



# THE REAL NEWS

## Louisiana

"A Community with a Voice Shall Be Heard" ®

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### "Resilient Pillars: How Black Mothers Shaped History Through Courage and Sacrifice"

Black mothers have shaped history through their resilience, courage, and unwavering dedication, often overcoming systemic barriers. Here are some notable historical figures who exemplify the strength of Black motherhood, along with their contributions and the challenges they faced:

**Sojourner Truth (1797–1883):** Born into slavery as Isabella Baumfree, Truth escaped with her infant daughter in 1826, demonstrating fierce maternal instinct. As an abolitionist and women's rights activist, she delivered the powerful "Ain't I a Woman?" speech in 1851, challenging racial and gender inequalities. *Continued on Page 2...*



## "Resilient Pillars: How Black Mothers Shaped History Through Courage and Sacrifice" *Continued from Page 1...*

- Despite enduring the sale of most of her 13 children into slavery, she used her voice to advocate for freedom and equality, leaving a legacy of resilience. Her motherhood fueled her fight against oppression, making her an enduring symbol of Black maternal strength.
- **Mamie Till-Mobley (1921–2003):** After the brutal murder of her son, Emmett Till, in 1955, Till-Mobley transformed her grief into activism. Her decision to hold an open-casket funeral exposed the horrors of racial violence, galvanizing the civil rights movement. She toured the country, denouncing white supremacy, and became a prominent advocate for racial justice and education. Till-Mobley's radical mourning challenged stereotypes of Black mothers as passive, showcasing their agency and resilience in the face of trauma.
- **Alberta King (1904–1974):** The mother of Martin Luther King Jr., Alberta was a choir director and community leader whose faith and activism shaped her son's civil rights leadership. Despite facing constant threats and the assassination of her son, she continued her work until her tragic death in 1974. Her quiet strength and vulnerability highlight the often-overlooked emotional labor of Black mothers supporting their families and communities under duress.
- **Louise Little (1894–1989)** was the mother of Malcolm X and a Grenadian-born activist. She faced harassment for her involvement in the Pan-Africanist Garvey movement. As a single mother of eight, she supported her family through economic hardship and pushed back against societal expectations. Her intellectual influence on Malcolm's worldview and her ability to show vulnerability challenge the stereotype of the "Strong Black Woman," revealing the profound depth of Black maternal resilience.

These women faced systemic racism, poverty, and gender oppression, yet their motherhood became a source of empowerment and resistance. They navigated societal tropes like the "pathological" Black mother or the "Strong Black Woman" stereotype, which often denied their emotional complexity. Their legacies inspire ongoing conversations about supporting Black mothers through policies addressing maternal health disparities, economic inequity, and community resources, as highlighted in modern advocacy efforts.



**Sojourner Truth**



**Mamie Till-Mobley**



**Alberta King**



**Louise Little**



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**Grant Writer!**

By: JR. "Randy" Stelly



I was going to write about economic development until this morning, 5/7/2025. At 5 am, I was preparing what I was going to say at the Older Americans Month affair at the Council on Aging as their guest speaker. At 7 am, I listened to Marvin Blake's podcast, which is presented through the Natchitoches Parish Journal.

Mr. Blake pays for his podcast to be played in the Natchitoches Parish Journal. Mr. Blake has sponsors for his podcast. I am beginning to question Mr. Blake's motive for his attacks on the mayor of Natchitoches lately. The attacks this morning were about the money being paid for a grant writer. Are his attacks his own or those of his sponsors or both?

Anyone who thinks \$75,000 a year is too much for a grant writer is naive and doesn't know what the value of a grant writer is. \$75,000.00 a year for a grant writer for the City of Natchitoches is a bargain. However, you would have to know what the job incurs. The people criticizing the mayor obviously don't know! I know and would like to debate with anyone who thinks differently.

Mr. Ben Johnson had a saying "It takes a man and a plan to build a barn, but any old jackass can kick it down."

Mr. Blake and others on social media who attack the mayor have nothing to offer in place of what they are complaining about. To know better is to do better.

I want to help the mayor do better. I want to help Natchitoches progress. I want to build a better Natchitoches so all can progress. I will leave negative attacks to Mr. Blake and others.

I will continue my work on economic development. My next article will bring the reader up to date on where I am in my study of our current economic development situation.

My last point to Mr. Blake. Nepotism is bad only if the person given the position is not qualified to do the job. In this case, the person getting the position is highly qualified. Remember when John Kennedy hired his brother Robert Kennedy as his Attorney General!



## Trailblazer of Courage:

### Captain Oswald Taylor Jr.'s Historic Firefighting Legacy

Captain Oswald Taylor Jr. is a retired Fire Captain from the City of Natchitoches. His journey in the firefighting profession began in 1969, and through his dedication, he rose to the rank of Captain, becoming the first Black Captain in the city. His retirement in 1998 marked almost 30 years of service. A graduate of Central High School in 1964, he furthered his commitment to service by joining the U.S. Army, which allowed him to explore different places beyond Natchitoches and the United States. In his front yard, the American flag and the Firefighters' flag stand proudly, symbolizing his profound dedication to his country and his notable career as a firefighter.

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## 16th Annual James Oliphant Memorial Golf Tournament Weekend

By: Nicole Gray

A super huge thanks goes out to all of our sponsors, golfers and volunteers for the 16th Annual James Oliphant Memorial Golf Tournament this Saturday, May 10th. We are so excited to have you join us at Northwestern Hills Golf Course in Natchitoches, LA. Continental breakfast will begin at 7 a.m. and we will tee off promptly at 8 a.m.

As you know, our annual tourney raises funds for the James Oliphant Endowed NSU Football Scholarship which supports deserving student athletes at NSU. Our 16th tournament is a testament to the love and commitment demonstrated by you, our sponsors and players, year after year and our longevity wouldn't be possible without you.

Please join us for a pre-tourney reception on Friday, May 9 at [Onyx Wine & Cigar Lounge](#), 312 Texas St. "Swing" on by and raise a glass with us. Small bites will be provided, and our humidor will be stocked with something you may like:-).

Volunteers are needed on Friday from 3-5 p.m. at the Northwestern Hills Golf Course to help with setup, Saturday at 7 a.m. to assist with Continental Breakfast and Registration, and finally at 11:30 a.m. for the luncheon and awards presentation and cleanup. Please call with any questions you may have!

We look forward to seeing you there!

