAPTIST PRESS

NASHVILLE – Grief can harden hearts. Chet Stewart saw that many times through 60 years in the mortuary business. But he also saw hard hearts soften.

In planning her deceased husband’s funeral, one mother argued with her daughter about who should serve as pallbearers. “They weren’t kind to him when he was sick and dying, and I don’t want them serving as pallbearers,” the mother said. The daughter countered that the people in question were family and ought to be included. Then she stormed out of the room.

As the mother sat crying, Stewart said to her, “The greatest example ever set was the one Jesus set when He had compassion on those who sharply disagreed with Him. I believe you would never regret responding in a loving way.” The woman retrieved her daughter, and they invited their family members to be pallbearers.

Stewart, former owner and CEO of French Funerals and Cremations in Albuquerque, discovered what other believers who care for the grieving also

have learned: God helps us through sorrow when we love Him and love others amid our sense of loss. “We are here to pursue true north, which is following Jesus and loving other people,” said Sam Williams, professor of counseling at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. “If we will do those two things, we are most likely to flourish emotionally. If we are not doing those things, why wouldn’t we feel bad?”

Grief becomes acute during the holiday season for many. More than a third of Americans (36%) said they did not want to celebrate the holidays due to feelings of grief or loss, according to a survey by the Harris polling organization. Some churches offer “blue Christmas” services featuring music, Scripture readings and candles for people dealing with loss.

Among the varied ways people mourn, is there a biblical way to grieve the death of a loved one? Yes, Williams says, though the particulars vary from person to person. “A starting point in helping those who are grieving is to be patient with them,” he said. “Sometimes my alarm clock goes off and says, ‘It’s time for you to get over this.’” But “I want to pay

more attention to God’s clock and that person’s clock than my own clock.”

An important step to grieving well, Williams said, is not focusing so exclusively on sadness that we block other emotions which are just as real. “We can’t erase” pain and sorrow, “but neither do we have to be totally fused with them in such a way that we don’t just have an emotion, it has us. It owns us.”

In one instance, the grief of a mother who lost her young adult child turned into depression. Williams told her to garden for one hour each day because she loved gardening before her child died. It helped. In other cases, volunteering in a food pantry, hospice facility or assisted living center has helped grieving people regain touch with emotions in addition to their grief.

But what if someone else is grieving and you are seeking to help them?

To help a grieving person, Williams said, “try to find a way to move toward them rather than avoiding them.” That can include saying, “I love you,” giving a hug, sending a card, giving flowers or sharing a memory of their deceased loved one.

HOLIDAY RECIPE

A sweet spin on tradition

FAMILY FEATURES

In a holiday season crowded with everything from mouthwatering cakes, cookies and pies to “fa-la-la-la” forgettable fruitcakes, the dessert table can bring you comfort and joy or sweet-tooth dismay.

Here’s the secret to spicy, sweet cupcakes that “sleigh” at the dessert table. These gingerbread cupcakes with honey cream cheese frosting swap molasses for raw honey to deliver bold flavor and buzzworthy bragging rights. To bring the journey to your home this holiday season, visit BusyBeeHoney.com to find more inspiration.

Gingerbread Cupcakes with Honey Cream Cheese Frosting
Yield: 12 cupcakes

1 ¾-cups all-purpose flour
½-cup packed dark brown sugar
1 ½-teaspoons baking powder
2 teaspoons ground ginger
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/8 teaspoon ground cloves
½-teaspoon salt
½-cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, softened
½-cup Busy Bee Raw Honey
1 egg, lightly beaten
½-cup buttermilk, at room temperature
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Honey Cream Cheese Frosting:
8 ounces cream cheese, softened



½-cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, softened
¼-cup Busy Bee Raw Honey
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
4-6 cups powdered sugar

Preheat oven to 350 F. Line 12 regular-size muffin cups with paper baking cups.

In medium bowl, whisk flour, brown sugar, baking powder, ginger, cinnamon, cloves and salt. In large bowl, using hand or stand mixer, beat softened butter and honey until smooth and slightly fluffy, 1-2 minutes. Beat in egg, then mix in buttermilk and vanilla until combined.

Add dry ingredients to wet mixture and stir gently

until no streaks of flour remain; don’t overmix. Divide batter evenly among muffin cups, filling each about two-thirds full.

Bake 20-22 minutes or until toothpick inserted in center of cupcake comes out clean.

