

Steppin' Out *News!*



"Reconnecting the Best of the African American Diaspora of Mobile: PAST • PRESENT • FUTURE"

VOLUME 26
ISSUE 05

ARTS • CULTURE • EDUCATION • COMMUNITY

JANUARY
2026

Gulfcoast Christian IN PARTNERSHIP WITH Northwest University

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Steppin' Out News!

"Reconnecting the Best of the African American Diaspora of Mobile's Past, Present and Future"

ABOUT STEPPIN' OUT

STEPPIN' OUT is a subsidiary of LEGACY 166 Inc., a non-profit organization with a Mission to provide Educational, Career, and Economic opportunities for Youth and the Underserved of Diverse Cultures; make available Cultural Activities for community participation; and deliver Quality of Life Skills Training through the Arts and Community Collaborations.

STEPPIN' OUT provides quality of life information to the community in each issue at no cost to the reader. Even though STEPPIN' OUT is not a "hard news" publication, the columns submitted by our contributors touch on subjects that address a wide range of community and cultural issues. Regular features include articles on health, history, entertainment, and finance. Articles on fashion, literature, and technology are some of the subjects that are occasionally featured.

STEPPIN' OUT and LEGACY 166 Inc. will continue to expand their roles in the community by offering internships and career training, and youth development and work opportunities. Volunteers are always needed with this mission.

STEPPIN' OUT Welcomes your comments and suggestions regarding this publication. For information on advertising, to comment on subject matter, or volunteer your services... PLEASE CONTACT US...

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BLACK LIVES MATTER



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TANENE JACKSON

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ELICIA OLIVERA JAXON (EJ)

Featured Column

**BLAQUE HISTORY
24/7/365**



LISA JOHNSON

Featured Column

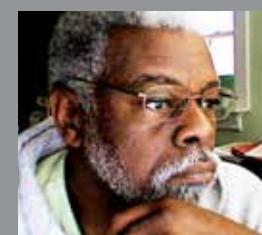
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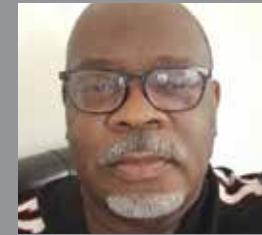
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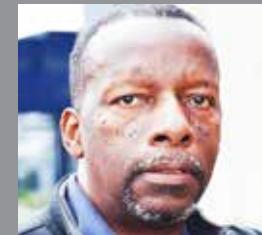
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Featured Column

PIECE OF CAKE!



MEMPHIS VAUGHAN JR

Featured Column

**TAKING MOBILE
TO THE NEXT LEVEL**

DISCLAIMER

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MESSAGE FROM THE PUBLISHER...

Kedu (How Are You?)
Steppin' Out Readers;

May Our Lord and Savior continue to Bless You as we continue to navigate this thing called Life.

We have been absent the last two months and for that I apologize. Sickness within our ranks had caused us to fall behind, and as a very small Black business, that can be devastating to the business. Fortunately, many of you have hung in there with us, and on top of that, some new advertisers are coming to the table. That says a lot about our community and our readers. With all that's going on a national level to minimize our community and our accomplishments, we continue to show our unity nationally and locally.

To help ensure that we don't go missing again, we are making moves that will allow us to grow from an at-home business to a store front operation. We are actively looking for space to move our operation and will soon begin to recruit to expand our staff to include more writers, graphics and layout personnel, and sales people. We are also starting an intern program to train and introduce young people to journalism and storytelling, graphics and layout, photography, and special assignments. This is an important task because we never want Steppin' Out to go away...there are too many important stories in our community to tell and report to trust anyone else to tell them.

Steppin' Out would again like to thank the candidates that selected us to get their message out during the November elections.

IN MOBILE: Samantha Ingram, Barbara Drummond, Robert Battles, and Jermaine Burrell.

IN PRICHARD: Carletta Davis, Stephani Norwood, and Teresa Fox-Bettis.

We appreciate that these candidates recognized you, our readers, as an integral part of their strategies to get elected. Many talk about supporting small business, but only a few step up to do so.

We've been promising to add new features and we expect that our "Business Directory" and "In Memorium" sections will be introduced in our March issue. Leroy and our Joke Section will follow shortly... Stay Tuned!

Hambani Kahle (Farewell) and Thank You for Your Support and Continue to be Blessed!

GREG CYPRIAN
Publisher/Editor
STEPPIN' OUT NEWS



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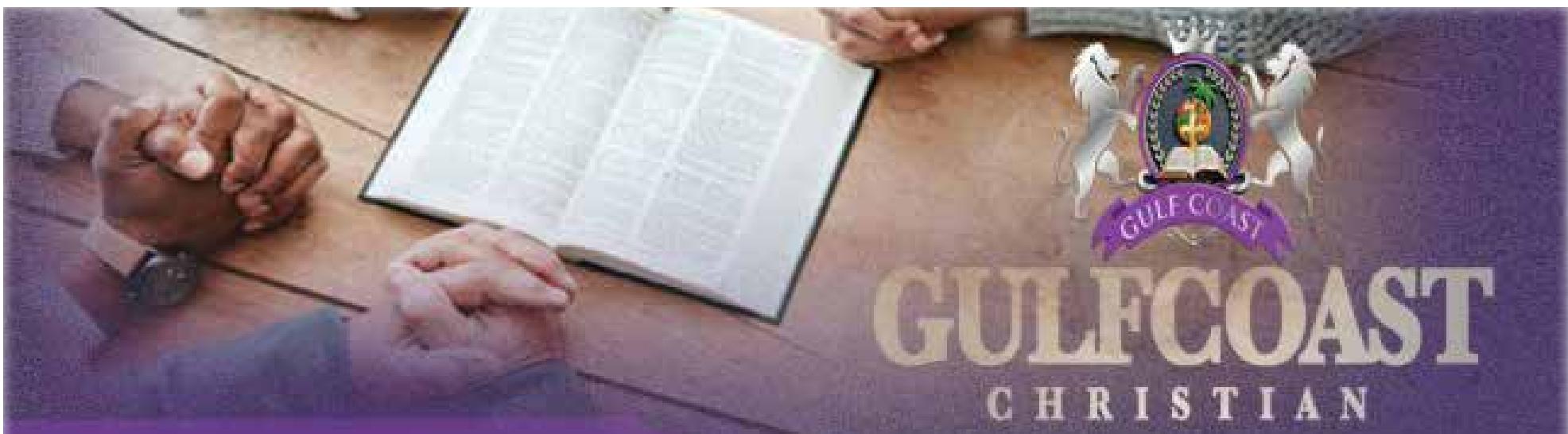
MARDI GRAS SCHEDULE 27

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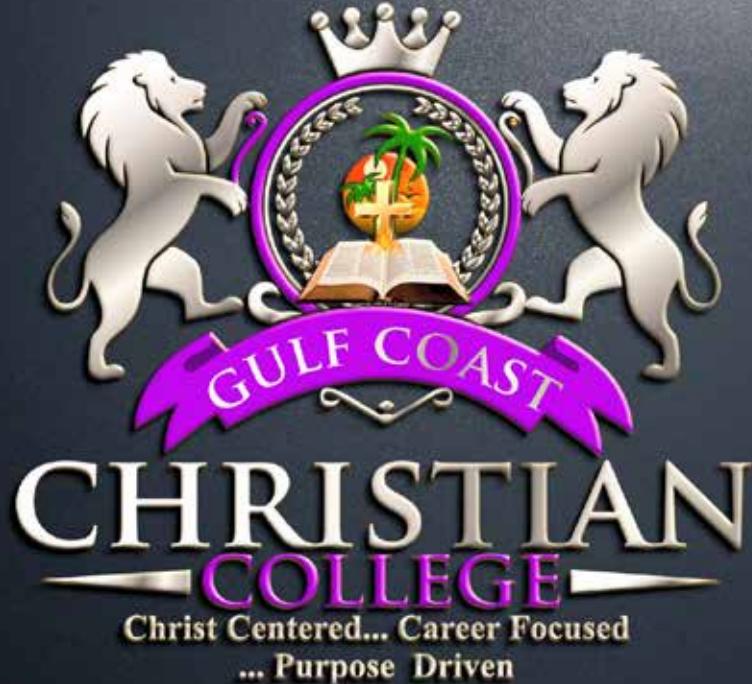
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Arthur L. Mack
FREELANCE WRITER
steppinoutnews@aol.com

COVER STORY



A new Christian College that will open in January in the building formerly housing the old Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church in Crichton hopes to provide an opportunity for students who want to pursue non-traditional education opportunities. Gulf Coast Christian College, located at 2756 Old Shell Road (next to New Shiloh Missionary Church) is the brainchild of the Rev. Kieron Buford, a Mobile native, Leflore High School, and Springhill College graduate. The old Shiloh building is in the process of being renovated, with plans to start classes in January 2026. Gulf Coast Christian is working in partnership with Kirkland, Washington-based Northwest University, to offer accredited online programs, and has a nine-member Board of Advisors.

The online degree programs offered are: Bible theology, Clinical Mental Health Counseling, Business Management, Interdisciplinary Studies, Organizational Leadership, Psychology, and Ministry Leadership. In addition, Gulf Coast Christian also offers Vocational programs in allied health through an online or in-person format. "We had a vision for this school back in 2016," Buford said. "We're moving the vision forward and making it materialize. The focus will be on providing non-traditional education, and the benefit is that our classes are accredited, and financial aid is available.

Buford, who works for the Department of Defense as a Program Manager for Contracts, said students attending Gulf Coast Christian College will get help with mentoring. "We also have a mentoring program," he said. "We're helping kids understand the assignment of real-world dynamics and teach them what it means to be positioned for success in the world of business. We also train students on how to prepare for an interview, expect success, and what kind of questions to ask; these are the kinds of things we teach them during the mentoring program. We want to be a world-class institution and galvanize the community to create an environment where our students exceed expectations and limitations."

Buford said unlike schools such as ITT and Virginia College, Gulf Coast Christian is more focused with actually helping students

pursue useful degrees instead of saddling them with insurmountable debt. That was another reason for creating the school.

"There's no return on the investment students made with ITT and Virginia College," he said. "Students are paying a \$19,000 fee for a nine-month certificate and are stuck with an insurmountable debt, that provides no return on their investments. That ignited something in my heart to correct this injustice of predatory lending that targeted minority students. We want to make classes legitimate and affordable."

Prospective students need to have a 2.5 grade point average with a diploma or GED to be eligible to enroll in the school. In addition to building a relationship with the community, Gulf Coast Christian is also building an athletic program, which includes football, basketball, baseball, and flag football.

The school is also encouraging spiritual growth and readiness for the working world. "In Mobile, we have football and basketball," Buford said. "We can use these sports to create that excitement in the community. Our students are required to attend a chapel service on Monday morning (9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.) and do a 12-hour internship program, which is graded. We want to expose students to the work culture and environment."

Gulf Coast Christian has a great team of innovators and leaders in place to assist students on this journey. The Vice President and Director of Operations Rev. Kelvin Maye Sr, is a phenomenal visionary who leads the school's Community Engagement and Business development initiatives, along with VP/General Manager Mrs. Kimberly Buford, Program Coordinator Mrs. Darlene Stratford, Head Women's Basketball Coach Mrs. Tammy Maye, Men's Basketball Coach Trevor Lewis, Career Services Dr. Carliss Eaton, VP/Logistics Mr. Clendon Pharr, and Asst. to GM Ms. Tamara McClendon.

Interested students can register at www.gulfcoastccedu.org ♣



BUSINESS WISDOM FOR ENTREPRENEURS

Darrelle Randle

BizWiz...

I wrote my first business column for Steppin' Out News back in March 2004. If you dig up that 21-year-old article, you'll find a straightforward introduction to my background and what I hoped to offer readers. My writing style has evolved since then, but my mission hasn't changed: to provide useful, practical, and timely information that helps you thrive.

That original column was called "Taking Care of Business." This new series, BizWiz—short for Business Wisdom for Entrepreneurs—carries that spirit forward. The title is also a nod to a card game we played growing up: Bid Whist. For those unfamiliar with the game, Bid Whist isn't a game you simply pick up. Someone has to teach you, and most players spend hours—sometimes entire nights—honing their strategies. Success depends on what's in your hand, how you bid, and how you play your cards. But it also depends on factors beyond your control: your partner, your opponents, and occasionally a bit of luck.

Business works the same way. There are internal factors you can control and external forces you can't—but you still have to play the hand you're dealt. That's why strategic thinking isn't just helpful; it's essential. Losing at Bid Whist might cost you a few bragging rights. Losing in business can cost you your livelihood. You must plan your strategy, adapt a new mindset, and modify your plan if necessary. Strategic planning doesn't just strengthen your business

—it can improve your personal finances, expand your net worth, and build long-term stability.

I have much more to share, but I promised to keep these BizWiz articles short and impactful. So I'll end with this: I encourage all Steppin Out News readers—and your families and friends—to shop local, especially with minority-owned businesses. Supporting local entrepreneurs is more than a feel-good gesture; it has real economic power.