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**For Questions, Call:** Nicole Gray: 972-897-5357  
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## The Black Mother by Marcus Mosiah Garvey

Where can I find love that never changes  
Smiles that are true and always just the same,  
Caring not how the fierce tempest rages,  
Willing ever to shield my honored name?  
This I find at home, only with Mother,  
Who cares for me with patient tenderness;  
She from every human pain would rather  
Save me, and drink the dregs of bitterness.  
If on life's way I happen to flounder,  
My true thoughts should be of Mother dear,  
She is the rock that ne'er rifts asunder,  
The cry of her child, be it far or near.  
This is love wonderful beyond compare;  
It is God's choicest gift to mortal man;  
You, who know Mother, in this thought  
must share,

For, she, of all, is Angel of your  
Clan. My Mother is black,  
loveliest of all;  
Yes, she is as pure as the new  
made morn;  
Her song of glee is a clear  
rythmic call  
To these arms of love to which I  
was born.  
I shall never forget you, sweet  
Mother,  
Where'er in life I may happen to  
roam;  
Thou shalt always be the Fairy  
Charmer  
To turn my dearest thoughts to  
things at home.



"Thank you, Black mother, for  
teaching us the beauty of our  
heritage"

Loveequotes.com







### AMERICA'S MOM

*"My most important title is still mom-in-chief. My daughters are still the heart of my heart and the center of my world."*

*-First Lady Michelle Obama*



### RENAISSANCE MOM

*"If you only have one smile in you, give it to the people you love. Don't be surly at home, then go out in the street and start grinning 'Good morning' at total strangers."*

*-Maya Angelou, poet, author, and civil rights activist*



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## Ben D. Johnson: Visionary Philanthropist and Champion of Natchitoches' Black Community



Ben Johnson (1910-2005) purchased and donated land in Natchitoches, Louisiana. Specifically, he donated land for the Self-Help Investment, Inc., a corporation he established, with funding from his Winnfield Funeral Home. He also built a ballpark and a boxing club in Natchitoches and gave generously to his church, First Baptist Church. Ben Johnson, a significant figure in the African American community of Natchitoches, was known for his entrepreneurial spirit and philanthropic efforts. His proactive approach was particularly evident in his efforts to provide positive opportunities for young people, aiming to steer them away from trouble. The Ben D. Johnson Educational Center (BDJ Center), formed to continue his legacy, is a beacon of hope for the Natchitoches community. It continues to empower individuals, ensuring that Ben Johnson's vision and impact live on.





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LIVES AND  
BUILDING  
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## 5 Ways to Treat Yourself on Mother's Day

By: Martine Gallie

What would Mother's Day be without pampering and indulgences? Don't limit yourself to just one day, though. Here, real-life moms suggest some great ways to indulge yourself at any time of the year:



### Treat those tootsies

"I have a pedicure. It's great to let someone else rub my feet. Plus, my toes are ready for sandals now! It's fantastic to have a bit of pampering."

-- **Kay Kay, mother of Katie Beth, 11 months**

### Girls' night out

"I'd make plans with my childless friends to go out on the town and sleep over at their place."

-- **Melissa, mother of Nicholas, 17 months**

### A spa retreat

"My three sisters and I leave the children and husbands at home and head to a spa. We get an affordable package that includes a sauna, a mineral bath, and a massage. Then we head to our favorite café for lunch. We have one rule, too: no complaining about work, husbands, or kids."

-- **Karin, mother of Mark, six months**

### Breakfast in bed

"My husband Tom would do the morning shift, getting Pippa up and breakfast and entertaining baby Edward once I'd fed him. Then bring me a cup of tea with toast and jam to savor in bed. We'd all go for a walk, have lunch at a child-friendly cafe, then spend the afternoon sobbing in front of the television watching Mary Poppins or something similar together."

-- **Chess, mom to Pippa, four, and Edward, four months**

### Bathroom bliss

"I fill my foot spa with hot water and sit in the bathroom and read, all alone. No one else is allowed in until I'm finished."

-- **Stacy, mother of Nathalie, nine months**



## Your Mental Health Matters!

By: Elder Brenda R. Sarpy

Mental health is a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stressors of life, realize their abilities, learn well, work well, and contribute to their community. As we observe mental health awareness, it is important to understand that a nurturing environment is essential to healthy emotional development. Recognizing biological or genetic influences can free the individual and their families from the tremendous blame and stigma associated with these illnesses that greatly compounds their problems. We live in a time where it is easier to play the soundtrack of trauma, leading us to attempting to repair rather than apply maintenance, in efforts to deal with issues at hand. Repairs often parallel with replacing, causing substitutions that may not contribute to mental well-being; however, it merely blankets what is underneath.

When we think of mental health, many times we often relate to Mental Health Illnesses that have been diagnosed. Mental health encompasses emotional, psychological, and social well-being. Bi-Polar, Anxiety, Schizophrenia, Depression, and Social anxiety disorder are among many diagnoses. While we acknowledge that these are crucial and need to be spotlighted, in efforts to bring awareness to what has become normal to suppress in some communities and cultures.

Let's take a moment to explore a gentle reminder of how to maintain the sound mind that God has given us and embrace freedom. For I will restore health to you and heal you of your wounds, says the Lord. Jeremiah 30:17

During this Mental Health Awareness month, let's take time to focus on our purpose and not our failures. Everyone at some point will "mess up" or run into obstacles, however, we must break free from destructive thinking and mental disruptions. Once we reset our minds and begin to cultivate a new normal, you may have old thoughts, but they won't be a permanent reversion. Our goal is to seek the euphoria of life in every aspect, starting with our mental state. 1Peter 5:7 Casting all of your care upon him; for he careth for you.

People's perception of who you are is their reality not yours. Walk in your truth, walk in the reality that God has placed in your life. Once we take control of our perception, we can start to create our own realities and the sky's the limit.

In doing so let's start by:

- setting mental health boundaries
- setting realistic goals for ourselves
- put a stop to what is stopping you
- avoid receiving negative comments
- make sleep a priority
- eating healthier and exercise
- relax, it's okay to say NO
- limit time on social media
- TAKE TIME TO PRAY



By embracing a variety of coping strategies, we empower ourselves to face adversity with resilience, navigate stress with grace, and cultivate a stronger foundation for emotional well-being. Give yourself time to figure out what works for you. Different things work for different people. Go at your own pace, take it step by step. If the first step feels too hard, try to break that up into even smaller steps, remember the race is not given to the swift nor the battle to the strong (Ecl 9:11), but to the one that can endure until the end. Whether facing everyday stress, major life changes, or more serious issues, having a range of coping skills at our disposal is crucial for maintaining mental equilibrium.