Let cupcakes cool in pan about 5 minutes, then transfer to wire rack to cool completely.

To make frosting: Beat cream cheese and butter until smooth and creamy. Add honey and vanilla, then gradually beat in powdered sugar until fluffy, spreadable and reaching desired sweetness. Chill for firmer consistency before piping or spreading, if desired.

AROUND THE TRIANGLE

RALEIGH BOOKS

African American Book Fair is Dec. 14, 2-6 p.m., “Top” Greene African American Cultural Center, 401 MLK Jr. Boulevard.

MARKET POP-UP

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

SENIORS

The next Senior Day is Dec. 19, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Triangle Town, 5959 Triangle Town Blvd.

MARKET

Handcrafted Holiday Market is Dec. 20-21, NC State Fairgrounds – Exposition Center, 4285 Trinity Road

SHOES

A Christmas Shoe Drive is Dec. 20, 2-4 p.m., Raleigh Boys Club, 605 N. Raleigh Boulevard.

ASSISTANCE

Seniors needing help with their energy bills can apply online at www.ncdhss.gov or call their local department of social services.

DURHAM MARKET

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

MEDICARE

Medicare Basics seminar for those needing a refresher is Dec. 16, 6 p.m., Durham Center for Senior Life, 406 Rigsbee Aveue, Suite 201. Register: www.seniorpharmassist.org.

DIABETES

“How to Prevent Amputation from Diabetes and Vascular Disease” seminar is Dec. 17, noon to 1 p.m., 414 E. Main St. Contact: Yvonne Reza at yreza@dconc.gov.

VIOLENCE

Durham city and county have joined to launch the Violence Reduction Plan. A public session is Dec. 17, 4-5 p.m., Durham County Library, 300 N. Roxboro St. The public is invited.

NATIVITY

Annual Black Nativity Durham is Dec. 19-21 at Hillside High School, 3727 Fayetteville St. Tickets: www.blacknativitydurham.com.

POETRY

Jambalaya Soul Slam Holiday Poetry Slam is Dec. 20, 8 p.m., Hayti Heritage Center, 804 Old Fayetteville St. Tickets: www.eventbrite.com.

CHAPEL HILL VIGIL

Orange County Homeless Memorial Vigil is Dec. 21, 5 p.m., Chapel Hill Cold Weather Cots Location, 828 MLK Boulevard.

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Sparks of Purpose: Zennia Thomas



ByRob Knox
SPECIAL TO THE TRIBUNE

Zennia Thomas' foundation was built long before the lights came on, in rooms where no one cheered — only cared.

Before the 6-foot-1 Howard senior forward ever learned the tempo of a basketball locker room, she knew the rhythms of caregiving. The kind of work that strips away ego and shows you what real impact looks like.

Influenced by her great-grandmother's and grandmother's legacy in nursing, she found purpose in those quiet rooms, in the small moments of trust that turned strangers into stories worth fighting for.

She saw it up close, felt it in her bones, and that's why Thomas is drawn to neonatal nursing — to shape a life before it fully begins.

"I was able to get a caregiving job (for two months when I attended Kentucky), and that was my test to see if nursing was something I really wanted to do," she said. "I loved it. I wouldn't trade those relationships with patients or the chance to impact someone's life. I would do that job again in a heartbeat. I love babies. The ability to have an impact on a child before their life even truly begins — that's what I look forward to."

Her days as a caregiver began with tasks most people avoid, such as lifting, bathing, wiping butts, tending to bodies that needed her patience more than her perfection. It was invasive, unglamorous, and demanding, yet she loved it.

It's the same spirit she carries into basketball now: a belief that impact isn't loud, and greatness isn't always seen. During those moments, Thomas learned empathy in the quiet corners of hospital rooms and discovered the power of leading with her heart.

That gratitude runs deeper than basketball. Thomas arrived at Howard last season after playing 10 games over two years at Kentucky; a medical issue nearly derailed her career before it fully began.

Recovery was slow and frightening at times, steadied only by her faith and the family that refused to let her lose hope. Daily devotionals, prayer, journaling, and reading the Bible app kept her grounded, and showing up every day kept her moving.

"I just had to figure out a way to continue to be there for everybody," Thomas said. "Being around basketball kept me focused. I had to adopt the mindset that I was going to return. ..."