Why Shop Local and Minority-Owned? Because It...

- * Recirculates money within your community
- * Creates jobs and stimulates the local economy
- * Offers personalized service and unique products
- * Builds community wealth and encourages local investment
- * Strengthens neighborhoods and supports local nonprofits
- * Reduces environmental impact through lower transportation needs
- * Promotes diversity, entrepreneurship, and cultural connection
- * Delivers better service, deeper product knowledge, and meaningful relationships
- * most importantly, keeps money where it matters—right here at home

More BizWiz insights are on the way. Until then, shop local, support each other, and keep playing your cards with strategy and confidence.♦



Congratulations to Tomeka Day

Her Williamson High Culinary Arts students were selected as a 2025 Rachael Ray Grow Grant Recipient! This national recognition, awarded through the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation and The Rachael Ray Foundation, supports outstanding high school culinary programs that are growing the next generation of culinary talent. It will provide new opportunities, resources, and experiences for Williamson's culinary students to continue developing their skills.

HANDS OF LIFE

CHIROPRACTIC &
REHAB CENTER
DR. CARTER SMITH D.C.



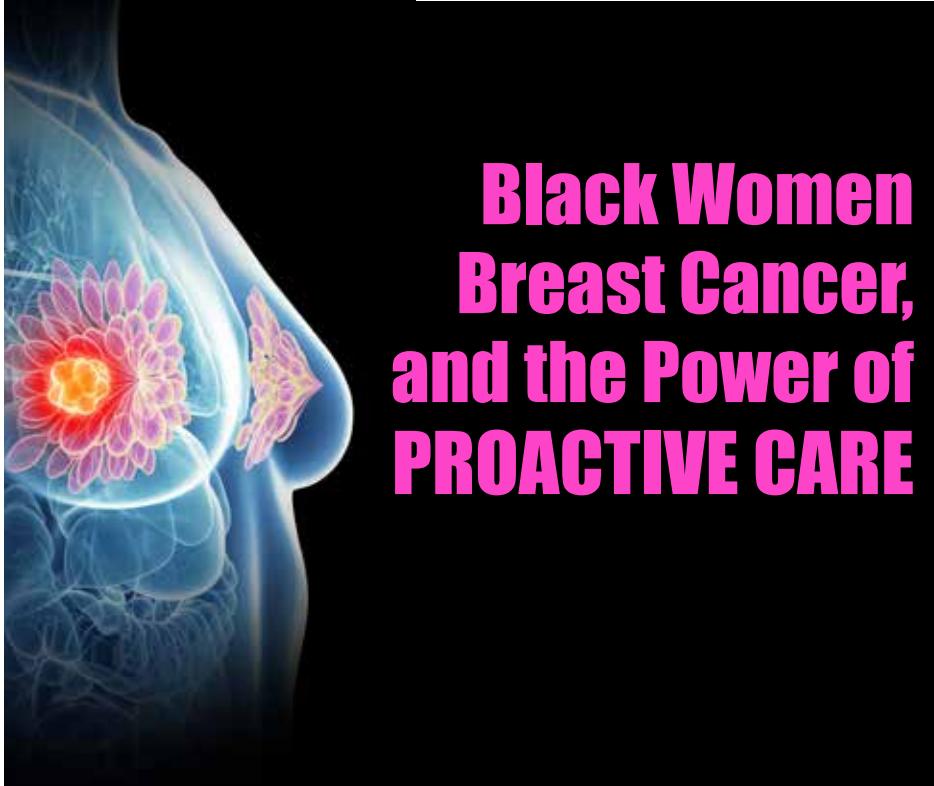
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A PIECE OF CAKE

Dianco Williams



Black Women Breast Cancer, and the Power of PROACTIVE CARE

In our communities, strength is often worn like armor. We take care of everyone—our children, our families, our jobs, our church homes—often forgetting that our own health deserves the same devotion. Nowhere is this more evident than in the fight against breast cancer.

Black women face a disproportionate burden in this battle. While we are diagnosed at slightly lower rates than white women, we are more likely to face aggressive tumors, be diagnosed younger, and at later stages. These aren't just statistics; they are the lived experiences of our sisters, aunties, cousins—and me.

At 45, I heard the words no woman wants to hear: "You have breast cancer." In that moment, I decided my diagnosis would not define me. Instead, it fueled a tenacity to win and a fire to serve. I wanted Black women everywhere to know: you are not alone, and you can fight and thrive. Many of the disparities we face come from delayed diagnosis. Too often, our symptoms are dismissed, or we push aside our own concerns because we're too busy being strong for everyone else. Barriers like lack of insurance or access to specialists make it even harder.

But proactive healthcare is one of the most powerful tools we have—and it starts with knowing your body. Do your monthly self-checks. Pay attention when something feels different. Speak up, even if you feel nervous. And if a doctor isn't listening, find one who will. Your life is worth that insistence.

Screenings save lives. Most women should begin annual mammograms at 40, but family history may mean starting earlier or seeking genetic testing. Asking questions, getting second opinions, and understanding your risks are acts of self-love. Community strengthens us. Sharing our stories, encouraging our sisters to get screened, and reaching out to those newly diagnosed reminds each of us that we are connected—and covered.

Breast cancer does not get the last word. We do. With faith, knowledge, and community, this journey—while tough—can be a piece of cake in God's hands. ♣



Expressions: Right or Wrong!

Lisa Johnson

Have you ever heard someone say, "Don't call me up – I didn't ask to come off the bench." I recently heard this during a conversation. I thought what an interesting statement as it can carry various connotations. For example, a friend comes to you for some advice. You give them your perspective, perhaps even a warning about why the decision they're considering is a bad choice. Instead of heeding the advice, they go through with it and now they're in a mess. Next thing you know they're calling you up. Your first thought might be, Why are they calling me? In other words, you didn't ask to come off the bench to be dragged into their drama. So, stay put.

THERE ARE TWO ANCIENT SAYINGS THAT I TRY TO LIVE BY:

"Make it your aim to live quietly and to mind your own business and to work with your hands, just as we instructed."

"However, let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or a wrongdoer or a busybody in other people's matters."
~ 1 Thessalonians 4:11; 1 Peter 4:15 ~

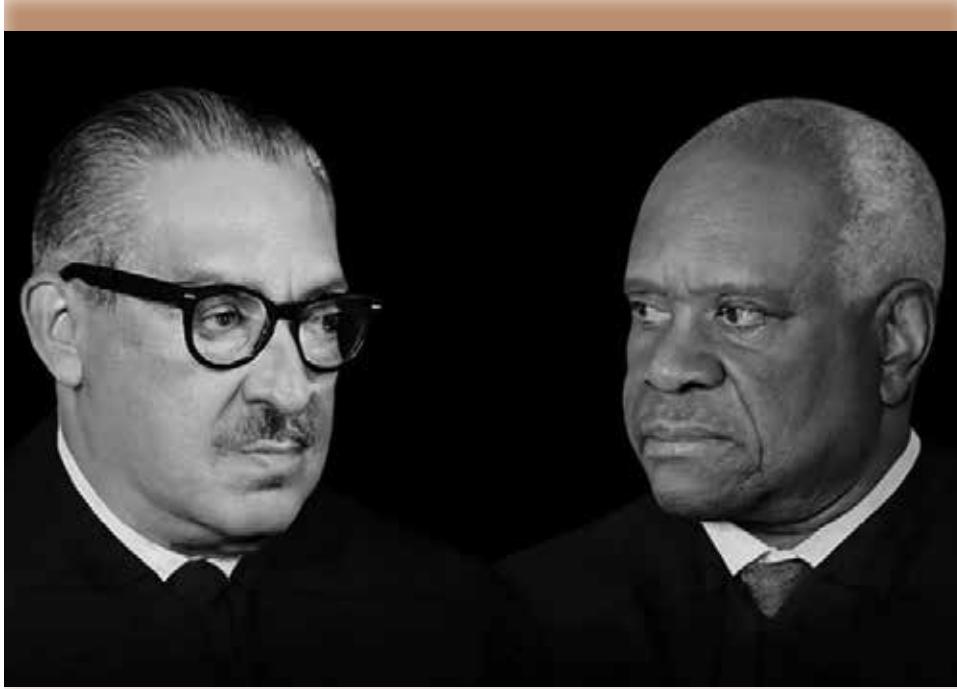
Another situation might be totally different. Whether it's the game of life or an actual sports game, you just might have to sit this one out. Sitting out isn't losing - it's learning. There are times when you need to be benched on purpose so you can grow. In those quiet moments reflect on what's happening in front of you. Learn from watching those in the forefront. Could it be that a particular technique, a move, or simply the art of patience is what's needed? When you receive that call, you must decide for yourself whether to answer. Not every call deserves your energy, and not every opportunity is your assignment. How do you know when it is your time? Pray and seek the advice of those experienced in the game of life – people who know how to navigate life challenges. Remember the ultimate decision is yours to make. Therefore, learn to take ownership of your choices and if they don't turn out right, it's ok. Pick yourself up, learn, and grow from the experience.

~ 1 Thessalonians 5:17; Proverbs 15:22; 11:14; 3:5-7 ~♦

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The Biggest Downgrade in U.S. History

In October 1991, Justice Clarence Thomas was sworn in as a member of the Supreme Court, filling the seat of civil rights champion Justice Thurgood Marshall.



A Lieutenant Colonel in the US Air Force, she was the first African-American female fighter pilot.

SHAWNA KIMBRELL

MEET LISA FORREST, PHILADELPHIA FIRE DEPARTMENT'S FIRST-EVER BLACK FEMALE FIRE BATTALION CHIEF IN 149 YEARS HISTORY.





Taking Mobile to the Next Level

Memphis Vaughan Jr.

EDITOR OF LITERARY WEBSITE... TimBookTu.com

Feedback can be sent to: mempv57@gmail.com

My Thanks to the Visionary

Writing for Steppin' Out for more than a decade has been a great experience. I'm deeply grateful to Greg Cyprian, the visionary publisher who gave me this wonderful opportunity. He's allowed me the freedom to write about the things that matter most to me—to share my experiences, hopes, and words of encouragement. I also want to thank you, the readers, for your continued support and thoughtful feedback along the way.

Greg continues to push for the expansion of the arts, literacy, culture, history and community collaboration, especially to provide opportunities for young people. Through Steppin' Out, Sankofa Media Group, and the non-profit Legacy 166, he is diligently working to keep us informed, educated, and engaged. He did this despite the health issues he has faced over the last several years. His commitment is unsurpassed by others with lesser challenges.

Because of Greg's dedication and tireless efforts, I find that I must dig deeper to find the energy to write and support the efforts that his entities represent. We're living in an age overflowing with misinformation, disinformation, negativity, and hate spread through various media, making it harder than ever to discern truth from noise. While much of what I write reflects my personal thoughts and opinions, I make a conscious effort to ground my words in facts and ensure they're something I can stand behind with pride. It's easy to fall into negativity, cynicism, or hypocrisy—but we already have more than enough of that in our daily lives.

I want to find joy and grace in what I write. That's not to say I've ignored the negative aspects of our community and society; rather, I try to highlight them while also offering possible solutions. I want my words to be a call to action by those who may be more inspired and empowered to bring about positive change.

My ongoing goal is to share ideas that contribute to the betterment of the community—to highlight Black history, culture, and the arts, and to explore topics that inspire progress and growth. If I can motivate even a few people to step off the sidelines and take part in moving our community forward, I'll consider my mission accomplished and a piece of Greg's vision fulfilled.♦



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Mobile Eagle Awards

The Mobile Chamber honored the 2025 Eagle Award winners at the 28th Annual Eagle Awards. Each year the Eagle Awards celebrate the accomplishments of outstanding local minority-owned businesses and their contributions to our local economy and community. The winners are:

Rice & Reece Funeral Home



Rice & Reece has been a trusted name in the Prichard community for nearly 50 years. Founded in 1975, the family-owned business provides compassionate care through funerals, memorial services, military honors, cremation options and grief support, ensuring every family receives the attention they deserve during life's most difficult moments.

Beyond their services, Rice & Reece is deeply involved in the community, providing Thanksgiving meals, sponsoring school supply drives, supporting local students on college tours and partnering with the Sickle Cell Center for blood drives. Their long-standing commitment to compassion, service and outreach has made them a true pillar of support, strengthening families and neighborhoods alike.

Corporate Environmental Risk Management (CERM)



CERM has been building stronger, more sustainable communities across the Southeast since its founding in 1995. What began with two friends from Prichard, Alabama, has grown into a nationally recognized firm delivering engineering, environmental and program management solutions. From transportation and water systems to environmental compliance and federal facilities, CERM brings expertise and innovation to projects that improve daily life.

The firm's commitment extends beyond its work sites through internships, mentoring and scholarships, as well as toy drives, neighborhood cleanups and partnerships with local organizations.