### A Prayer for Guidance

God, thank you for loving me on purpose. You have given me a choice, and I choose you. I pray that you will help me to steward my mental health by embracing who you have called me to be. Give me the confidence it takes to be authentically me and the courage to make pivotal changes that not only puts me back on track but brings Glory to who you are. Lord, you are my Shepard, as I extend my hand to you, lead me and I will follow. In Jesus' Name -Amen

**\*\*\*\*\*Seek professional help if you are experiencing severe or distressing symptoms that have lasted 2 weeks or more. \*\*\*\*\***

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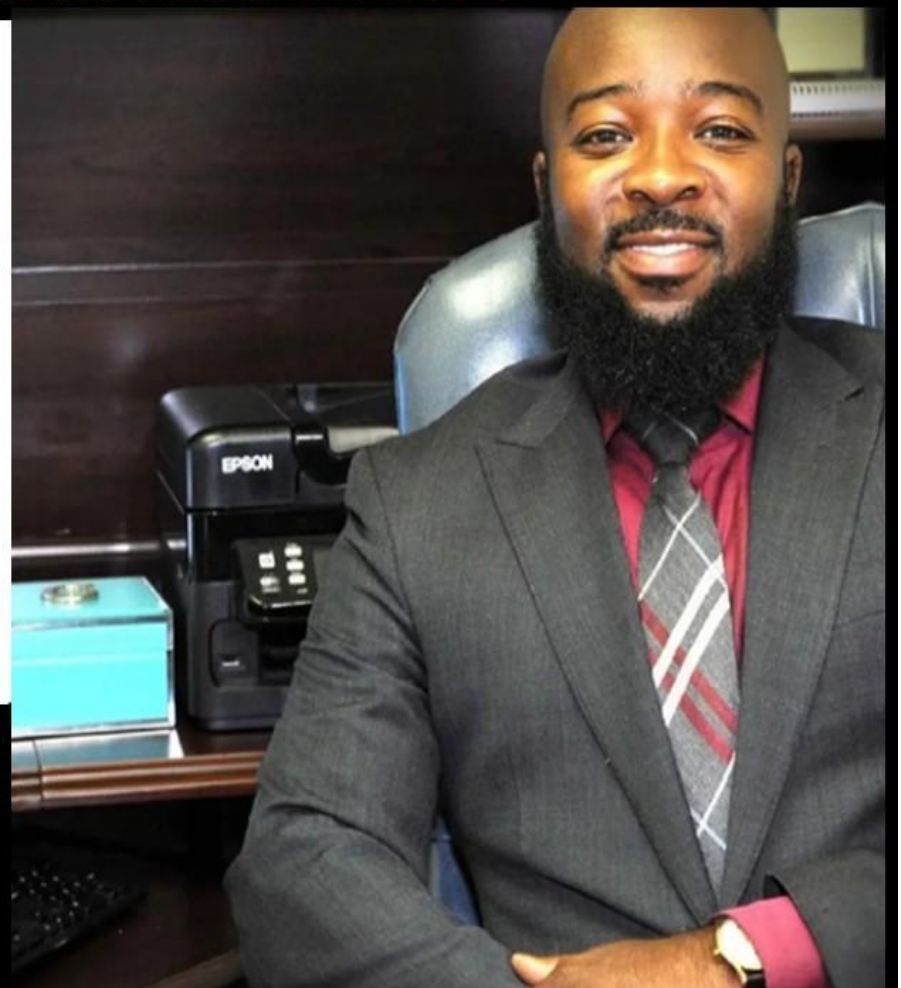
## Natchitoches Cheers AJ Gillie Jr.'s Seahawks Signing!

Albert "AJ" Gillie Jr., a native of Natchitoches (specifically the Village of Natchez) and a former football player at Natchitoches Central High School, has signed with the Seattle Seahawks as an undrafted free agent following the 2025 NFL Draft. Gillie played as an offensive lineman at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, where he was a four-year starter. In his senior year, he earned honorable mention All-America honors from the College Football Network and was recognized as a first-team All-Sun Belt Conference and All-Louisiana selection.

Standing 6 feet 2 inches tall and weighing 328 pounds, Gillie started all 13 games in his final season, helping his offensive line rank fifth among FBS programs for tackles for loss allowed (3.58), 18th in total offense, and 44th in rushing offense. He was also rated as the nation's No. 42 pass protector. A graduate of NCHS in the Class of 2018, Gillie is the son of Bridget and Albert James Gillie Sr. Congratulations, AJ! We're rooting for you!



## CHARGED WITH A CRIMINAL OFFENSE? INVOLVED IN A CAR ACCIDENT?



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Archie Metoyer and family want to wish our mother, **Lizzie Mae Llorence Metoyer** of Melrose, a happy 95th birthday! A little about our mother, she graduated from Grambling University as a home economics teacher. She married our daddy, Vilfried "Totsie" Metoyer Sr., and had 10 kids: 7 boys and three girls. She retired from the Natchitoches Parish School Board. She was born on April 26, 1930, and made 95 on April 26, 2025. "Happy 95th Birthday, Mother! What an incredible journey! It's a true inspiration to see you reach this milestone. Wishing you a day filled with joy and love from your family.





## Archie's Paint and Body Shop Celebrates 40 Years of Service in Natchitoches!

Archie's Paint and Body's mission is to provide top-quality service on every vehicle and build long-lasting relationships with our customers. Our vision is to progress with the industry's latest technologies while continuing to provide a small business atmosphere within our establishment. With our shop being less than 3 miles from NSU's campus, college students have been our consistent customers for many years. Most of them are countless hours away from their parents, so these students need a trusted connection they can count on. When young adults from out of town get into an accident, we want to get them back on the road. In our years here in Natchitoches, we will become their go-to service provider for all automobile issues. In most cases, this becomes a long-lasting relationship. Archie's Paint and Body ensures the highest standards of excellence in our work through the 42 years of experience that we have had in the business. Through the many experiences we have overcome in his industry for many years, we are confident in knowing what works and what doesn't. Knowing that these standards increase over time, we strive to find ways to stay relevant within the industry's new trends.



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## Archie's Paint and Body Shop Celebrates 40 Years of Service in Natchitoches!