So, when she finally returned to the court, every sprint, every rebound, every breath felt like a gift. Howard embraced her from Day 1 — teammates, coaches, the entire community — providing a sense of belonging she didn't realize she'd been missing.

Now, happy, healthy, and home at The Mecca, Thomas is penning a beautiful tale of perseverance, resilience, and history. After transferring in last season, she's having a blast and helping the Bison to their first 4-0 start since 2004, now 6-1.

Her impact has been loud as she leads Howard in scoring (15.7 points per game), rebounding (8.7), and blocked shots (1.2). More importantly, she has been the fulcrum of Howard's blue-ribbon defense that allowed only 53.6 points through their first four games.

It took some time for Thomas to shake off the rust last season. The 2024-25 campaign was the first time she played competitively in two years. Ultimately, once she found her groove, Thomas was the dominant game-changing force Howard head coach Ty Grace had seen when she initially recruited her.

The Triangle Tribune
Sports

December 14-20, 2025 | 6A

SOCCER



KATIE SCHROECK

Former North Carolina Tar Heel star Maycee Bell.

NC Courage, Maycee Bell agree to multiyear contract extension
Defender signs to stay through 2028

STAFF REPORTS

CARY — The North Carolina Courage and defender Maycee Bell have agreed to a multiyear contract extension to keep the former UNC Tar Heel in Courage country through the 2028 NWSL season.

Since moving to North Carolina via trade during

the 2024 season, Bell has become a mainstay in the Courage defense, making 26 appearances across her season and a half. During that time, she has won 68% of her duels and 65% of her tackles.

Bell took a big step forward in her first full season with the Courage in 2025,

consistently starting at the heart of the defense and matching up directly against some of the league's top attacking talents.

"Maycee has shown significant growth this season, contributing significantly to the back line and earning a starting position across much of the season. Maycee

represents what we want this club to stand for - professionalism, resilience and a commitment to continuous growth. We are delighted to be extending her contract, excited to see her continued development knowing that there is still

Please see **NC COURAGE/7A**

HBCU FOOTBALL

Harris, Washington earn top MEAC honors

By Bonitta Best
editor@triangletribune.com

Albany State's season ended with a loss to Newberry in the Super Region Two quarterfinals. Playing without starting quarterback Isaiah Knowles, the Golden Rams led 21-3 in the first half before Newberry changed quarterbacks and dominated the second half for a 31-24 win.

The Cricket Celebration Bowl closes out the HBCU season this weekend in Atlanta. SWAC champion Prairie View A&M will meet MEAC champion South Carolina State for the title of HBCU champion.

N.C. Central

Redshirt senior quarterback Walker Harris was named the MEAC offensive player of the

year on Tuesday. Ironically, Harris is the first Eagle to earn the honor since QB Davius Richard in 2022 and '23, who was his QB coach during the season.

Harris set a program passing record in a season after throwing for 3,214 yards and is only the second NCCU quarterback, after Earl Harvey in 1985, to throw for 3,000 yards.

Former Eagle Nicholas Leverett is now on the Dallas Cowboys practice squad.

Brandon Codrington was released by the Buffalo Bills and then immediately re-signed to their practice squad.

S.C. State

Defensive back Jarod Washington was voted MEAC defensive player of the year Tuesday. He led the FCS in passes defended and pass breakups and



amassed 32 tackles (29 solo) and two interceptions.

Winston-Salem State

The Rams named alumnus Tory Woodbury as their new head coach last week. Woodbury was a standout student-

athlete who played professional football before entering the coaching ranks. His last position was assistant head coach/special teams coordinator at Norfolk State.

Please see **HARRIS/7A**

COLLEGE CORNER

No more undefeated CIAA teams left

It's early in the basketball season, but some interesting drama is playing out in the CIAA women's division.

Five teams have only one loss as of Dec. 9: Virginia Union, Bowie State, Fayetteville State, Winston-Salem State and Claflin.

The surprise team in this mix are the Rams whose five wins so far are one shy of their total (6-20) of last season.

WOMEN

N.C. Central

The Eagles' matchup against No. 3 South Carolina ended the way most expected. The team (1-8) continues its road trip at High Point this Sunday and Queens next Wednesday - more doable wins.

In track and field, Laila

Jackson took first place in the 800 meters at last weekend's JDL Fast Track in Winston-Salem.