Grounded in integrity, innovation and service, CERM continues to make a lasting impact in Mobile and throughout the region.

Soaring Eagle Legacy Award Major General Jerome Gary Cooper, USMC (Ret.) (1936-2024)



Major General Jerome Gary Cooper, USMC (Ret.) was a decorated Marine, businessman and public servant. A graduate of the University of Notre Dame, he became the first Black officer in Marine Corps history to lead an infantry company into combat during the Vietnam War.

For his heroism, he earned the Bronze Star, two Purple Hearts, the Distinguished Service Medal and the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry three times. Rising to the rank of Major General, he later served as Commanding General at Camp Lejeune and as Director of Personnel at Marine Corps Headquarters.

Beyond military service, General Cooper was Vice President and Senior Vice President of Volkert & Associates, U.S. Ambassador to Jamaica and Assistant Secretary of the Air Force under President George H.W. Bush. He also chaired Commonwealth National Bank and CNB Bancorp, Inc., Alabama's first minority-owned national bank. His career blended courage, leadership and lasting impact in both military and business arenas.

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Creole History Highlights

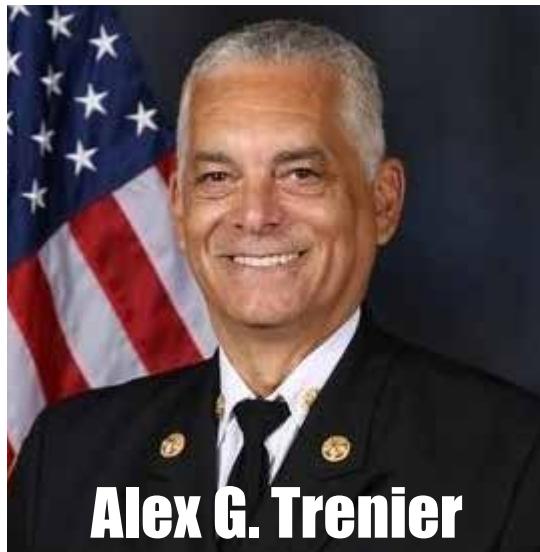
Tracy Neely

PRESIDENT: MOBILE CREOLE CULTURAL
AND HISTORICAL PRESERVATION SOCIETY

HONORING A LEGACY

The A.G. Trenier Fire Station Dedication

When Alex Trenier walked into the Utopia Club in 2018 for MCCHPS's first Creole Family Reunion, I could not have predicted the profound impact he would have on me and on preserving Mobile's rich Creole history. As Deputy Chief Fire Marshal, Alex embodied the extraordinary legacy of his family—a legacy that has protected Mobile for over two centuries.



A Family Tradition Since 1819

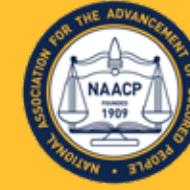
In April 1819, Alex's fourth great-grandfather, Fermin Trenier, founded Creole Fire Company No. 1 with other members of Mobile's Creole community. This was Mobile's very first fire department—a vital civic institution established just months before the transition to American governance. Mobile joined the United States in December 1819.

Creole Fire No. 1 became legendary for always arriving first at fires, using rejected racehorses and steam-powered engines. Their horse Jack could reportedly follow his nose straight to any blaze. Located first at Dearborn and St. Francis Streets, then later on Springhill Avenue, the company operated continuously until integration in the early 1970s—an remarkable 150+ year run. The company wasn't just about firefighting; it was the heart of Mobile's Creole community. According to Mark Trenier, their annual April 9th parades drew crowds including U.S. Presidents, featuring rose-wreathed engines, the Excelsior Band founded by firefighter John C. Pope, and elaborate floats carrying young girls in their Sunday best.

Continuing the Tradition

Since 1819, a Trenier has continuously served in Mobile's fire department. Alex's father served, as did his brother Mark, who became the first Captain of color after integration. Today, Alex's son John continues this unbroken chain of service, working on his own "larger than life shadow." Alex approached every challenge with resolve that appeared effortless—being extraordinary seemed as natural to him as breathing. His genuine, good-hearted nature made him both an excellent firefighter and exceptional human being. When MCCHPS commemorated Creole Fire No. 1's 200th anniversary in 2019, Alex opened doors for interviews with surviving members, ensuring their stories would be preserved for future generations.

As we dedicate this fire station in Alex's honor, we celebrate not just one man's service, but a family legacy spanning seven generations of protecting Mobile. The torch has passed, inspiring us all to serve our community with the grace, strength, courage, and boundless love that was Alex's signature.♦



NAACP

ADVISES ON THE GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

Robert Clopton, President of the local chapter of the NAACP, has sent out an advisory on the Government Shutdown. The advisory reads as follows:

What to do if you're affected by the Government Shutdown. Many families and communities are feeling the strain of the government shutdown. Whether you've been furloughed or rely on federal programs, here are key steps and resources to help you navigate this uncertain time.

• If You've Been Furloughed

APPLY FOR UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS ASAP:

You may be eligible if you're not working and not being paid. Note: If you later receive back pay, you may be required to repay the unemployment benefits.

CONTACT YOUR MORTGAGE LENDER, LANDLORD, OR CREDITORS:

Explain your situation and request flexible payment options.

FEDERAL STUDENT LOANS:

Payments are not affected by the shutdown.

STAY INFORMED:

Check with your agency's HR office for official information, and share this email with family and friends who may find it helpful.

• If You Rely On Government Services

MEDICAID:

Your coverage continues, though some administrative processes may be delayed. Community health centers remain open and available for care.

VETERANS SERVICES:

VA hospitals and clinics remain open. Disability and pension payments will continue.

SOCIAL SECURITY:

Benefits continue. New applications or replacement card requests may take longer than usual.

We will continue to share updates and resources as they become available. You are not alone. We're here to support you.

KEEP ADVANCING!



MAC Announces 2026–2027 Poet Laureate

The Mobile Arts Council (MAC), in partnership with the City of Mobile and the Alabama State Council on the Arts, announced the appointment of Alex Lofton, known throughout the community as "Huggy Bear da Poet," as Mobile's 2026–2027 Poet Laureate.

The Poet Laureate program celebrates the power of poetry to uplift, connect, and inspire the people of Mobile. As an ambassador for the literary arts, the Poet Laureate will use the written and spoken word to deepen community engagement, promote creative expression, and celebrate the cultural vibrancy of our city.

Alex Lofton's lifelong connection to Mobile is woven through generations. Raised between the heart of Mobile, the neighborhoods of Prichard, and the red-clay hills of Citronelle, his earliest performances took place inside his grandmother's country church. Lofton refined his voice and passion for the arts at John L. Leflore Magnet High School, where he developed the integrity, purpose, and creative drive that have shaped his career. For more than 20 years, Huggy Bear has authored, performed, educated, and advocated through the art of poetry. His mission has remained constant: to use poems as a bridge—uniting people across racial, social, and political divides, empowering young people, and strengthening the fabric of the community.

Said Lofton, "Poetry has been my fervor and my untamed zeal for over a score. It's my vocation and chosen life mission. Despite more lucrative opportunities, my purpose has always been to author, perform, educate, and advocate for the people through the art of verse. I've been doing the work for the last 20 years because it was aligned with my purpose. I am honored to now serve the City of Mobile as its Poet Laureate."

MAC and its partners are thrilled to continue this vital program and to champion the role of poetry in strengthening community bonds, celebrating local voices, and enriching our cultural landscape.

###



Cultural Journey Home Chris Williams



Returning to Africa

I have come across numerous friends and curious people who ask about moving to Ghana or other African countries. It is a novel and intriguing idea but one that needs careful consideration. I was a military man; at the age of 19 I started my first journey in Europe and it was the most terrifying thing I had ever experienced and it took me over a year to get used to it after leaving the only home I had ever known. Then one day I woke up and it became the best decision I ever made. I learned that home is where your peace and happiness is. Learning different cultures and how others live was amazing. I visited Accra Ghana several times and each visit was a profound experience but I never thought I would end up wanting to live there.

It is always a big decision to leave your country, especially if you have children, family and friends. What is more important is knowing what your expectations are. If you are thinking of moving to any African countries be realistic. If you don't have a plan it will be the most miserable and regretful decision in your life. If you don't have the finances available working here is not a great source of income. The average monthly income in Ghana is \$800 per month. If you do have your own resources then you can easily open your own business to supplement your income. You can find great places to live with all, and more, of the amenities of a home in the US. What you pay monthly for a 3 bedroom home maybe \$2500 - \$3000 in the US a month, you can find a very lavish 5 or 6 bedroom with all the amenities and pay \$3000 yearly in Ghana. Cars are expensive in Ghana but are a necessity to get around and do your daily necessities. You will find all of the homely dining experiences such as Domino's Pizza, Burger King, KFC and you will find great steak restaurants, Chinese, and Indian cuisine.

If you're seriously thinking about it I would say take the time to visit. If you can, stay for a month, that will help you with your decision. Find someone who's relocated there and get their honest opinion of everyday life.

In the end life is an adventure so enjoy yours.✿





MOBILE, ALABAMA
TRANSIT SYSTEM

MOBILE'S TRANSIT FUTURE!

The WAVE Transit System is creating a faster and easier public transit system for Mobile for Summer 2026!

You are invited to take a Survey to share your input!

Go to thewavetransit.com

Scroll down to

Mobile's Transit Future

Click on [Read On...](#)

then

TAKE OUR SURVEY!

**Make Your Voice Heard
by January 15, 2026!**



Creole History Highlights

Tracy Neely

PRESIDENT: MOBILE CREOLE CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL PRESERVATION SOCIETY

GRAVE NOTES

In January 2024, I embarked on a genealogy project called 52 Ancestors in 52 Weeks. The project, created by Amy Johnson Crow (<https://www.amyjohnsoncrow.com/52-ancestors-in-52-weeks-new/>), encourages genealogists to write about one ancestor each week using prompts that explore how their ancestors lived their daily lives.

I decided to adapt the concept. Instead of researching my own family, I used death certificates from Mobile's Black cemeteries to bring forgotten families back to life. Each week, I'd select one death certificate, build a family tree, search newspaper archives, and write about what I discovered. My desire was to learn more about our local abandoned cemeteries.

Adam Palmer was my first subject. His headstone is the oldest found to date in St. Austin Cemetery, and since I had been the one to find it, I was already curious about his story. The research proved fruitful. I found his wife, Hannah Early, his children, Adam Jr. and Mattie Palmer Edwards, and Mattie's daughter Christine, including all her children with Will Langham. The family owned several lots on Butcher's Lane next to Catholic Cemetery.

In June of this year, I began uploading my research to WikiTree, a public genealogy database. Of course, Adam Palmer's family went up first. He continues to teach me things about family history. You can see what I uploaded here <https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Palmer-35899>.

This week, I received an email from a woman named Ms. Knight in New York who, having found my research through a Google search, believed she was related to Essie Langham, a descendant of Adam. She thought Essie was her grandmother but had little information. There had been confusion in the family because there were two women named Essie Langham, her grandmother who had died young and another one whose relationship she did not understand.

Working together, Ms. Knight and I were able to untangle the mystery. Her mother, Ethelsteen, had been the daughter of Essie Langham Hardy, who died in 1931 and was buried in Plateau when Ethelsteen was only five years old. Ethelsteen was orphaned since her father, Powell Hardy, was already dead. The second Essie Langham—actually Essie Langham Knight-- was a niece to the first one and roughly the same generation, which caused the confusion. She moved to New York and later Michigan.

Had it not been for Adam Palmer, none of this would have happened—the man whose headstone chose to show itself over two years ago, inspiring me to research, never imagining where his story would lead one hundred sixteen years later.

Please send any questions regarding those buried in the Mobile's Black cemeteries to tracy.neely.mcchps@gmail.com. Let's dig!✿

Rx MIDTOWN PHARMACY

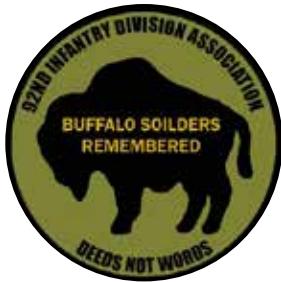
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LEGACY 166



PORTRAITS 'n BLACK



The 54th Massachusetts Infantry

Many African Americans fought during the Civil War. The 54th Massachusetts Infantry was one of the Union Army's first African American regiments during the war. The group was most famously known for its bravery in the assault on Fort Wagner, a Confederate stronghold located on Morris Island, South Carolina, just south of the entrance to Charleston Harbor. The regiment was pivotal in dispelling doubts about the combat abilities of Black soldiers.

The regiment was formed in response to the Emancipation Proclamation, which allowed African American men to enlist in the Union Army. Massachusetts Governor John A. Andrew called for volunteers, and over 1000 men enlisted within two weeks. The regiment's most famous engagement was its failed assault on Fort Wagner in July 18, 1863. The regiment suffered heavy casualties including the death of its leader, Colonel Robert Gould Shaw, a white officer born to an abolitionist upper class Boston family. He was shot and killed while leading his men to the parapet of the fort. It was said that his leadership and his advocacy for his Black soldiers along with the training and bravery of his unit during the battle inspired hundreds of thousands more Blacks to enlist for the Union, helping to turn the tide of the war.