We ensure quality in our work from the instant the initial estimate is written to the moment we hand over your keys so you can reunite with your vehicle. In the recent past, Archie's Paint and Body has strived to continue to improve our business. Some of the things that we have implemented are a scanning tool that diagnoses issues and clears check engine codes. We have also purchased a paint camera that helps to improve the accuracy of matching a paint's color to your vehicle. Archie's Paint and Body has added an additional office staff member to help with bookkeeping and servicing customers. Lastly, after unfortunately losing the original shop due to an electrical fire, we have managed to keep our employees working and continue to repair vehicles. Thanks to the generosity of some of our local citizens, we can work in a building near the office that remains. One of the main ways that Archie's Paint and Body receives feedback from our customers is through Progressive Insurance Company. Our partnership program allows customers to provide direct feedback on their experience at our shop. This includes timeliness, quality, and customer service. With all of Archie Metoyer's children participating in Dixie Youth baseball/softball, he was a major sponsor for Dixie Youth from the inception of his company until Dixie Youth was dissolved in Natchitoches. Archie is also a founder of the River Run motorcycle ride, which is coupled with the Meat Pie Festival. Archie currently sits on the board for the Meat Pie Festival and actively volunteers for that event every year. Other activities/establishments that Archie's gives back to include the Beautillion and Debutante ball, St. Anthony's Catholic Church, and NCHS baseball/softball. We are proud to have served Natchitoches for 40 years and look forward to many more!





## History has been made with Lake Charles and Deridder electing their first Black mayors.

Two cities in Louisiana made history by electing their first Black mayors:

- Lake Charles: Marshall Simien, running as an independent, was elected as the city's first Black mayor, defeating incumbent Nic Hunter. This marked a significant milestone for the city.
- DeRidder: Michael D. Harris, a retired captain, was elected as the first Black mayor of DeRidder, winning by a narrow margin of 10 votes.

A historic runoff election was scheduled for December 7, 2025, in Gonzales, where Timothy "Tim" Riley and Kemlyn Bailey Lomas, both Democrats, competed to become the city's first Black mayor. Riley received 44% of the vote in the initial round, while Lomas secured 23%.

These elections reflect a growing representation of Black leadership in Louisiana's municipal governments.







**Congressman Cleo Fields demands accountability after international student visas were revoked in Louisiana.**

Congressman Cleo Fields, representing Louisiana's 6th district, took decisive action when the Trump administration revoked the visas of at least 16 international students, particularly at Southern University. Specifically, eight students at Southern University's Baton Rouge campus and two at its New Orleans campus were affected, alongside students at other institutions such as the University of Louisiana at Lafayette (three students), University of New Orleans (three students), and Tulane University (two students) Louisiana congressman demands to know why Southern University student visas were revoked.

This action was part of a nationwide effort, with over 1,500 students from nearly 250 colleges and universities having their visas revoked recently, often without clear justification. Fields sent a letter on April 22, 2025, to federal officials, including Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem, and Acting ICE Director Todd Lyons, demanding an explanation and visa reinstatement. In this letter, Fields demanded "an immediate review and explanation" of the visa terminations, called for transparency regarding any alleged violations by the students, and urged reinstating the visas pending a full investigation. Fields emphasized the broader implications: "The sudden termination of these students' legal status without clear justification threatens their academic careers and undermines our nation's reputation as a welcoming place for global scholarship." He further called for ensuring that all immigration actions adhere to due process and American values, highlighting the potential harm to international education and U.S. standing globally. Following legal challenges, ICE announced on April 25, 2025, that it would restore the visas, resolving the issue for affected students in Louisiana. According to reports, ICE is manually restoring student status for all affected individuals, not just those who filed lawsuits, using systems like SEVIS (Student and Exchange Visitor Information Systems) and NCIC (National Crime Information Center). Congressman Fields responded to this development, noting that approximately 1,500 student visas nationwide, including those of Southern University students, would be restored. He stated, "Today, my office was informed that ICE will be restoring approximately 1500 student visas. This decision comes following a multitude of legal challenges and a direct letter that I sent to federal officials." This resolution is particularly significant for Louisiana, given the state's reliance on international students for academic diversity and economic contributions. The restoration of visas ensures continuity for these students, aligning with Fields' call for fairness and due process.





## Leadership Natchitoches Session 3: Business & Industry

Session three of Leadership Natchitoches Cohort 6 was focused on business and industry!

We kicked off the session with tours of two major manufacturing facilities that play a vital role in our local economy. At **Roy OMartin** and Alliance Compressors, we saw firsthand how the manufacturing industry supports Natchitoches Parish with stable, high-income jobs. Touring the production floors gave Cohort 6 a deeper appreciation for the scale, innovation, and workforce behind these industries.

We also visited **Natchitoches Pecans** (Little Eva Pecan Company), where we learned about the origins of the family-run business and explored the delicious products they offer. It was an inspiring look at entrepreneurship, agriculture, and value-added production right here in our own backyard.

Throughout the session, we discussed how business and industry is shaping the economic future of Natchitoches Parish — and why cultivating strong industry partnerships is key to a thriving community.

To learn more about the Leadership Natchitoches program, visit [GoNatchitoches.com/Leadership](https://GoNatchitoches.com/Leadership) today!

A promotional graphic for the Leadership Natchitoches program. It features the Natchitoches Area Chamber of Commerce logo at the top. Below it, the text "JOIN TODAY" is written in large, bold letters. A large "\$25" is prominently displayed in the center, with "A MONTH" written below it. At the bottom, contact information for Dustin Dauzat is provided, along with a QR code.