Freshman Kaydence Daniels earned a second-place finish in the 200 meters in her first meet as an Eagle, and Tia Lucas was second in the high jump.

Shaw

The Bears began their basketball conference schedule Tuesday night at Elizabeth City State. Shaw was looking to rebound from a 12-point loss to Barton College.

Behind D'Ayza Atkinson's 22 points, Shaw (3-5) held off the Vikings for a 56-49 win. Center Mahogany Collins recorded a double-double of 12 rebounds and 11 blocks to give her a Division II-best



COURTESY

NCCU's Zion Amadi set a 400-meters record.

44 blocks on the season.

The team travels to Bluefield State this weekend before a rematch at Virginia State next Tuesday.

MEN

N.C. Central

Uhhh, hmmm, there were so UN-happy folks on social media after N.C. A&T

Please see **NO/7A**

NC Courage, Maycee Bell agree to contract extension

Continued from page 6A
loads of potential to be realized and looking forward to seeing her play for the Courage for years to come," Courage Chief Soccer Officer Ceri Bowley said.
A Wichita, Kansas,

native, Bell moved to North Carolina to join the Courage Academy ahead of her standout collegiate career at UNC-Chapel Hill. Across five seasons with the Tar Heels, she made 107 appearances, playing over 7,500 minutes.

"This club has bought into my continued growth as a player and supported me along the way. I love what we are building here and am happy to call North Carolina home for a few more years," Bell said.

No more undefeated CIAA teams left

Continued from page 6A
left Durham with a win. It's been a long time since CC saw an Eagles squad score only 19 points in the second half against its archrival. The Aggies were undefeated against MEAC teams until Tuesday night's loss to Howard at Cameron Indoor Stadium. After its loss at Kentucky, NCCU should get back on the winning track

next Wednesday when Mid-Atlantic Christian comes to town. That won't be pretty.
In track and field, Zion Amadi won the 400 meters at the JDL in 47.78 seconds, breaking the meet record held by St. Augustine's Jalen Jones in 2019. Amadi placed second in the 200m, breaking former NCCU sprinter Gordon Lewis' record. Team-

mate Jonathan Rajion-Koger took second in the high jump.
Shaw
The last undefeated CIAA team took its record to the Vikings Tuesday and walked away with a one-point loss. The men follow the women to Bluefield State and Virginia State. The Trojans will be looking for revenge.

Harris, Washington earn top MEAC honors

Continued from page 6A
"We had an exceptional pool of candidates, and this was not an easy decision. But it is time for us to restore the standard at WSSU, and coach Woodbury's energy, expertise and unwavering passion for this institution clearly rose above the rest. He understands what Ram pride means, and he is ready to lead our program into a new era of excellence. We are excited about this next chapter, and we are ready to win," WSSU Chancellor Bonita J. Brown said.

Vacancies
Another name was added to the list Monday after Florida A&M coach James Colzie was released. Quarterbacks coach and co-offensive coordinator Henry Burris was named interim head coach. Colzie went 12-12 in two seasons.

Going Bowling
Former Florida A&M coach Willie Simmons has Florida International headed to the Responders Bowl against UTSA.
Former N.C. Central coach Jerry Mack and Kenesaw State won the Conference USA Championship Game last weekend and is headed to the Myrtle Beach Bowl to face Western Michigan.

American Bowl
The inaugural American Bowl airs Jan. 22 on the NFL Network. The all-star game will feature the top



college football players projected to be selected in the fourth through seventh rounds of the 2026 NFL Draft.
HBCU invitees:
* S.C. State DB Jarod Washington
* Morgan State line-backer Erick Hunter

Legacy Bowl
More participants added to the 2026 Allstate HBCU Legacy Bowl.
* Bethune-Cookman QB Cam'Ron Ransom
* Delaware State RB Marquis Gillis
* N.C. Central WR Chan-acey Spikes
* Winston-Salem State LB Jamieson "Jupe" Alston
* B-CU S Antwone Watts

* N.C. A&T OL Korion Sharpe
* Alabama State LB Jalil Lenore
* Florida Memorial RB Jerrold Sims
* Virginia State WR Malik Hunter
* Bowie State DL Jamal Jones

Transfer Portal
* Johnson C. Smith DT Robert Wilkerson
* Hampton C Elijah Blow
* Arkansas-Pine Bluff WR Bryce Robinson
* Virginia Union S Jayden Earley
* Alcorn State LB Cedric Roberts
* Tennessee State OL Jesse Igwe



Congratulations to Cierra from Florida Memorial University on making the Miami Dolphins Cheer Squad.