Although the regiment lost the assault on the fort, three significant occurrences resulted from the battle:

- The actions of the 54th Massachusetts helped change public and military opinion on the role of African Americans in the war effort
- One of its soldiers, Sergeant William H. Carney, became the first Black soldier to be awarded the Medal of Honor for carrying the flag in to battle after the color bearer was killed in action
- The regiment initially refused to accept pay until they received the same wages as white soldiers, which was eventually granted later in the war

The regiment's story was renewed to the public with the 1989 film "Glory" and is memorialized in the Robert Gould Shaw and Massachusetts 54th Regiment Memorial in Boston.



COMMUNITY BUILDER

Beverly A. Scott

iyai+

Welcome to Our “Community Builder” Series

Introducing Youth to American Infrastructure (“iyai+”) is a national non-profit, established in 2018 by Dr. Beverly A. Scott, headquartered in Mobile, AL. The organization’s mission is building greater youth awareness and participation in our nation’s critical infrastructure sector careers and career pathways (both “good” jobs and business opportunities) – which includes vitally important areas like transportation, energy, water, communications, manufacturing, agriculture, public health, financial services – and others. ALL of which directly impact our personal lives, households, and communities – and are essential to the well-being of local areas, regional and national competitiveness, and security.

Today, iyai+ youth program participants are in the U.S. and Canada. Visit our website: www.iyai.org to learn about our work with young adults, including our annual “Sustainable Mobility Career Awareness and Virtual Innovation Challenge” and “paid” Dr. Juanita-Jones Abernathy “Community-Builder” Fellow/Internship. In 2026, we are excited to launch our Community Builder Series in the historic Africatown community, expanding our experiential youth learning model to increase awareness of our nation’s critical infrastructure sectors. Our goals are to promote community education, develop skills, support leadership, build local capacity, and encourage collaboration and partnerships with others who are passionate and interested in making a positive community impact. We are pleased to work with Steppin’ Out News and others locally to share information and promote active public engagement.

OUR FIRST AREA OF FOCUS IS PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION:

a top priority for the City of Mobile, the Africatown community and surrounding areas.

GETTING STARTED: The City of Mobile has launched a major public initiative – “Mobile’s Transit Future” -- to create a faster, easier, and more accessible public transit system for the city by Summer 2026. We wholeheartedly support robust community engagement and education to inform the City of Mobile’s plans in this critical lifeline infrastructure area. Their public website is: <https://mobilestransitfuture.civicspace.io/en/projects/mobile-s-transit-future>. Please go to this website and SIGN UP to receive future updates on upcoming meetings, community engagement, and related news.

- This webpage includes a PUBLIC TRANSIT SURVEY that is due no later than January 15th at 5:00 p.m. CST. YOUR input is critical. Please visit the website and personally complete this Survey!
- Please immediately share the public webpage with your community, professional, and personal networks – neighborhood associations, churches, schools, professional associations, schools. (As of the week before Christmas, 1200 survey responses were reported as received.)
- Given the compressed timeframe, if you have immediate questions, or a need for more accessible formats – contact Mobile City Officials – your City Councilmember and/or the Mayor’s Office.

In support of this important work, we are excited to announce our kick-off Public Transportation 101 Session in February, with continued in next column... see **iyai+**

iyai+ (continued)

additional sessions from March to August 2026. Topics will include careers and business opportunities in public transportation, transportation funding and decision-making at the national, state, and local levels, a look at recent local transit initiatives, autonomous vehicle innovation, and emerging energy technologies conducted in partnership with various local, regional, and national stakeholders. Drawing on extensive industry experience—including leadership roles within the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) and chief executive positions at public transit systems in Boston, Atlanta, Sacramento, and Rhode Island—these sessions will provide important data alongside practical expertise and actionable insights.

As importantly, we want to hear directly from you about what you are interested in learning more about concerning public transportation and related areas like smart growth -- accessibility, pedestrian amenities, safe streetscapes and routes to important major activity centers like jobs, schools, local community centers and churches, health care, and shopping.

Please contact me directly at: beverly@iyai.org if you would like to receive information about our upcoming Public Transportation 101 “Community Builder Series” – and/or share a specific question, need, or personal experience regarding public transportation.

JOIN US IN 2026 as we work together to create stronger, more sustainable, resilient, and prosperous communities for all!

Sincerely,
Dr. Beverly A. Scott, Founder
Introducing Youth to American Infrastructure, Inc. (“iyai+”)

Shabby Chic Mardi Gras Ball

Celebrating

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8pm - 2am | DONATION \$70

Dress Code Will Be Enforced

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No Refund If Not Dressed Accordingly

Men: Tuxedo Jacket, suit coat, dress shirt (any color), with tie or bowtie. Jeans, any color, but they must be jeans

Ladies: After Five Tops: This is sequin, beaded, metallic, chiffon, glitter Jean: Any color, must be jeans

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Black People Don't Know History

Tommy Green

Facebook and Steppin' Out Blogger
Former Editor: Mobile Beacon

I will continue my critique of Black pastors because Black pastors have changed since the 1970s. In the 1950s and the 1960s, Black pastors were preaching about Freedom & equality for Black people.

Mario Cain Van Peebles (born January 15, 1957) is an American [film director](#) and actor best known for directing *New Jack City* in 1991. On November 11, 2022, I forwarded a video with Mario Van Peebles critiquing 50 Cent, Ice Cube, and Little Wayne, who were supporting #45. Mario said, "When you inherit the values of the people who would buy and sell you and your people what have you become like many, little Black Robots, Little Uncle Toms echoing the slave masters and the colonizers values, right. I think that racism is next to sexism that is around the corner from classism with the destruction of mother nature next in line. If we follow the colonizers, we are all in trouble, Blacks, white, rich or poor; We all will go to hell. Everyone can evolve and grow. I made a lot of mistakes, but I hope that I have grown over the years. Joe Biden made some mistakes too, but he has grown. The Crime Bill that he was involved with was a mistake. He knows that it was a mistake, so he has evolved and grown. He admitted that it was a mistake."

When Mario was critiquing rappers, I didn't consider pastors as lovers of money. In 2025, there are prosperity ministers where Black people are attending, looking for wealth. As though Jesus Christ will send down, blessing in money. I haven't read or heard of Jesus Christ supporting love of money. There are some members who are doing well in those churches, including pastors, doctors, businesses, but the average members are still waiting for blessings in wealth. In May 2015, Wikipedia stated, "Creflo Dollar asked his congregation to buy him a \$65 million jet, which caused scrutiny. In response to his critics, Dollar said in a sermon, "If I want to believe God for a \$65 million plane, you cannot stop me. You can't stop me from dreaming; I'm going to dream until Jesus comes." It followed the loss of a previous Gulfstream aircraft he owned on 24 November 2014, which left the runway during takeoff at [London Biggin Hill Airport](#)."

In the 1950s and the 1960s, Black pastors' North Star was freedom and equality, but today, it is posterity ministry. In the Holy Bible, Proverbs 28: 30 say "A faithful person will be richly blessed, but one eager to get rich will not go unpunished.♦

BLACK LIVES *Still* MATTER



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PORT CITY CHAPTER OF BLACKS IN GOVERNMENT

CONGRATULATIONS NEWLY ELECTED OFFICERS!

HONORING THE LEGACY, ADVANCING THE MISSION

Alabama BUTTERMILK

The Making of a Humble Hero

FROM CENTRAL HIGH'S CLASS OF 1970 TO PUBLISHED AUTHOR — A MOBILE NATIVE SHARES HIS STORY!

A proud graduate of Central High School's last Class of 1970, Alvin "Alabama" Lovett has turned his remarkable life story into an inspiring book — Alabama Buttermilk: The Making of a Humble Hero.

Through decades of community service — including HIV/AIDS awareness and outreach in African American communities throughout America — Alvin has dedicated his life to uplifting others. His heart for people and service to his community helped him assist thousands and become one of the top car salesman with Kia in the history of Southern California — the largest market in the world.

This powerful memoir captures the heart of Mobile, Alabama, and the resilience of a generation that overcame challenges with faith, hard work, and community spirit. Lovett's story reflects the strength of our heritage, the value of education, and the enduring pride of those who came before us.

Every Mobile, Alabama resident should have a copy of Alabama Buttermilk.

GET YOUR COPY TODAY!

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CALL ALABAMA (310) 528-0046



Alvin 'Alabama' Lovett
WWW.ALABAMABUTTERMILK.COM

Celebration of Life!

Leo Alexander

The Staff and Contributors of Steppin' Out
send Prayers and Blessings to the
Family and Friends of our former colleague!

**REST WELL DEAR FRIEND
IN THE ARMS OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR!**

SCHOOL NEWS
SCHOOL NEWS
SCHOOL NEWS
SCHOOL NEWS
SCHOOL NEWS
SCHOOL NEWS
SCHOOL NEWS



GABRIELLA PERKINS, a student at Bishop State and Mary G. Montgomery has received the National Coalition of Certification Centers 1,000,000th (NC3) Certification!



Congratulations to **TIFFANY BUCHANAN** of Vigor High School... named PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR!



Congratulations to the **B.C. RAIN HIGH SCHOOL VARSITY CHORALE** for receiving a superior rating at District Choral Assessment, its highest rating!

ATTENTION YOUNG PARENTS



Are you between the ages of 10-24, pregnant, or parenting? Is your child or children age 0-5? The Mobile County Health Department is here to support you through our Healthy Start Enhanced Program! Join a community dedicated to helping you and your little ones thrive. Our trained Parent Educators are ready to assist you with valuable information, resources, and tools designed to help your children learn, grow, and develop.

PERSONAL VISITS: Our professionals provide one-on-one support right in your home, offering parenting guidance tailored to your family's needs.

MONTHLY GROUP CONNECT MEETINGS: Join us for fun-filled gatherings where you can connect with other parents, hear from guest speakers, participate in engaging activities, and enjoy refreshments—all while building a supportive community around you!

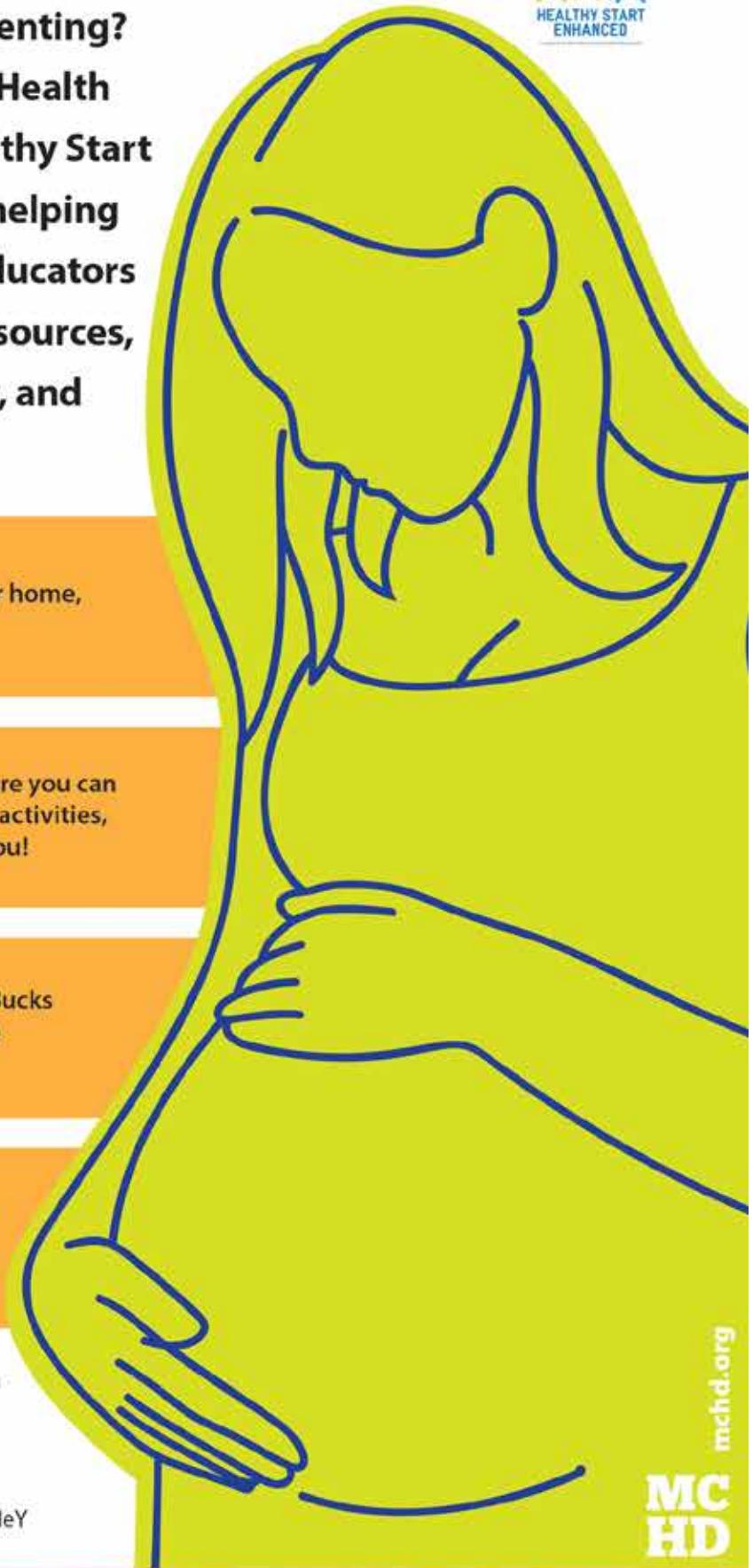
EARN BABY BUCKS: The more you participate in our program, the more Baby Bucks you can earn! Use these bucks in our Baby Store to purchase essential items like diapers, wipes, baby clothes, toys, car seats, strollers, and so much more!