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**No Love and No Loss Like That of a Good Mother**

By: Author Shelia Pierre



Many women desire or long to have children and eventually start their families. The Bible portrays motherhood as a blessing, a calling, and a source of joy and honor (Proverbs 23:25). I couldn't agree more. I definitely feel that way about my two adult children and my grandson. God truly blessed me with them. So many mothers are the glue that holds our families together. They are indeed important and appreciated. We know that mothers should be loved and celebrated every day for all they do. People may get tired of hearing or reading words on this subject. Still, I encourage children to be more present in their lives than buying presents. I'm sure they will appreciate visits and calls the most. Never get so busy that everything else is first and mom is last in line. "No Charge" and "I Remember Mama" by Shirley Caesar were two powerful songs played in our house regularly. The words resonated in my soul, and to this day, I still listen to those words. I love the messages in those songs. The important reminders help us remember what a mother should be and how grateful we should be for having great mothers. A woman carrying us for nine months, growing inside of her, then taking care of us through sickness, pain, and countless other issues in life. Her love and help don't end at the age of eighteen. Think of every time your mom has helped you past the age where children think they are grown. Parenting never stops. Moms grow old and sometimes need somebody to take care of them. Whatever mama needs done, should be done freely from the heart. She should never be a burden. Buy her groceries, cook for her, cut the grass, put gas in her car, and take her to the store. Show up for her and have her back. Please think of the countless times she was there for you, for free! When you add it all up...the real cost of love is NO CHARGE! I've read many scriptures pertaining to mothers, but I want to leave this specific one for their children. Deuteronomy 5:16 (KJV) reads: "Honor thy father and thy mother, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee; that thy days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with thee, in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee." This verse is part of the Ten Commandments, repeated in Deuteronomy, and emphasizes the importance of honoring parents. It promises that honoring parents will lead to a long life and prosperity in the land God has given them. (Google) Sometimes memories fall from my eyes, the price I pay for loving and missing my dear mother. For the nine months she carried me, doctored me, set up with me, and prayed for me, I was grateful. I have no regret because she knew I was present. Anything done for her was for free. Love your mothers because losing them is a lifelong heartache. If your mothers are no longer with you, I hope you remember them in a special way!





## Did you know?



### EDWARD WARD JR.

The Natchitoches Black Community has a dedicated historian, Edward Ward Jr., who plays a crucial role in preserving and sharing the rich history and experiences of the community. His efforts help ensure that the contributions and stories of the Black residents are recognized and remembered.



In 2002, **OPRAH WINFREY** visited Natchitoches, Louisiana, after the late Peggy Plunkett challenged her during a taping of The Oprah Winfrey Show. Plunkett, a native of Natchitoches, told Oprah, "Everyone in Natchitoches loves you. You should come and visit," during an audience Q&A segment. Taking up the challenge, Oprah made a surprise visit, where she had lunch at a local restaurant, participated in the homecoming parade at Northwestern State University, and spoke at a pep rally for the school's sports program. Her visit showcased the charm and community spirit of Natchitoches, prompting Oprah to call it "the best little town in the whole U.S.A."

**Wanda Lucas** won the award for Female Gospel Soloist in 2000 at the One Church One Body Family Conference & Retreat Awards Gala, which was hosted by Sherri Shepherd.





## Dr. Edward A. Johnson and Crittie Carroll Johnson

Pillars of Natchitoches' African American Community and Civil Rights Pioneers"

Dr. Edward A. Johnson and Crittie Carroll Johnson were transformative figures in Natchitoches, Louisiana, known for their significant contributions to healthcare, civil rights, and community empowerment. Their work not only improved individuals' lives but also profoundly impacted the entire community. Dr. Edward A. Johnson, born in Powhatan, Louisiana, was among the few Black physicians in Natchitoches Parish. Trained at Meharry Medical School in Tennessee, he faced significant challenges in establishing a medical practice in Natchitoches, where he became the sole provider of medical care for the African American community. His dedication extended beyond medicine; he was a prominent civil rights leader, serving as president of the Louisiana NAACP. Dr. Johnson played a pivotal role in integrating the Louisiana Normal School (now Northwestern State University), collaborating with NAACP attorney Thurgood Marshall to challenge segregation. His activism helped advance educational access for Black students in the region. Crittie Carroll Johnson, his wife, was a trailblazer in her own right. The daughter of a funeral home director, she attended college in Kansas City and became the first African American female mortician in Natchitoches and one of the first in Louisiana. Her pioneering work in the funeral industry broke gender and racial barriers, establishing her as a respected entrepreneur and community leader. Together, the Johnsons were deeply involved in the Civil Rights Movement, advocating for equality and justice in a segregated South. Their role in breaking barriers is a testament to their strength, and the weight of their achievements is something we can all feel. Their legacy reflects a commitment to service, education, and civil rights, making them enduring icons in Natchitoches' African American community. Their impact on the community is profound, and their story is one that we can all feel connected to.



Nelson Funeral Home, 1960 City Directory, CHRC



Dr. Edward A. Johnson



Johnson House & Office  
Photo Credit: Michael Fontenot



## First 2025 NRMCFoundation Gala Cancer Champion: Jamal Johnson

Jamal was diagnosed with Stage 3 B-cell lymphoma in June 2024. With faith in God, compassionate care from the NRMCFoundation Cancer Center team, and the unwavering support of his loved ones, Jamal faced his journey with strength and positivity every step of the way.

Do you want to show your support? Donate in honor of Jamal or any of our champions to help support life-changing care at the NRMCFoundation Cancer Center. <https://nrmcfoundation.org/annual-events/annual-gala/>.



**37<sup>th</sup> NRMCFoundation GALA**  
Save the Date - May 17, 2025



Enjoy the  
*Sweet Things*  
In Life

Conveniently located in the heart of Natchitoches, **Dr. Ashby** and his dedicated team at NRMCFoundation Medicine Associates are committed to helping you achieve your best health. From routine wellness exams and chronic disease management to unexpected illnesses or minor injuries, you can count on us for expert, compassionate care every step of the way. ***Our goal is to help you reach optimal health and stay healthy, so you can enjoy all the sweet things life has to offer.***



**NRMCFoundation**  
Medicine  
Associates

601 Keyser Ave.,  
Natchitoches LA  
[NRMCHospital.org](http://NRMCHospital.org)



**Call 318.479.5227 to schedule an appointment with Dr. Keith Ashby!**



### 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Natchitoches Showdown Basketball Tournament on July 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>

**WEAMS**  
**NATCHITOCHES SHOWDOWN**

**\$200 REGISTRATION FEE.**  
**MULTI TEAM DISCOUNT:**  
2 TEAMS= \$175  
3+TEAMS= \$150

**JULY 12-13**

**REGISTER NOW!**

**CHAMPIONSHIP RINGS**  
1ST PLACE & 2ND PLACE TROPHIES

**CONTACT:**  
BAMON SHIELDS 318-354-5594  
ANGEL JOHNSON 318-471-7088  
GARY ROBERSON 318-354-6112  
RICHARD MOODY 318-581-8091

Date: July 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup>

Guaranteed three games for all teams

1<sup>st</sup> Place Champions: Champion Rings

2<sup>nd</sup> Place Teams: Trophies

Don't miss your chance to compete in this thrilling tournament and showcase your skills on the court!