SPORTS SHORTS

RALEIGH
* Raleigh Firebirds' Holiday Tip-off Classic Youth Skills Camp (K-12) is Dec. 20, 4-5:30 p.m., Abundant Life, 4400 Old Poole Road. Text: 919-630-2185.

DURHAM
* Durham High School Football Reunion Bash is Dec. 13, 6-9 p.m., West End Billiards, 601 W. Main St., Suite A.

day Invitational is Dec. 29-31, Falls Lake Academy, 1701 E. Lyon Station Road. Tickets: rnssportsnc@gmail.com.

CREEDMOOR
* Battle in the Bull Holi-

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

The Best in HBCU Sports
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LIBERIAN CONNECTION ACTIVITY SHEET

Hi Everyone!

I bring you greetings from my Liberian connection, Saqar Ahhah and DenTut Rayay. They live in Liberia and have helped me learn things I never knew about this beautiful nation and about the world of "Rappers".

LET'S GO AND CELEBRATE! GET YOUR VISAS READY!

Liberian President George Manneh Weah, wants to celebrate the founding of Liberia in 1822 by announcing a year-long BICENTENNIAL TO BEGIN JANUARY 2022 AND RUNNING THROUGH DECEMBER 2022! "The year is of high symbolic significance as it commemorates 200 years since the first group of freed African American slaves touched down on what came to be known as the Providence Island," President Weah said.

WHAT'S MY SIZE?

Liberia is slightly larger than which American state listed below?

Texas Connecticut Tennessee California

Their company is M.C.W.A.R. LLC, which stands for "Masters in the Community Check the World Association of Rappers". This is an online digital company presenting rappers sharing what they like to write about. As leaders in the official sport of "Battle Rap", they are reaching 2 million millennials around the world.

Internationally known as "Africa's Iron Lady", Ellen Johnson Sirleaf is the first female president of Liberia & Nobel Peace Laureate.

FACTS ABOUT LIBERIA

Place a T for true or an F for false next to the statements about Liberia.

___ Liberia was founded by freed African American slaves.

___ Liberia is bordered by Sierra Leone, Guinea, Ivory Coast and the Atlantic Ocean.

___ Liberia is Africa's youngest republic.

___ The Liberian flag looks more like the flag of France than the flag of the United States.

___ Most Liberians speak English.

WHAT IS RAPPING?

Rapping, which originated in the African American community, is a musical form of speaking audibly by using rhyme, rhythmic speech and "street" terms. It is performed or chanted in many different styles over a beat or accompanied by music. The main parts of rap include content, how it flows and how it is delivered. This type of music usually has a fast rhythm in which the words are spoken instead of sung.

A CALL TO RAPPERS!

Share a "positive message" rap song you have written by connecting with KEMETCOMIC.COM and get published in an upcoming activity sheet! Make sure you include your contact information (name, age, state, email).

OUR LIBERIAN CONNECTION

The West African country of Liberia, which means "land of the free", was founded in 1822 by freed African American slaves from the United States. Eighty-six African American immigrants established the first settlement in Christopolis. The city was later renamed Monrovia after President James Monroe.

Liberia's first president was American born, Joseph Jenkins Roberts. He was an African-American merchant from Virginia who emigrated to Liberia in 1829, and opened a trading firm in Monrovia. He was elected as the first President of Liberia and was the first man of African descent to govern the country. Brought back by popular demand, he was later elected again as the seventh President of Liberia.

OVER THE BORDER
LINE IN ONE MINUTE
SERIAL LEONE
GUINIA
LIBERIA
IVORY COAST

WHAT'S MY SIZE?
TENNESSEE
FACTS ABOUT
LIBERIA
T.C.S.T

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Flavor Hills Restaurant & Bar



FACEBOOK



Flavor Hills at 107 W. Main Street opened last week in downtown Durham. The restaurant is Black-owned and veteran-owned.

MOVERS AND SHAKERS

N.C. CENTRAL



Vann

NCCU architect and instructor of public history Andre D. Vann was recently honored with a 2024-25 President's Lifetime Achievement Award for years of dedicated service. Issued by former President Joe Biden, the award is the highest honor for volunteer service in America for those who have contributed over 4,000 hours or more over a lifetime of service and leadership. Vann also was a 2025 Preservation Durham Award recipient for his work as a local public historian.