FATHERHOOD COMPONENT: A network for fathers to feel supported and make connections with other fathers while providing resources to them to help support their families. Don't miss out on this opportunity to enhance your parenting journey while connecting with others who understand your experiences.



For more information about the Healthy Start Enhanced Program or to get involved, don't hesitate to get in touch with us at healthystart@mchd.org or call 251-433-8715.

Ready to take the next step? Make a referral today by visiting: <https://redcap.mchd.org/surveys/?s=9H7WR4NX98MAP7F7&dag=VHeY>



HEALTHY START ENHANCED offers services and support for mothers, children and their families before, during and after pregnancy.

Hats Off

HAPPY Birthday



**Sister Andetta
E.L. Thomas**

**Celebrating
94 BLESSED YEARS!**

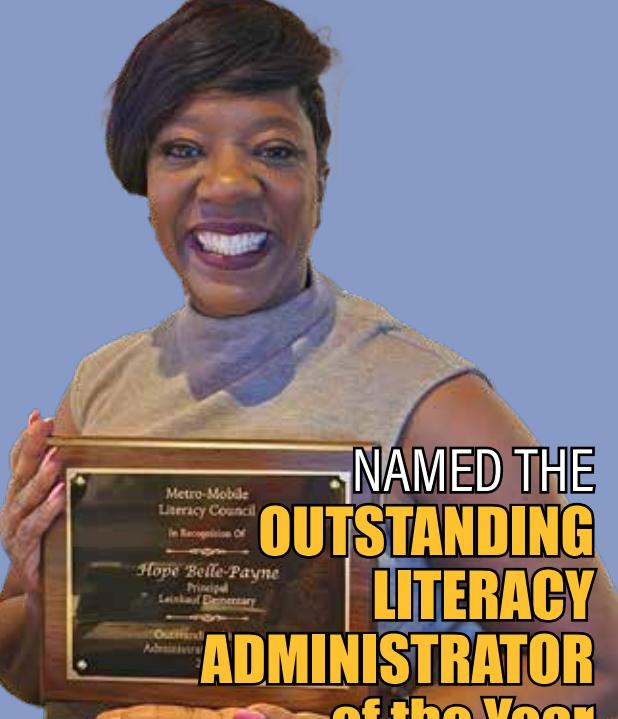
Congratulations!



Dr. Helen Campbell

**RECEIVED THE
Robert and Mary Walker
Community Advocacy
and Service Award**

Congratulations!



Hope Belle-Payne

**NAMED THE
OUTSTANDING LITERACY
ADMINISTRATOR of the Year
METRO-MOBILE LITERACY COUNCILS**

Congratulations!



**Representative
Barbara Drummond**

**ELECTED
CHAIRPERSON
ALABAMA WOMEN'S COMMISSION**

Congratulations!



Dr. Myrtle Campbell

**SELECTED
GARY ALUMNI HONORS
EDUCATION AWARD**

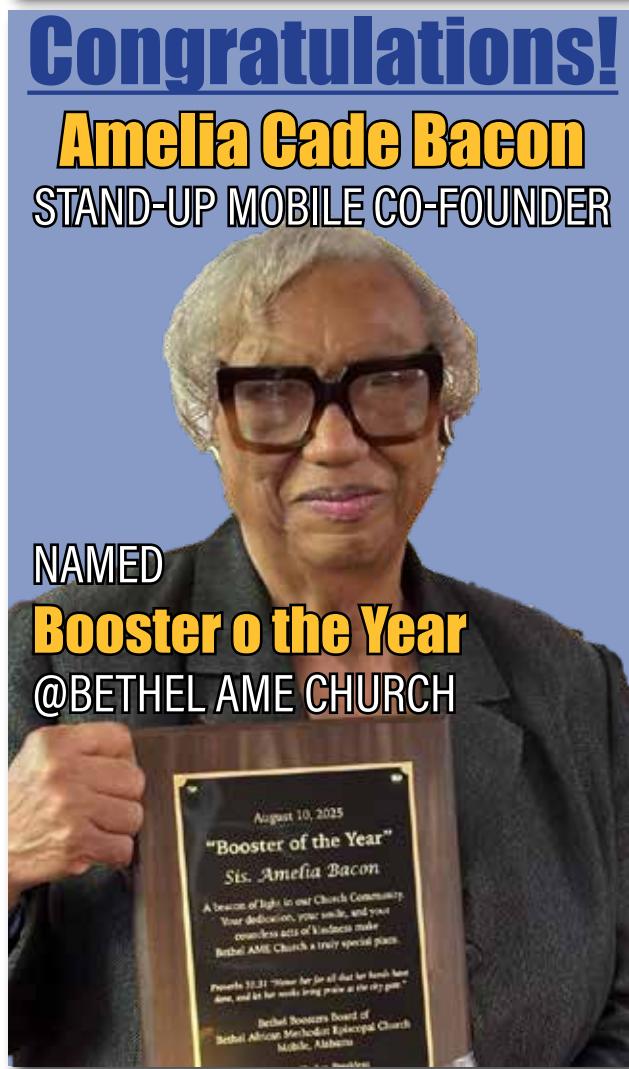
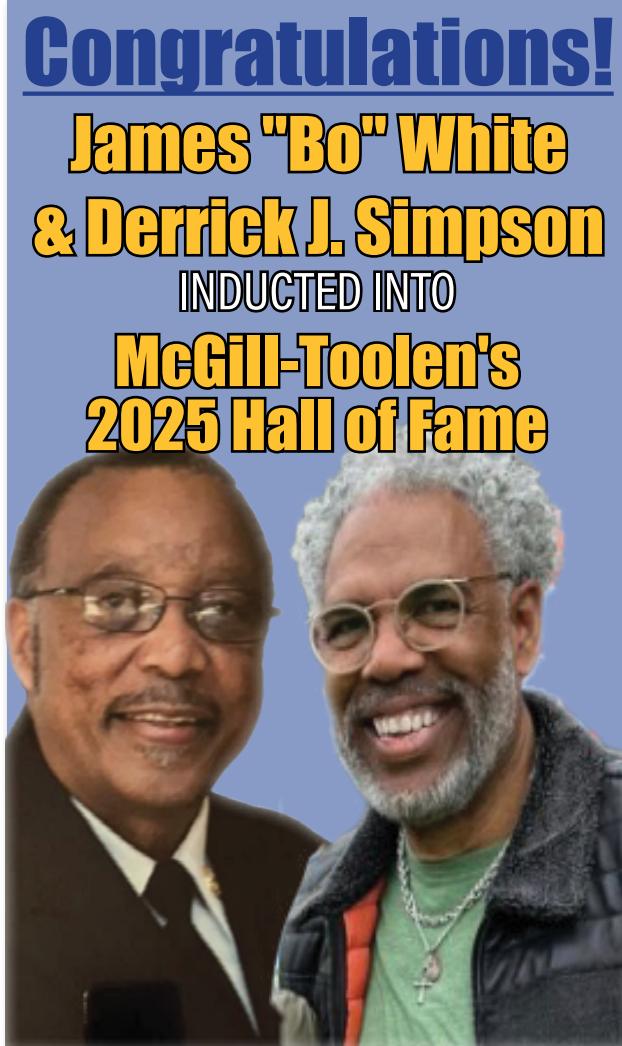
HAPPY Birthday



Mother Millie Fritz

**Celebrating
91 BLESSED YEARS!**

Hats Off





Locs of Soul

Tanene Jackson

TRICHOLOGIST;

Owner/Operator of Locs of Soul, LLC

Minimizing Hair Loss During Cancer

This past September marked National Hair Loss month, followed by October with Breast Cancer Awareness month. Both months consist of physical and emotional awareness due to altered states in appearance. When a person loses their hair, it starts to affect their self-esteem, confidence, personality, social settings, as well as socioeconomics. However, treatments for alopecia (hair loss) differ based on the type of alopecia that is experienced. Scalp hypothermia or scalp cooling, is a non-invasive treatment issued during chemotherapy to lessen the amount of hair loss or hair thinning that may occur. Scalp cooling (or scalp hypothermia) refers to lowering the temperature of the scalp with a scalp cooling device. Cold caps have been in use in Europe since the 1970s, initially as manual chilling devices. It was introduced in 1979 but not until 1980, a patent was created in the U.S., becoming FDA approved in early 2000's. Since then, "the caps have been consistently used in Oncology for over 25 years to reduce chemotherapy-induced hair loss."

There are two main types of scalp cooling devices work in different ways... Automated and Manual. Before you decide to use one, understand the differences.

1. AUTOMATED SCALP COOLING (cold caps)

Cooling caps (or cold caps) are automated scalp cooling systems regulated by the FDA. They work by connecting a special cap to an automated device that circulates a liquid or gel cooled to a specific temperature. Automated cold caps are only approved for chemo-induced hair loss related to solid tumor cancers, not blood cancers. There are currently three automated scalp cooling systems that are FDA-approved for preventing chemo-induced hair loss (alopecia).

- DigniCap
- Paxman
- Amma

According to the American Cancer Society, people who are NOT recommended for scalp cooling:

- Have a central nervous system cancer
- Are getting chemo to prepare for a bone marrow (stem cell) transplant
- Had, or will have, radiation therapy to the skull
- Have leukemia, lymphoma, or multiple myeloma. (These cancers travel through the blood and lymph system, so we don't want to reduce the amount of chemo going to the head and scalp because of the possibility of cancer cells in these areas.)
- Have a cold-agglutinin disease, cryoglobulinemia, or post-traumatic cold dystrophy (due to the risk of toxicity)

Scalp cooling might not be as effective for people with:

- Severe liver problems, because scalp cooling affects how long a medication stays in your system.

2. MANUAL SCALP COOLING (FROZEN GEL CAPS)

Frozen gel caps are manual scalp cooling devices not regulated by the FDA. This type of device doesn't use an automated cooling system. Instead, it is manually cooled in a freezer or with dry ice. The temperature for frozen gel caps must be much lower compared to automated cold cap systems. This is because the cap starts to warm as soon as you put it on your head. You also need to switch to a new frozen cap every 30 minutes.

Continued in next column... **see HAIR LOSS**



Connect to Success!

Nathaniel Patterson

Writes about his insights and observations to create conversations, empowerment and solutions. Named "Top 200 Voices in Leadership" by LeadersHum in 2022 & 2023, Former Vice-Chair of Mobile Chamber and President, Dearborn YMCA. CONNECT on LinkedIn -or- (727) 485.3980

MORE UNION REPRESENTATION IS NEEDED IN MOBILE, AL

Over the years corporate America has sought loyalty from their employees by calling them family. It is often said that you spend more time with your associates on the job than your family. There are many posts on social media illustrating how quickly companies will replace you upon death, sickness or for their bonuses. The truth is that businesses are developed for profit and their leadership is under heavy pressure to acquire or exceed projected profits, no matter what. Too many leaders are gravitating away from the trending servant leadership to being a BOSS. They are implementing cultures solely focused on production and favored relationships. Which has resulted in business cultures that demand obedience, births toxic relationships, pay disparities and too many favored relationships.

It is time to reconsider Unions. There is some negativity associated with Unions and it is deserved based on some past behavior bribes, excessive leadership pay and seniority issues. Yet Unions were responsible for many services that today we take for granted: 8-hour workday, 40-hour work week, minimum wage, overtime and holiday pay, workplace safety, unemployment insurance, social security, to name a few. Yet in today's environment workers need better representation than the company public relations spills. There is too much pay disparity, unsafe working conditions, a lack of fairness with leadership, management with workers, increasing harassment and poor management. Be mindful when a Union campaign is initiated companies invest in a negative campaign to suppress the initiative. Some companies have gone so far to pay influential employees to sway co-workers and/or rig the vote for unions.