Contact us for registration details and secure your team's spot today! Let's make this tournament an unforgettable showdown!

**The BREADHOUSE**  
*Nakatosh*

*Soulicious Food & BBQ*

**1202 Texas St, Natchitoches, LA 71457**

**(318) 214-2400**

**Open 7 Days a Week      Hours 11 am to 7 pm**



NATCHITOCHES - Northwestern State University's Office of Electronic Learning and Global Education will offer a Notary Public Exam Prep Course starting Tuesday, June 3. The early bird fee is \$430 until May 28 and \$450 after that date.

In partnership with Louisiana State University-Shreveport, this 52-hour course is an introduction to notary public fundamentals. The instructor, attorney and notary Jennifer Brown, has a pass rate higher than the state average and distributes significant course study guides and materials to assist participants in preparation for the exam. This course will be delivered via online video conferencing. The instructor will provide a conferencing link to join the class on June 3, the first day of class.

Requirements for the course are that participants must have broadband access, a camera and sound. The test is based on the Louisiana Secretary of State's newest edition of "The Fundamentals of Louisiana Notarial Law and Practice," which is available only at [www.sos.la.gov](http://www.sos.la.gov) or call (225) 922-0507 for further information. Participants must have the book on the first day of class. The 2025 Sidepiece to the 2025 Fundamentals of Louisiana Notarial Law and Practice will be available from Amazon in the future.

Please visit the Louisiana Secretary of State's Website at [www.sos.la.gov](http://www.sos.la.gov) and select Notary and Certifications for qualifications or call (225) 922-0507. In order to take the Louisiana State Notary Exam, students must be Louisiana residents and registered to vote in Louisiana.

For more information or to register for classes, go to [checkout.nsula.edu](http://checkout.nsula.edu) or call (800) 376-2422 or (318) 357-6355. Stay up to date with course offerings by following NSU Electronic Learning and Global Education on Facebook at [facebook.com/NSULA.ece](https://facebook.com/NSULA.ece).





ADMISSION:

\$5

CEREBRAL PALSY AWARENESS

# PROSPER DAY FUNDRAISER

FREE POPCORN!  
1 FREE RAFFLE ENTRY!

JUNE 7TH

FROM 12PM TIL 6PM

## ACTIVITIES

FUN GAMES,  
RAFFLES  
AND MORE

DIXIE YOUTH COMPLEX  
100 SCHOOL DR.  
NATCHITOCHES, LA 71457

FAITH,  
FAMILY,  
FUN!



Join us for PROSPER DAY!

We're raising awareness for Cerebral Palsy with a day full of faith, family, and fun!

When: June 7th | 12 PM – 6 PM

Where: Dixie Youth Complex, 100 School Dr., Natchitoches, LA

Admission: \$5 (includes free popcorn + 1 raffle entry!)

Enjoy games, raffles, and fun activities for all ages! Don't miss this chance to support a great cause and have a blast doing it!

Info: Call 318-909-4791



Exchange Bank

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## 60<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration

Honoring 1st Lady Of Restoration Apostolic Ministries, Pastor Lucy Babers







## 60<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration

Honoring 1st Lady Of Restoration Apostolic Ministries, Pastor Lucy Babers





## 60<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration

Honoring 1st Lady Of Restoration Apostolic Ministries, Pastor Lucy Babers





## BOM Gives Back

### NATCHITOCHES:

BOM donated to the Lakeview High School softball program. Pictured left to right: BOM's Shonterika Payton and LHS Head Coach Blake Dodson.



### CADDO/BOSSIER:

BOM presented a sponsorship check in support of the Haughton High School Band. Pictured left to right: Glenn Dowden and BOM's Henry Burns.



### RAPIDES:

BOM is a proud supporter of the Buckeye Dixie Youth Organization. Pictured left to right: BOM's Maranda Evans, Presley Perry, Hank Bryant, Reid McNeely, Ryder Perry, and BOM's Mandy Futrell.



### SABINE:

BOM is proud to continue our sponsorship of the Many FFA program. Pictured left to right: Darrell Simmons and Kylie Miller.



# Happy Mother's Day!



# BOM

BOFM.COM

Member  
FDIC





## The Lord Honors Contentment

By: Evangelist Bonita Moses Arnold



The Apostle Paul states: "I have learned to be content in whatsoever state I am in." This verse doesn't necessarily mean accepting unsatisfactory mishaps or not wanting to improve and advance in life. Being content means that no matter what's going on around you, you still have that inner peace knowing that the Lord can do abundantly and more than we can ever think or ask. The Lord honors contentment because what you are showing him is that you dare not complain. You should know that trouble doesn't last always.

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Mama Shug would always say...

"If you are not going to trust in the Lord in all thy ways, there's no need for you to waste your time calling on him".

**Kingdom Heart**  
**KIDS**  
**SUMMER CAMP**

**\$100 A WEEK**  
**REGISTRATION OPEN NOW BUT ENDS**  
**MAY 23RD**  
First day of camp is May 26<sup>th</sup>  
7:45am-5:00pm  
Fun, games, outdoor activities, and food!!!!  
500 Royal street Natchitoches La, 71457  
Call 318-228-4112 to register

*Happy  
Mother's  
Day*

**Yolanda C. Reed, CLA**  
**Natchitoches Parish Assessor**



## Krewe of Excellence All White Events Over the Years



2015



2018



2019



2022



2023

05.10.25 | 8 PM | KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS HALL  
1105 EAST FIFTH STREET . NATCHITOCHES, LA



*Annual*  
**ALL WHITE**  
*Affair*

Featuring  
**GO DJ CHRIS**



**SPLIT-THE-POT DRAWING!**



**ADVANCE TICKETS \$25 | \$30 AT THE DOOR**  
\*\*ADVANCE TICKETS MUST BE PURCHASED BY FRIDAY, MAY 9, 2025. \*\*

LIMITED RESERVED TABLES AVAILABLE (SEATING FOR 8)  
WHILE THEY LAST!!! FIRST COME, FIRST SERVED.