Are you or someone you know a Mover and a Shaker? Drop us a line at Movers and Shakers, c/o The Triangle Tribune, 5007 Southpark Drive, Suite 200-G, Durham, NC 27713 or e-mail us at info@triangletribune.com. Photos welcome.

BofA names 2 nonprofits its Triangle 2025 Neighborhood Builders

STAFF REPORTS

RALEIGH – Bank of America has named Housing for New Hope and StepUp Ministry as its 2025 Neighborhood Builders for their work addressing the region's unhoused population and creating pathways for employment and life skills for long-term success.

Bank of America's signature Neighborhood Builders program continues to be one of the nation's largest philanthropic investments into nonprofit leadership development, while providing unique multiyear flexible funding annually to high-impact nonprofits in communities nationwide.

Specifically, both Triangle nonprofits are each awarded a \$200,000 grant over two years, comprehensive leadership training for the organization's executive director and an emerging leader, and ac-

cess to a national network of nonprofit peers.

Since the program's inception, 17 nonprofits have been selected as Neighborhood Builders in the Triangle, with the bank investing more than \$3.2 million in philanthropic capital into these nonprofits.

"Our local nonprofit partners have a deep understanding of the Triangle's most pressing needs and are uniquely positioned to address these challenges," BofA President Kari Stoltz said.

"Through flexible funding and comprehensive leadership development, our Neighborhood Builders program empowers nonprofits to tackle critical issues and expand economic opportunities for individuals and families across the Triangle community."

Housing for New Hope enables individuals and families experiencing

homelessness to take their next best step toward long-term, stable housing with an array of supportive housing and affordable housing options.

This new grant funding will be used specifically to help better meet the needs of Durham's growing unhoused population by helping the nonprofit upgrade specific spaces, expand supportive services, and improve resident health and well-being.

StepUp Ministry provides pathways to employment and life skills training for hundreds of people in Wake County, helping them overcome barriers and transform their lives.

The bank's funding will be used to enable the expansion of both their mission to assist more residents and current programs positioned to help set them up for long-term success.

Premier Martial Arts students earn Black Belts



COURTESY

Eight Premier Martial Arts Garner students have earned their Black Belt after completing more than five hours of intense, nonstop testing last weekend. This milestone is not handed out; it is earned through discipline, commitment and resilience. The test pushed students through advanced striking, self-defense, sparring, weapons proficiency, conditioning and mental fortitude.

"These students proved they can push past limits and rise to a challenge most people will never attempt," head instructor Sensei Jess said.

The students, ranging from youth to teens, trained years for this achievement. Their success represents thousands of hours of practice, personal growth and unwavering dedication. Premier Martial Arts Garner continues its mission of building strong, confident, resilient kids in the Garner community through martial arts training that develops life skills both on and off the mat.

FRATERNITY NEWS

Beta Phi Chapter New Officers



COURTESY

Seated left to right: Phillip Harrington, assistant keeper of records and seal; Roderick Ballard, keeper of records and seal; Bryan Patton, first vice basileus; Antonio Jones, basileus; Darrell Spells, second vice basileus; William Dixon, keeper of finance; and Cory Rawlinson, assistant keeper of finance.

Standing left to right: Kumani Simmons, immediate past basileus; Louis Threatt, chaplain; John Ervin, assistant editor; Jerome Johnson, editor; Brandon Bannister, assistant keeper of peace; Phillip Powell, parliamentarian; Hank Speller, talent hunt chair; and Carlton Williams, keeper of peace. Not picture: Jacob Bagley, assistant chaplain.

Advance Community Health



COURTESY

Advance Community Health was awarded \$200,000 as a part of the Wake County Community Capital Grant Program 2025. This funding will be invested in the Southeast Raleigh clinic, including the upgrade of equipment and infrastructure. "The Southeast Raleigh clinic is approaching its 15-year anniversary, and the infrastructure, technology and critical systems need to be modernized," COO Erica Mathies said.

"Wake County is proud to partner with nonprofits that are on the front lines addressing issues that impact our residents' quality of life," Wake County Board Chair Susan Evans said in a statement. "These investments strengthen the safety net that supports families, improves access to transitional housing and health care, and builds a more resilient community."