Alabama is a pro-business state. Politicians from the Governor down have publicly stated there is no need for Unions. These are the same politicians that have Alabama ranked near the bottom in many quality-of-life polls for years. In my experience businesses do not police or self-correct themselves until their negativity is exposed. In Mobile (AL) County there are several notable entities that demean employees, create unsafe environments, practice pay disparities and discrimination. They need to be checked. It is time for the workers to look out for their own careers and families and stop believing the company spills.

As Always Let's Be Greater! ♣

HAIR LOSS (CONTINUED)

As per The American Cancer Society, "as of July 15, 2025, Medicare has proposed including reimbursement for automated scalp cooling in the 2026 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule (MPFS). If finalized, the change would take effect on January 1, 2026, and establish specific payment rates for the service. Manual cold caps are not regulated or FDA-approved, so they may or may not be covered by insurance. Medicare does not cover manual cold caps."

There are resources that can potentially financially assist with such treatment:

- Susan B. Komen Foundation

[HairToStay](#) is a nonprofit organization that helps low-income families pay for scalp cooling treatment.

[The Rapunzel Project](#) is a nonprofit organization that provides information on what resources are available.

To learn more about cryo-caps (cool caps), speak with your doctor or oncology specialist for more information. You can also contact the American Cancer Society and Susan G. Komen Foundation. ♣



BLAQUE HISTORY 24/7-365

Elicia "E J" Jaxon



A HOSPITAL BUILT FROM HOPE

The Untold Story of TABORIAN HOSPITAL in Mound Bayou

MOUND BAYOU, MISSISSIPPI — 1942

In the heart of the Delta, where cotton fields stretched for miles and Jim Crow's shadow loomed long, the people of Mound Bayou dared to build something extraordinary: their own hospital. Not a clinic, not a small wing tucked away from white patients—but a full-scale hospital, built, funded, and staffed entirely by Black hands.

It was called Taborian Hospital. The proud creation of the Knights and Daughters of Tabor, a Black fraternal organization that believed in self-determination when the world around them did not. Every brick, every bed, every surgical tool came from their own labor and sacrifice. No government grants. No white benefactors. Just faith, unity, and the conviction that their community deserved care with dignity.

Inside its walls were four operating rooms, a maternity ward, and 36 beds—all alive with purpose. The doctors were Black. The nurses were Black. The janitors, the cooks, the administrators—all Black men and women serving their own people with skill and pride. More than 1,200 surgeries were performed there each year, in an era when many Southern hospitals would not admit a Black patient unless death was already at the door.

For just two dollars a year, a family could receive quality medical care—care that was not charity, not pity, but a right. Taborian Hospital became a sanctuary, a beacon of what could be achieved when a community refused to accept exclusion as destiny. Mound Bayou was more than a town; it was a vision made real—a self-sufficient Black community that stood tall in the face of oppression. And, Taborian Hospital was its beating heart.

Today, its story is missing from most history books. But its legacy endures in the whispers of those who remember, and in the spirit of every community that still dares to build for itself. Taborian Hospital was not just a building. It was a declaration: We can heal ourselves. We can build for ourselves. We are enough.✿



SPiRiTUAL CONNECTIONS

Elder Jerome Dean, Pastor

PEACE & GOODWILL PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH

- 2027 TUCKER STREET • MOBILE, ALABAMA • 36617 -

The Pastor I'm interviewing here is my friend of 40 years. We started as freshman classmates in 1984 and later as lifelong friends with a common bond of Kingdom building and Evangelizing in our youth. He's a Stewart of GOD's Word, his congregants, who allows the Holy Spirit to lead him always. He is the Pastor of Peace & Goodwill Primitive Baptist Church in the Toulminville Community. He is Elder Jerome Dean. Hey Pastor, I've been looking forward to this interview. Let's do this!!

STEPPIN' OUT: Can you share the story of how your calling into ministry first came about, and the vision that God placed on your heart through it?

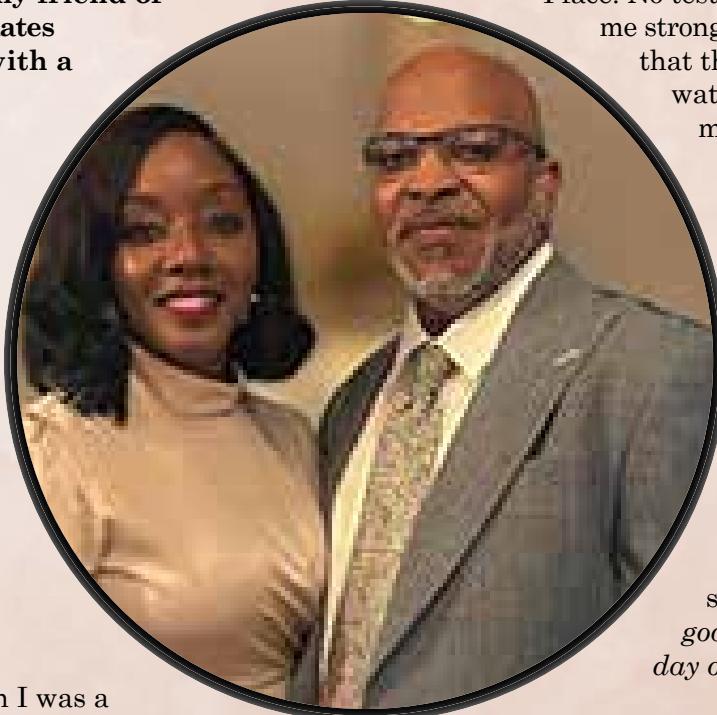
DEAN: The calling on my life began when I was a teenager, but I didn't fully acknowledge it until I was 20. During a mid-week service at my home church, El Bethel, Pastor Yates preached on Jonah, "A Mighty Tempest," and the Holy Ghost moved powerfully through me. That night, I told him and the congregation that the Lord had called me to preach. Pastor Yates instructed me to be ready by Sunday morning. Four days later, on the 4th Sunday of May 1990, I preached my first sermon, stepping into the ministry God had prepared for me.

STEPPIN' OUT: You came from humble beginnings. As a teen, I remember you working hard after school at the neighborhood grocery store. Your exceptional service had customers asking for you. In many ways, God was already grooming and preparing you for the purpose He had planned.

DEAN: The Lord has been dealing with me for a long time. In the words of the song, All my life not only has the Lord been faithful but he has been good to not only me but my family. The way I was reared taught me to be humble and respectful to all people, regardless of your social status, political status, financial status but because of who you are as an individual. Hence, the Lord has no respect of person so why should we.

STEPPIN' OUT: Since answering your call to ministry, how has your life been transformed through challenges, like losing your parents and brother David, and blessings, such as the birth of your children and witnessing friends give their lives to Christ?

DEAN: The ministry has taught me to look beyond my struggles and see that God is greater than any problem, situation, or circumstance



I face. No test, no testimony. When I am weak, He makes me strong. Faith will be tested, yet the Word promises that through fire, I won't be burned, and through waters, I won't drown. Humanly, I miss my mother—after all, I'm a Momma's boy—my father, and David. But I thank God for the Comforter, who strengthens, guides, and lives within me. Praise God always.

STEPPIN' OUT: Do you have a favorite passage of Scripture that continues to speak to your heart? If so, why does it hold such personal meaning for you?

DEAN: Many Scriptures are dear to my heart, so it's hard to choose just one. But at this moment, the verse speaking to my spirit is Philippians 1:6: *He who began a good work in you will continue it until the day of Jesus Christ.*

STEPPIN' OUT: When, where, and how did your calling to Pastor Peace and Goodwill Primitive Baptist Church take root and what was the driving passion behind your start there?

DEAN: The organizing Pastor of Peace & Goodwill became ill and, after several ministers served over a few years, he asked Pastor Yates to assist. I began helping in 1995, and this past April we gratefully celebrated 30 years of faithful service together to the church.

STEPPIN' OUT: How do you and Elect-Lady Renee keep it balanced with work, school, church and family fun time with all your children, especially the two youngest ones because You two make it look easy.

Dean: One Word... PRAYER!

STEPPIN' OUT: There is something powerful in the way you connect with the elderly. Even as kids, we knew you were an "Old Soul." We continue to respect your humility. When the day comes with God, how would you like to be remembered?

DEAN: May the work I've done speak for me. My prayer is that someone found hope, healing, or salvation through the Word God entrusted to me—whether a life was spared, a heart was restored, or a soul was led to Christ. If the Gospel I preach brings anyone closer to God, then my living is not in vain. From the moment He called me, it has never been about Jerome, but about God's glory alone. ♫♪♫

SPiRiTUAL CONNECTIONS

Pastor Jeffrey L. Mackie

AMITY MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

- 2451 SAINT STEPHENS ROAD • MOBILE, ALABAMA • 36610 -

I met this preacher in October of 1994 and at that time he was the associate minister of the Church he was born and raised in which he now Pastors; Amity Missionary Baptist Church. He's an old, blessed soul adored by his two grandmothers who were blessed to reach over 100 years of age. He's my friend of over 30 years, a dynamic Gospel Preacher, Retired Educator, Mentor to many. He is Pastor Jeffery L. Mackie.

Thank you so much for allowing me this time to interview you. Let's get started.

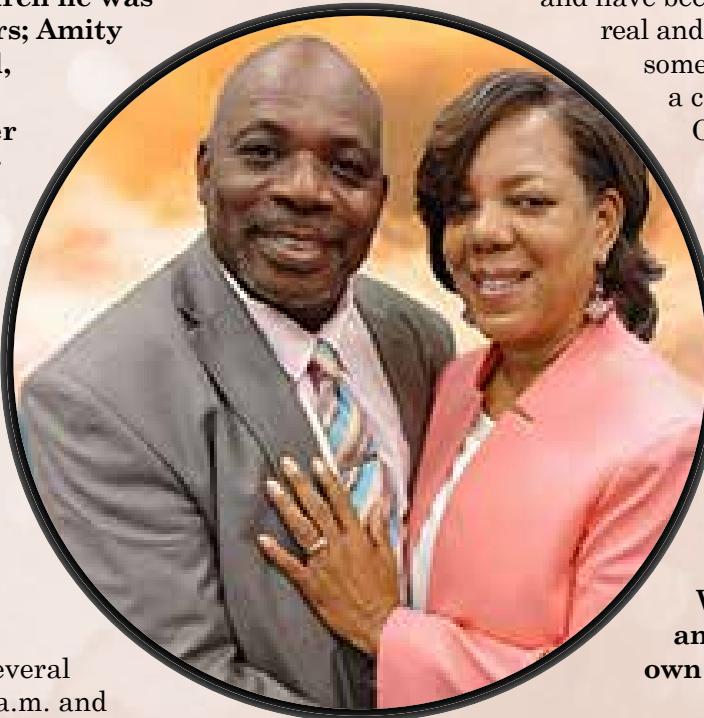
STEPPIN' OUT: When did your calling into ministry first came about and do you have a favorite passage of Scripture that continues to speak to your heart and how does it hold such personal meaning for you?

MACKIE: I received my call in 1989. For several nights, the Lord awakened me at exactly 3 a.m. and told me to read His Word. Each morning afterward, the preacher on the radio taught from the very same scripture I had read. By the third night, I knew this was no coincidence. I prayed, "Lord, if You want me to preach, show me a sign." The next day, driving home from Atlanta, I saw a woman stranded on the shoulder of I-85. I stopped to help and took her to a service station. Before leaving, she looked directly at me and said, "You know, things happen for a reason." I didn't understand it then. Later on that same trip, I dozed off, drifted into a ravine, and my car stopped inches from a tree. In that still moment, the Lord spoke clearly: "I'm in full control." That's when I knew my calling was real.

STEPPIN' OUT: How has answering your call to ministry transformed your life, both through challenges and blessings? And as President of the Minister Alliance of Prichard and Vicinity, what key goals have you set for the community in 2026?

MACKIE: The late Pastor Horace L. Young, Sr. encouraged me to attend seminary, and through his recommendation I completed my training at Birmingham Seminary. He brought me to his weekly Minister's Conference, where I listened, learned, and was shaped by seasoned pastors who taught me not only what to do, but what not to do. Pastor Young was more than my pastor — he was my mentor and my friend. He pushed me to grow, to read, and to study the Word, and I'm grateful I obeyed. Look at God! Thirty-six years later, I now serve as President of the Minister Conference of Prichard and Vicinity. Our goal is to uplift the community by strengthening faith, increasing spiritual and educational awareness, and putting belief into action.

STEPPIN' OUT: Can you tell us a little bit about your childhood, being mentored by the late Pastor Horace Young, Sr., and what molded you into the seasoned Man of GOD you are now?



MACKIE: I came to Amity Missionary Baptist Church as a baby and have been here ever since. At 14, wondered if God was real and prayed, asking Him to show me. The first time something miraculous happened, I thought it was a coincidence. When it happened again, I knew God is real. Sitting under Rev. Young's leadership, hearing the Word of God, strengthened my faith and encouraged me to trust Him. That guidance and spiritual foundation helped me grow into the man I am today, serving faithfully in the ministry and striving to honor God in all I do.