BYOB. SET-UPS AVAILABLE

FOR TICKET AND TABLE PURCHASE, SCAN QR OR CASHAPP \$KREWEEXCELLENCE



## Natchitoches Junior High JAG Team Shines, Wins Top Award at National Career Development Conference

Congratulations to Natchitoches Junior High JAG members Genesis Conday, TaJarrius Bowers, Mariah, Holliman, and MyCyah Roberson for earning the top creative decision-making scenario competition award. Ky'Ren Burton was also in attendance and showed outstanding leadership. The NJH Jag members made history by winning first place at the 4th Annual National Career Development Conference held in Indianapolis, Indiana, bringing pride and inspiration to our school community!



TJ Bowers, Genesis Conday, Mariah Hallman, Kyron Burton, and Makalyia Robinson



Photo Credit: Richard Moody Jr.







## Called to Serve: Dr. Demery's Journey of Faith and Leadership

### ***What is Dr. Demery's primary occupation?***

Pastor Demery is a full-time pastor dedicated to serving God's people. In addition to preaching the Gospel, he is the Head Meat Manager and Butcher at Piggly Wiggly's Natchitoches location.

### ***What is a defining moment that shaped Pastor Demery's leadership style?***

Dr. Demery contributes his leadership qualities to his late grandmother, Clara Turner-Coleman, and his mother, Oscarene Whatley. These two women raised him with a strong sense of faith and instilled in him the principle of treating others as he would like to be treated. They taught him that when you bless others, they are likely to do the same, and if they don't, God will take care of it. He believes in never looking down on any man unless you are picking him up.



**Dr. Elbert R. Demery, Jr.**

### ***What inspired Pastor Demery to become a pastor, and what words of encouragement would he give to the next generation of ministry leaders?***

Being a Pastor is not an inspiration; it is a divine call on one's life through the power of the Holy Spirit.

If I could give any words for the next generation of leaders in ministry, it is, be true to who God has called you to be, because only what you do for Christ will last.



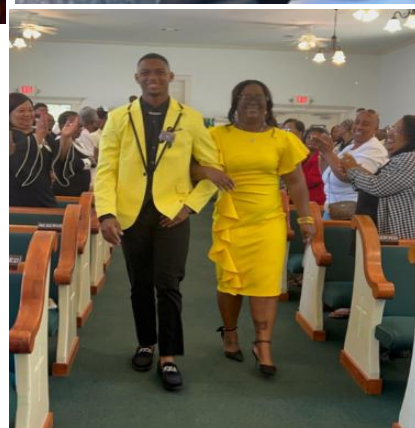
*Evergreen Missionary Baptist Church*

# PASTORAL *Appreciation*

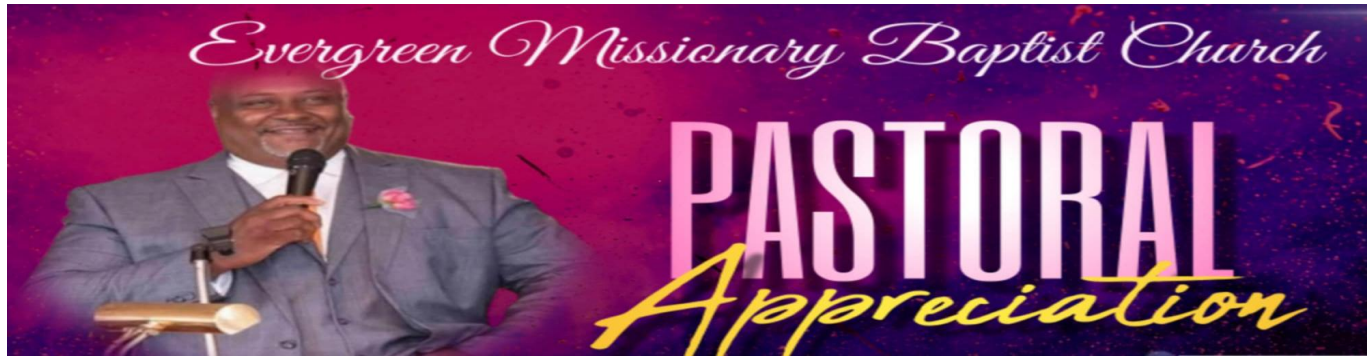


Honoring Dr. Elbert R. Demery, Jr.

Theme: "Feed the Flock of God" Acts 20:28

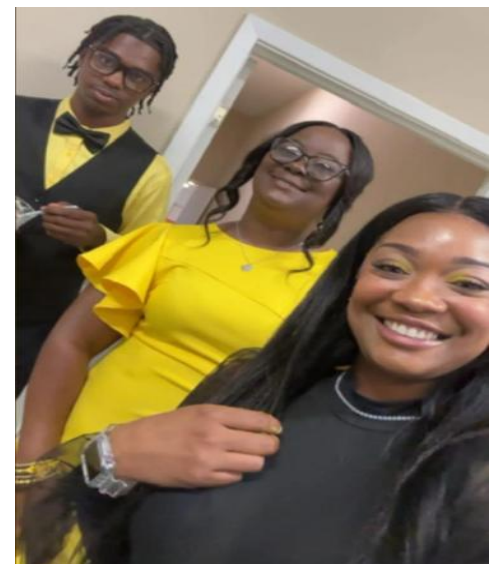
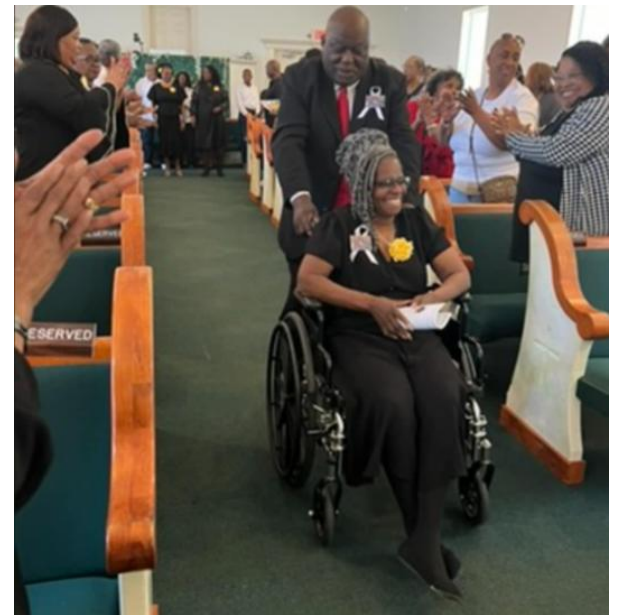






Honoring Dr. Elbert R. Demery, Jr.

Theme: "Feed the Flock of God" Acts 20:28







Honoring Dr. Elbert R. Demery, Jr.

Theme: "Feed the Flock of God" Acts 20:28





# COMMUNITY EVENTS

Applications Open Now!

Please call (318) 554-9300 to apply.

*United Missionary Baptist Church Presents*

## 1st Annual Occie Lee Sykes BOYS 2 MEN BOOTCAMP

MISSION: TRAINING BOYS TO BECOME MEN

**JUNE 2-6**  
7 AM - 4 PM  
9166 HWY. 1 SOUTH, NATCHEZ, LA

**Glasses Include:**  
BIBLE STUDY WELDING MECHANIC BUTCHER FERRIER  
GARDENING APPLIANCE REPAIR

**\$100 per child (meals included)**  
**AGES 8-18**

*\*Bonus: Sports & Fishing Trip*  
*\*transportation will be available*  
*\*\*Please see sponsorship form if you would like to sponsor a child*

*Sponsored By: Pastor Ocie Lee Charles Jr.*

**IamGabrielleJ**  
GIVING YOU ALL THE BUSINESS TEA

## Brunch & Business '25

**TEA PARTY EDITION**

**JUNE 7TH, 2025**  
**11AM-2PM**

**621 BOSSIER STREET,  
NATCHITOCHES, LA 71457**

**TEA PARTY ATTIRE REQUIRED**

**SPONSORED BY:**  
bayone beauty   

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# ST. LUKE

BAPTIST CHURCH

## PASTORAL INSTALLATION OF Reverend Christopher L. Anderson

**05.25.2025**  
**AT 2:00 PM**

193 POSEY ROAD | NATCHITOCHES, LA 71457

**GUEST SPEAKER**  
REV. ISIAH D. ANDERSON SR.  
ST. JOHN B.C.

**MAY 18TH** **MUST BE 25+**

**KREWE OF THE 9 PRESENTS**

# BOOTS -ON THE GROUND

**CROWN & SEXY EDITION**

**\$10 ENTRY FEE | DOORS OPEN AT 6 PM**  
**SOUNDS BY GODJ CHRIS**  
**@TOKAY'S**

7244 HIGHWAY 3110 NATCHITOCHES, LA



# COMMUNITY EVENTS



NORTH STAR MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH  
MEN'S MINISTRY PRESENTS

## FAN DRIVE

FOR THE ELDERLY IN THE POWHATAN/ALLEN COMMUNITY

IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO SHARE KINDNESS AND GOODNESS WITH OTHERS.

**FAN DONATIONS ARE WELCOMED**

COME AND FOLLOW ALONG WITH US AS WE GIVE BACK TO THE COMMUNITY AND SPREAD THE WORD ABOUT JESUS CHRIST.

**SATURDAY, 17 MAY 2025 10:00 A.M.**

BISHOP WILLIAM B. ROBERSON, PASTOR  
NORTH STAR MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH  
734 HWY 485 NATCHITOCHES (POWHATAN), LA 71457

## FAUNA Dog Wash & Nail Clipping Schedule 2025



May 3 ~ June 14  
July 12 ~ August 9  
September 13 - microchipping  
October 11



9:00 AM - 1:00 PM ~ Tractor Supply  
Baths - \$10 under 60 pounds ~ \$15 over 60 pounds  
Nails - \$10 ~ Anal Gland Expression - \$10

# Juneteenth

## FREEDOM DAY PARADE

Date: Saturday, June 21st, 2025  
Line up starts at 1:30p.m. - Parade starts at 3p.m.  
**\*BREATHALYZER TEST WILL BE ADMINISTERED**

Parade Route: Line up on Third street at the Natchitoches Parish Courthouse Parking Lot, exit left onto Third Street towards Texas Street, turn left on Texas Street, turn left on MLK Jr., proceed towards Amulet, turn right on Amulet, turn right onto North Street, head towards Trudeau, turn right on Trudeau, end at the Ben Park.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE INVOLVED PLEASE REACH OUT TO THE NAMES BELOW:

BETTY SAWYER-SMITH 318-332-8668  
MARIA MANGUM 318-332-0081  
ROBERT JACKSON 318-229-1774  
RALPH WILSON 318-332-8254



# COMMUNITY EVENTS



Square Park  
AT 2PM

**BBQ  
COOKOUT  
Party**

LET'S HAVE FUN  
**ALL FAMILY INVITED**

**11<sup>TH</sup> MAY**

**FOOD. DRINKS. MUSIC. GAMES**

BACK OF THE SQUARE PARK - 1717 LAKE STREET, NATCHITOCHES,  
LOUISIANA, 71457



**AGE 9-14  
YEARS**

**JULY 8-24**

**TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY,  
& THURSDAY**

**STEAM EXPLORERS  
SUMMER  
CAMP**

**8:00AM -1:00PM**

REGISTRATION  
FREE

**ACTIVITIES**  
Explore STEAM Like  
Never Before! Science,  
Technology,  
Engineering, Arts, and  
Math.

WHAT'S IN STORE?  
• DRONE TECHNOLOGY:  
LEARN HOW TO FLY  
AND PROGRAM DRONES!  
• ENGINEERING  
CHALLENGES: BUILD  
BRIDGES WITH  
SPAGHETTI AND  
CREATE REAL-WORLD  
DESIGNS!  
• FINANCIAL LITERACY:  
LEARN TO BUDGET,  
PLAN BUSINESSES,  
AND UNDERSTAND  
MONEY!  
• ART & CODING:  
CREATE DIGITAL ART  
AND GAMES USING  
SCRATCH & TYNKER!  
• ROBOTICS: DIVE INTO  
ARTIFICIAL  
INTELLIGENCE AND  
ROBOTICS.  
• INNOVATION  
CHALLENGE: WORK  
WITH A TEAM TO  
DEVELOP AN  
INNOVATIVE PROJECT.

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ROCKFORD BAPTIST CHURCH - 609 OLD RIVER ROAD - NATCHITOCHES, LA 71457

**12TH ANNUAL**  
*Pastor and First Lady Celebration*

**SUNDAY  
MAY 25  
2:30 PM**

**SPECIAL GUESTS**  
Pastor and First Lady Bayonnes  
AND THE HIGHER GROUND MINISTRIES CHURCH FAMILY

COLORS OF UNITY: SHADE OF JADE, GOLD, AND CREAM. PLEASE USE FLYER FOR REFERENCE.

## CONTACT US

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P.O. Box 1082 Natchitoches, La 71458