STEPPIN' OUT: As a retired educator and licensed Master Brick Mason, I've noticed that during summers and holiday breaks, your students gain hands-on training, later becoming foremen, business owners, and more. Was this the same practical instruction and mentorship you received during your own training in the field?

MACKIE: I began working with my father, a brick mason, at age 11. In the 11th grade, I took brick masonry classes at T.L. Faulkner & Murphy High School. After high school, I attended Carver State Community College and earned my Brick Masonry Certificate. Combining what I learned from my father and my teachers, I became the contractor I am today. I worked with my father in Atlanta to gain deeper experience before returning to Mobile to start Mackie Construction. Later, the Lord led me to accept a teaching position at Faulkner, where I taught for 24 years. During that time, I trained many young men and women in masonry. Some became contractors, some worked for others, and some started their own businesses. Most importantly, I provided a spiritual and practical foundation, equipping them to serve God through their craft.

STEPPIN' OUT: Since your retirement from teaching, You and your wife Lady Sarah are doing more Evangelizing and Kingdom Building at Amity Missionary Baptist Church and I must say that the two of you are beautiful in your footwork. Tell us what more we can look forward to in the coming year of 2026.

MACKIE: The main thing is encouraging the people to come back to God. Since the pandemic there has been a lot of falling away. We plan to do more outreach ministry going out to the highways and byways compelling them to come. Following God lead.

STEPPIN' OUT: We all will face that inevitable appointment from GOD. In your own words, how would you like to be remembered?

MACKIE: My family, especially my wife, knows I move only when led by the Lord. If He says go, I go; if He says stay, I remain. I live by trusting God and putting Him first in every area of life. This is how I stay in His will, guiding my family faithfully. ♣♣♣



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- Helps coaches and trainers provide the info to keep you safe.
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3. Complete before the first official practice or competition.

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- For additional information
Felicia W. Amos, New Born Screening Coordinator
-  Email: Famos@scdmobile.org
-  Phone: 251-432-0301 Ext. 105

SCDA-MC is your community partner in protecting athletes and building awareness

Reginald Crenshaw A LIFETIME OF SERVICE

In 47 years and four months, to be exact, Dr. Reginald Crenshaw has seen a lot of things take place during his time at Bishop State Community College as a research assistant and director of Title III funds, where he spent the majority of his time and managed an approximately \$5 million grant covering all areas of the college from professional development and enrollment.

Coupled with serving his third term with the Mobile County School Board, and the Blount High and Morehouse graduate, who also has a PhD from Southern Mississippi, Crenshaw is well-tuned when it comes to education — not to mention longevity when it comes to service.

"The president (Olivier Charles) tried to convince me to stay 50, but I was ready to go," said Crenshaw, who retired from Bishop in February. "Technology had caught up with me, and I didn't want that hassle. The school was good to me; I met a lot of nice people, and I miss them. I've seen the school grow immensely, and I had the pleasure of working under every new president from Dr. Bishop to Mr. Charles.

"That was a great experience for me. I remember when he came into my office and asked me, 'You tell me what's wrong with Bishop since you've been here the longest'. We talked for about two hours, and he asked me to be acting Dean of Students. I served for about a year and a half until he was able to get somebody, and we were able to do some good things."

Crenshaw said among the bad times was navigating through irregularities with financial aid and talk of merging Bishop with another community college. "We went through times where we were getting a president every two years or every three years," he said. "We had issues with financial aid to the point where the federal government threatened to pull it from us. We were able to get it straightened out; we had some people arrested but we managed to work through that. If they had pulled financial aid from Bishop State, a whole lot of our students would've been in trouble; we would've lost our accreditation. But the chancellor got it back and we were back on track again."

It was indeed a good thing accreditation was not lost, because 75 percent of Bishop State's students were from Maysville, Prichard, and other communities in Mobile. Not only that, chances of getting technical education would have gone down the drain. Now, however, with an even stronger emphasis on technology, Crenshaw said the school is now a major player.

"The college has gone through major changes with personnel and with facilities," he said. "We've come a long way with facility upgrades. We got Title III money to upgrade facilities and I had a hand into making those recommendations to the president and making sure the money was there for that."

Add to that Crenshaw's tenure with the Mobile County School Board, which turned out to be even more of an advantage when it came to his position at Bishop State. "At that time, there was a move to change out the administration at Bishop State and



I know my name came up because I was part of the old administration," he said. "Word got back to me saying, 'I don't think the chancellor's going to bother you because you're sitting on a post at the largest school system in the state. So they left me alone.

"I was elected to the School Board when Barack Obama was president. I had the honor of serving with Levon Manzie. We made a lot of decisions, so it was important for us to stick together. One of the great things we did was get that bond issue for improvement of schools. The schools in my district and his district were horrible, and we were able to convince the board to give us \$60-70 million. We didn't advertise it; we didn't beat our chests. We were able to get improvements for Vigor, the new Blount under Ms. Hazel Fournier, and new schools at Ella Grant. We were able to get major upgrades in the schools in our districts."

Crenshaw also reflected on getting on campus football stadiums at Vigor as well at other schools, thanks to money that readily became available for the projects. He said the next challenge will be standardized tests. "A lot of my schools are in the inner-city, and reading and math is a weakness," he said. "There are major challenges in my district and Ms. (Sherry) McDade's district, but we've made a lot of progress."

Just because Crenshaw has retired from Bishop doesn't mean he's sitting idle, and with his background, he said standardized tests don't always show a true measure of a student's talent. "I've still been involved with the School Board, as well as the Lions Club and my fraternity (Alpha Phi Alpha)," he said. "I come to schools when they ask me, but I'll simply show up and stick my head in the classrooms. With standardized testing, it doesn't show a person's intelligence. When I was in high school, I made 13 on the ACT, and here I am with a PhD."

"Going to Morehouse was a good thing for me. I was able to go there with Edwin Moses (Olympic champion 400-meter hurdler), Spike Lee, and Dr. King's son (Martin III). I grew up in a single parent home; my mother sent me food stamps, and while being at Morehouse, I told myself I would use that as a stepping stone, and the relationships I gained from Morehouse was a great experience. I'm really enjoying my lifestyle, and God has helped me come from a single-parent household to being over the largest school system in the state of Alabama. God has been good to me. Now that Crenshaw has retired from Bishop State, he plans to devote even more time to his School Board district. "I plan to spend more time with the schools in my district, and looking at what needs each school has," he said. "I'll especially be involved with the Blount High School National Alumni Association. We've given ten \$1000 scholarships to Blount High graduates for the last 13 years. I'm also going to help with community activities... that's in my blood. I'll run for one more school term in 2026; I'm gearing up for the campaign right now."♦

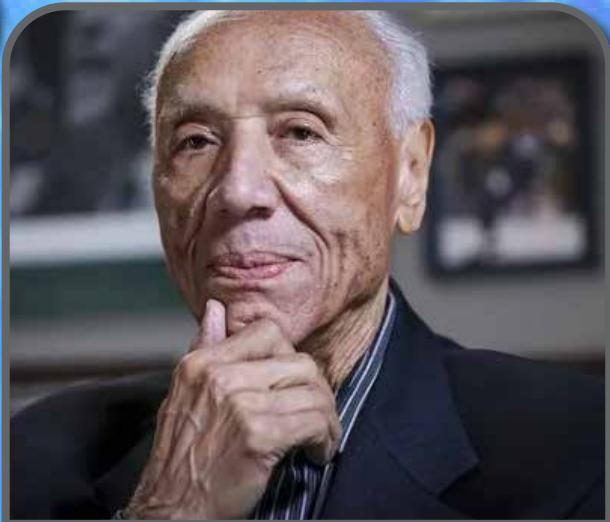
PASSINGS



D'Angelo • 51
SINGER/SONGWRITER
Lady • Brown Sugar
PANCREATIC CANCER



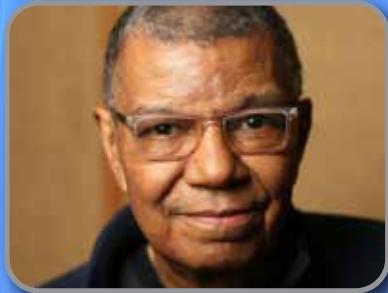
Diane Keaton • 79
ACTRESS
Annie Hall • The Godfather
BACTERIAL PNEUMONIA



Lenny Wilkins • 88
NBA PLAYER/COACH
Cleveland Cavaliers
Seattle Supersonics



Dick Cheney • 84
POLITICIAN
Vice President (2001-09)
PNEUMONIA/HEART DISEASE



Jack DeJohnette • 83
JAZZ MUSICIAN
Miles Davis Quintet
CONGESTIVE HEART FAILURE



Cleto Escobedo III • 59
MUSICIAN/BAND LEADER
Jimmy Kimmel Live!
CARDIOGENIC SHOCK



Kenny Easley • 66
NFL PLAYER
Seattle Seahawks



George Hardy • 100
PILOT/OFFICER
Tuskegee Airmen



Marshawn Kneeland • 24
NFL PLAYER
Dallas Cowboys
SUICIDE BY GUNSHOT



Diane Ladd • 89
ACTRESS
Rambling Rose
IDIOPATHIC PULMONARY FIBROSIS



June Lockhart • 100
ACTRESS
Lassie • Lost In Space
Petticoat Junction



Woodrow Lowe • 71
NFL PLAYER
Chargers
University of Alabama



Bill Ivey • 81
FOLKLORIST • AUTHOR
CHAIRMAN
National Endowment of the Arts



Michael Ray Richardson • 70
NBA PLAYER
Knicks • Nets • Warriors

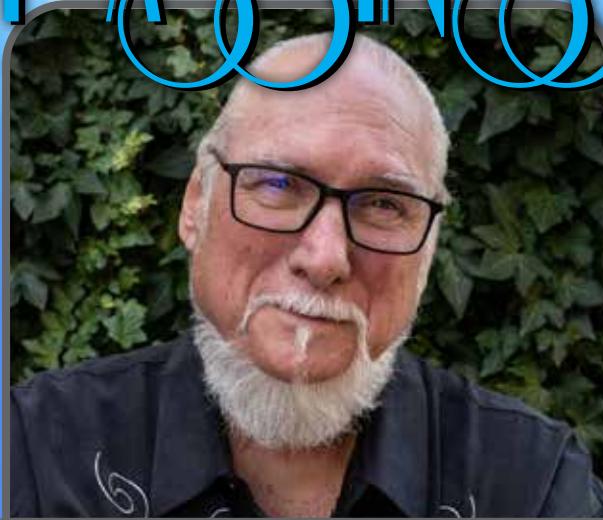


Leslie Wilson
SINGER
New Birth • L.T.D.

PASSINGS



Ann Bedsole, 95
POLITICIAN
Alabama Senate
PHILANTHROPIST



Steve Cropper, 84
GUITARIST
Booker T. & The M.G.'s
SONGWRITER
In The Midnight Hour
Sittin' on the Dock of the Bay



Viola Fletcher, 111
TULSA RACE MASSACRE SURVIVOR



Brigitte Bardot • 91
FRENCH ACTRESS
Animal Rights Activist



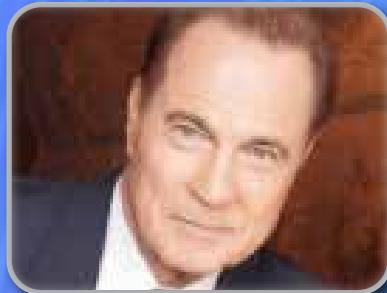
H.Rap Brown • 82
CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVIST



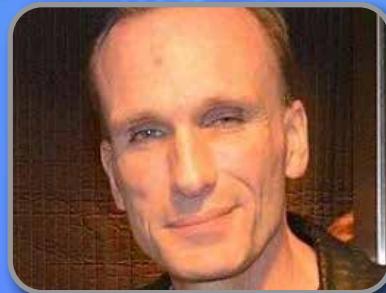
Carl Carlton • 73
SINGER
Everlasting Love
She's A Bad Mama Jama



Jimmy Cliff • 81
JAMAICAN SINGER
SONGWRITER/ACTOR
PNEUMONIA



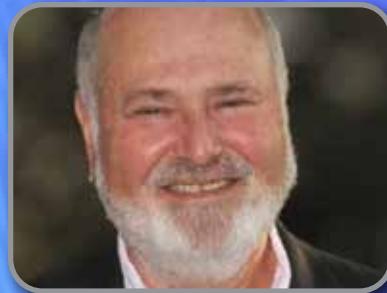
Gil Gerard • 82
ACTOR
*Buck Rodgers in
the 25th Century*
CANCER



Peter Greene • 60
ACTOR
Pulp Fiction



James Ransome • 46
ACTOR
The Wire
SUICIDE BY HANGING



Rob Reiner • 78
ACTOR
All in the Family
DIRECTOR
When Harry Met Sally
STABBED



Tatiana Schlossberg • 35
JOURNALIST
ACUTE MYELOID LEUKEMIA



Richard Smallwood • 77
GOSPEL SINGER
Total Praise
KIDNEY FAILURE



Isiah Whitlock Jr. • 71
ACTOR
The Wire



Fuzzy Zoeller • 74
GOLFER
Masters
U.S. OPEN CHAMPION



Moments in Time

Paulette Horton

AUTHOR... The Avenue

Unexplained Mystery

Did Booker T. Washington really make speeches in New Haven, CT. Washington was on vacation from September 18, 1915 through October 01, 1915 in Mobile, AL along the Gulf Coast.

On October 25, 1915 he was to deliver a speech at Woolsey Hall in New Haven, Connecticut in front of over 2,500 people. It is written that he was to be the house guest of John Christopher Schwab, the Yale librarian and that he was driven to Woolsey Hall, which was a short distance away.

Did Booker T. Washington really make a speech that night at Woolsey Hall and then another speech that same night at Varick African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church? I have a copy of this speech; however, was it delivered at Woolsey Hall? What proof do we have that this speech was delivered?

Where are the photographs of this major event? Where are the newspapers showing Washington coming to town? Where was he for a week after he arrived in New Haven? Who saw him?

And more importantly, why was he admitted to Rockefeller hospital on November 01, 1915? How could doctors say Washington was totally worn out after he finished vacationing in Mobile?♦



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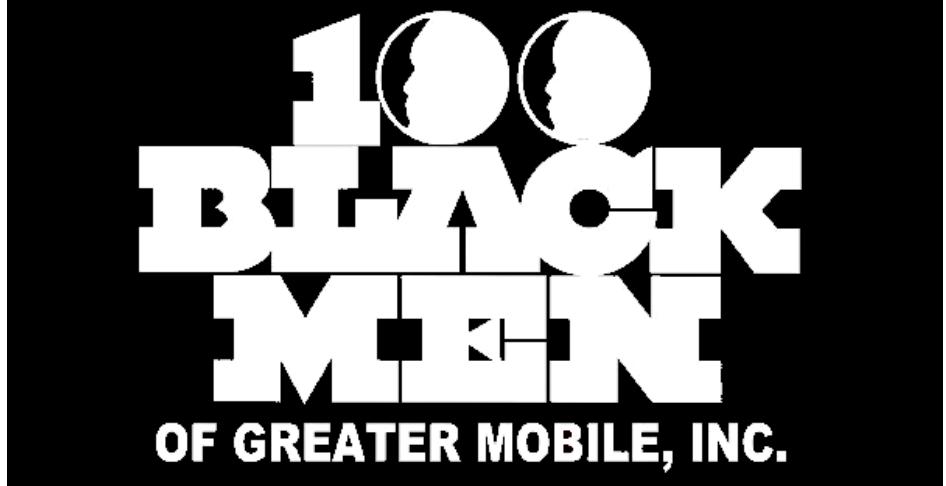


THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

Arthur L. Mack

FREELANCE WRITER

steppinoutnews@aol.com



PROJECT MENTOR MALE SUMMIT

Scores of young men from several high schools and middle schools in Mobile County came out for the annual Project MENTor Male Summit, sponsored by 100 Black Men of Mobile held, at Bishop State on November 19. The theme of this year's event was 'Getting in the Game. Schools involved in this year's summit were Mobile County Training School, Alba Middle School, Vigor, Theodore, Chickasaw, Alma Bryant, LeFlore, and Murphy.

Katrina Kinn, project mentor and grant manager for 100 Black Men of Mobile, said more than 300 young men from different schools were in attendance, and said the event was designed to empower young men by using community leaders, business professionals, educators, etc., who can surround these young men and provide them the tools needed for success. "We've been working with our project mentor initiative in our third year now," she said. "The grant is for our students in the county because there was a lack of resources being sent to our county schools for a group of males to be reached. We applied for this grant, which is through the American Rescue Plan. We applied through this grant through the county commission."

Kinn said the grant was written based on the needs of the young men serviced in county schools who may not be getting all the mentoring services needed. A special curriculum, called the DREAM Curriculum, is used to help inspire participants to pursue their dreams. "In that curriculum, we focus on financial literacy, as well as being your best self," she said. "We're also looking at character development, and all the skills a young man needs to grow and develop into a man. We're giving them a checklist for every year they're in high school; things they should be focusing on like how to apply for a job, interviewing skills, resume tips, or all of the above. "It's important that we follow that curriculum with them as we go into the schools with them. We're in schools weekly."

Kinn said the first year was strictly to find out what the needs were and what the students wanted as far as getting involved in the program itself. "We were kind of getting our feet wet and just getting to know the schools and the students in the schools and doing some interest inventory with them," she said. "The first year was kind of a soft year, trying to get a lay of the land and survey where our greatest needs were and what they wanted. We wanted to hear from students, and after various interest inventories, we knew they wanted something on how to feel better about themselves. By the time we got into year two, we were ready with a more direct and targeted program to suit their needs."♦

Mardi Gras

2026 PARADE SCHEDULE

JANUARY

17 SATURDAY..Krewe de la Dauphine.....1:00 pmDaup. Isle
24 SATURDAY.Dauphin Island People's Parade.....1:00 pmDaup. Isle
30 FRIDAY.....Conde Cavaliers.....6:30 pmRte A
31 SATURDAY..Bayport Parading Society2:00 pmRte A
 Mystic DJ Riders2:00 pmRte A
 Order of Rolling River.....2:00 pmDIP
 Pharaohs Mystic Society Parade.....6:30 pmRte A
 Conde Explorers7:00 pmRte A

FEBRUARY

01 SUNDAY.....Massacre Island Secret Society6:30 pmDaup. Isle
05 THURSDAY.Order of the Polka Dots Parade.....6:30 pmRte A
06 FRIDAYOrder of the Inca Parade6:30 pmRte A
 Apollo's Mystic Ladies Parade.....6:45 pmDaphne
07 SATURDAY.Mobile Mystics Parade1:00 pmRte A
 Mobile Mystical Revelers1:00 pmRte A
 Mobile Mystical Friends1:00 pmRte A
 Maids of Mirth Parade6:30 pmRte G
 Knights of Ecor Rouge Parade6:30 pmFairhope
 Order of Butterfly Maidens Parade.6:30 pmRte A
 Krewe of Marry Mates Parade.....6:30 pmRte A
08 SUNDAY....Neptune's Daughter Parade.....6:30 pmRte A
 Order of Isis.....7:00 pmRte A
09 MONDAY....Order of Venus.....6:30 pmRte A
 Miracle On the Bay.....6:30 pmRte A
 Order of Many Faces.....6:30 pmRte A
10 TUESDAYOrder of LaShe's Parade.....6:30 pmRte A
 Order of Olympia6:30 pmRte A
12 THURSDAY .Mystic Stripers Parade6:30 pmRte A
13 FRIDAYCrewe of Columbus Parade6:30 pmRte A
 Krewe de Secondline6:30 pmRte A
 Maids of Jubilee Parade6:45 pmFairhope
14 SATURDAY..Foley Parade11:00 amFoley
 Krewe of Goats12:00 pmPrichard
 Pritchard Carnival Association12:00 pmPrichard
 Krewe of Sparta12:00 pmSaraland
 MCA Floral Parade12:00 pmRte A
 Knights of Mobile Parade12:00 pmRte A
 Mobile Mystical Ladies Parade12:00 pmRte A
 Order of Angels Parade.....12:00 pmRte A

FEBRUARY (continued)

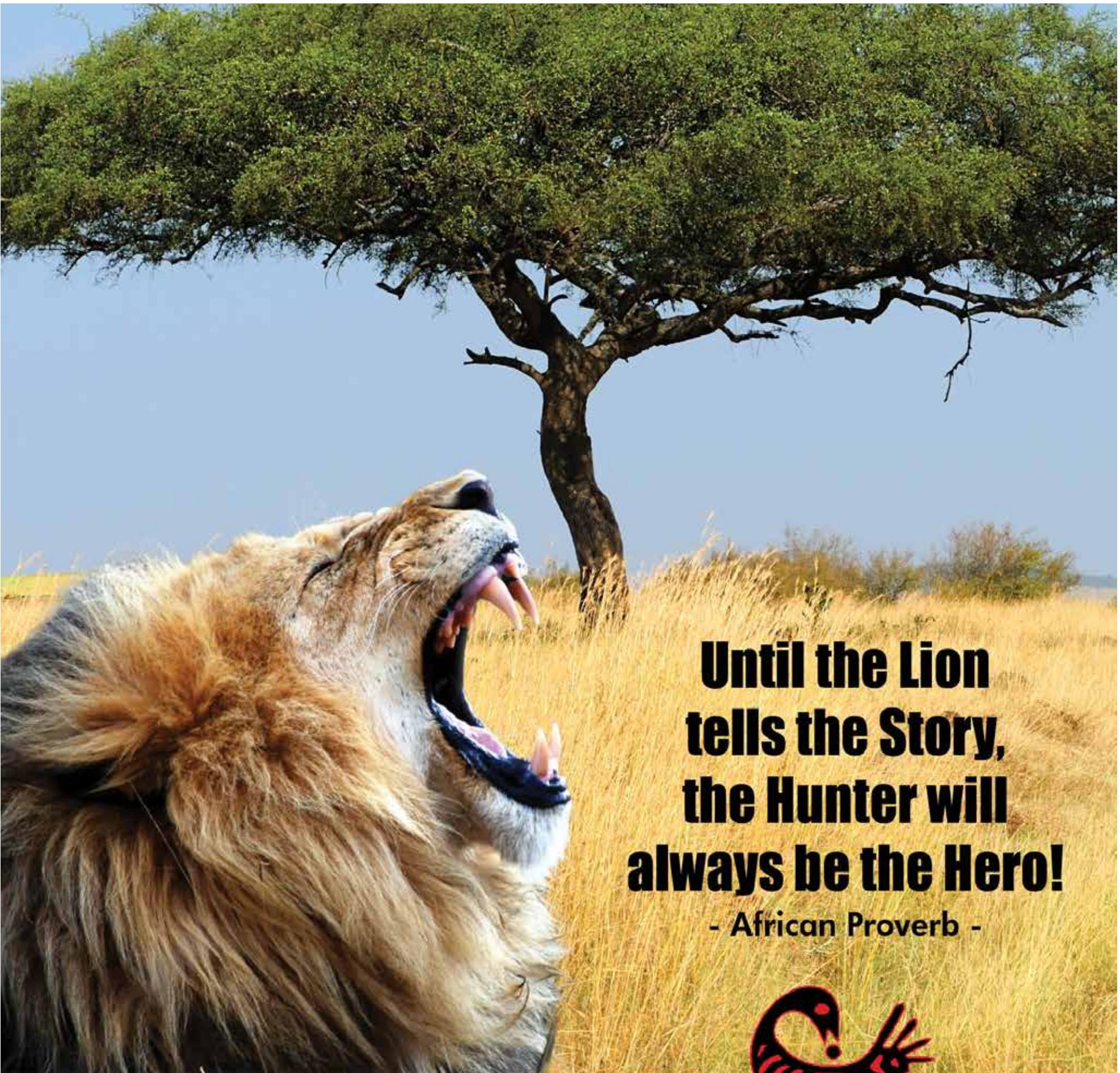
14 SATURDAY .Joy of Life12:00 pmRte A
 Krewe of Mullet Mates2:00 pmM.Pte
 Mystics of Time Parade5:45 pmRte H
 Mystics of Pleasure Parade6:00 pmOB
 Knights of Cote d'Azur6:30 pmLoxley
 Shadow Barons Parade6:45 pmDap
15 SUNDAYFort Morgan Parading Society1:00 pmFt. Mor
 Arrival of King Elexis I.....2:00 pmRte E
 (at foot of Government Street)
 Loyal Order of the Firetruck.....2:29 pmDaphne
 Joe Cain Parade2:30 pmRte A
16 MONDAYMCA King Felix III Parade.....11:30 amRte A
 Floral Parade12:00 pmRte A
 MLK Bus. & Civic Parade.....2:00 pmRte D
 MLK Monday Mystic Adult Parade..2:30 pmRte D
 Northside Merchants Parade3:00 pmRte D
 Order of Mystic Magnolias Parade..6:45 pm ... Fairhope
 Infant Mystics Parade6:30 pmRte F
 Order of Doves.....7:00 pmRte F

17

FAT TUESDAY

Mardi Gras Day

10:00 am.....Gulf Shores ParadeGS
10:00 amOrder of AthenaRte A
12:30 pm.....Knights of RevelryRte A
12:30 pm.....King Felix III.....Rte A
12:30 pm.....Comic CowboysRte A
2:00 pm.....Orange Beach Parade.....OB
2:00 pmMAMGA MammothRte B
6:00 pm.....Order of MythsRte C



**Until the Lion
tells the Story,
the Hunter will
always be the Hero!**

- African Proverb -



**It is Our Duty
to Share the Stories
About Our Ancestors!**

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