



PRESTON: 'Roses Among Thorns' - p. 4

Friday
February 7, 2025
Vol. 11, No. 23
ValleyWeeklyllc.com

The Valley Weekly

SALUTE!
Rosetta James Foundation
ELDER OF THE WEEK



Mother Betty Craighead

"... Never, never, never under any circumstance support anything and anybody who won't support you." - Claude Anderson

Eight Receive HUD/CDBG Grants

Huntsville Community Development Office awarded funds to the Alabama Non-Violent Offenders Organization,

\$15,000; Boys and Girls Clubs of North Alabama, \$119,817; Christmas Charities Year Round, \$20,000; ENABLE, \$10,000;

First Stop, \$25,000; HATCH, \$100,000; Thrive Alabama, \$15,000; and Village of Promise, \$15,000.



ARTS FOR ALL: Arts Huntsville, in partnership with Huntsville Revisited and the City of Huntsville's Office of Multicultural Affairs, is pleased to announce "Arts for All: Community Conversations," a series of open conversations designed to connect Huntsville artists and arts organizations with valuable community resources and partners. Events will be Tuesdays in February from 5:30-7:30 p.m. at the Dr. Richard Showers, Sr. Recreation Center, 4600 Blue Spring Road.

College Fair Set at Union Chapel

Union Chapel Missionary Baptist Church will host a Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) College Fair on Saturday, February 15, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The event will be held at the Union Chapel Family Life Center, located at 315 Winchester Road in Huntsville, Ala.

The four-hour recruiting session will feature financial

aid information and door prizes.

For additional information, contact Jennifer Pigott at (256) 566-2839 or Anthony Davidson at (256) 527-1666. The public is invited to attend.

RJF Accepting Scholarship Apps

The Rosetta James Foundation (RJF) is accepting applications for its annual scholarship award program until Friday, February 14. Awards will be presented at the "Honoring Our Elders" event at 12 noon on Saturday, March 8, at The Jackson Center in Cummings Research Park. The scholarships are

awarded to deserving students who are committed to community volunteerism as part of their college experience. Scholarships are not awarded to graduate students or previous recipients. Scholarship co-chairs Ja'Lissa Williams Cothron and Morgan Saintjones will be carefully selecting recipients



of several Rosetta James Foundation endowed scholarships.

Visit www.rosettajamesfoundation.org for a link to the Scholarship Application. All criteria are provided.

Woody Anderson's Stender Named SE 'TIME Dealer of the Year'

Woody Anderson Ford announced that Cathy Stender, owner and dealer principal, has been named the 2025 Southeast TIME Dealer of the Year at the 108th National Automobile Dealers Association (NADA) Show in New Orleans. The award is one of the most prestigious honors in the automotive industry, recognizing franchised dealers for exceptional business performance and an

unwavering commitment to community service. Stender was selected from a field of more than 16,000 franchised dealers across the country. "Receiving this recognition is a testament to the dedication of our team at Woody Anderson Ford and the impact we strive to make in our community," said Cathy Stender. "From the moment I began leading the dealership in 2003,

my mission has been to carry forward a legacy of excellence while fostering deep connections with our customers and the greater Huntsville community." "Cathy is more than a business leader—she is a champion for Huntsville," said Mayor Tommy Battle. "Her commitment to innovation, workforce development, and philanthropy has made a lasting impact on our community."



The Valley Weekly

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Valley Weekly Washington One Minute

by Ron Hamm



Here are the latest top issues and events in Washington:

1. CONGRESS. The House and Senate are in session this week. The Senate will continue voting on cabinet nominees starting with votes Monday on Russell Vought to be Director of the Office of Management and Budget, Christopher Wright to be Secretary of Energy, and Pam Bondi to be Attorney General ... House Speaker Mike Johnson (R-LA) is hoping to get a Concurrent Budget Resolution, the first step to enacting the comprehensive tax bill through the Reconciliation process, written in committee this week and finalized in the House by the week of Feb. 10.

2. EXECUTIVE BRANCH. On Tuesday, the President met with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the White House. A federal

judge in Rhode Island on Friday ordered the Trump administration not to “pause, freeze, impede, block, cancel, or terminate” taxpayer money already allocated by Congress in 22 Democratic-leaning states for all congressionally approved government programs, including those that could run afoul of the President’s ideological tests contained in a series of recently issued executive orders. The order does not block the administration from continuing its review of federal spending, only from defunding those programs that fail its tests in the states that sued.

3. DOGE. On Friday, Senate Finance Committee Ranking Democrat Ron Wyden (D-OR) sent a letter to newly confirmed Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent protesting a plan to allow Elon Musk and his Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE)

access to the U.S. Bureau of the Fiscal Service’s payment systems that control the flow of more than \$6 trillion in annual payments to households, businesses and other entities nationwide, including Social Security and Medicare benefits, tax refunds, payments to federal employees and contractors (including competitors of Musk-owned companies).

4. FED EMPLOYEE BUYOUT OFFER. Last Tuesday, the U.S. Office of Personnel Management sent a blast email to over 2 million federal employees offering them a “dignified, fair departure” from their jobs through “deferred resignation” if they accept within 9 days by this Thursday (Feb. 6). The buyouts are for all full-time federal employees except for military personnel, U.S. Postal Service workers, and those in positions in immigration enforcement and national security – but per the Associated Press it did include the nation’s air traffic controllers who received the buyout offer. OPM pledges to give them 8 months of salary through Sept. 30 if they accept (and they would no longer have

to report to work) ...

5. SUPREME COURT. The court has no oral arguments scheduled until Feb. 24. On March 4, the court will hear a case as to whether a lawsuit by the Mexican government against U.S. gun manufacturers may go forward, in which Mexico argues that the gun makers aided and abetted the illegal sales of guns to traffickers for cartels in Mexico (Smith & Wesson Brands v. Estados Unidos Mexicanos).

6. GDP REPORT. On

Thursday, the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis reported that the Gross Domestic Product for the 4th quarter of 2024 slowed to 2.3%, down from 2 previous quarters of 3% each.

7. DNC WINTER MEETING. On Saturday, National Democrats held their Winter Meeting at National Harbor, MD (near Washington, D.C.) and elected Minnesota Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party Chair Ken Martin as the new chair of the Democratic National Committee with

246.5 votes, beating Wisconsin Democratic Party Chair Ben Wikler’s 134.5 votes and former Maryland Gov. Martin O’Malley’s 44 votes.

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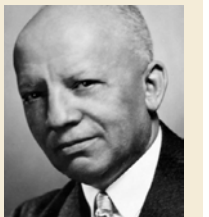
drakestate.edu



ON THIS DAY

On Feb. 7, 1926, Carter G. Woodson initiated the first celebration of Negro History Week which led to Black History Month, to extend and deepen the study and scholarship on African American history, all year long.

- Zinn Education Project



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**The Valley Weekly**

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Celebrating Black History Month in Challenging Political Times

As we navigate these turbulent political times, it is more important than ever to celebrate Black History Month. Recognizing the contributions of African Americans to our communities is not just a once-a-year acknowledgment but a continued commitment to honoring the past, learning from history, and pushing forward with a collective spirit.

Huntsville, like many American cities, has been shaped by individuals of diverse races, colors, and backgrounds. Their contributions—past and present—have helped define our city's progress and resilience. As someone who attended Alabama A&M University in the 1970s and returned to Huntsville in the 1990s, I have been fortunate to learn about, meet, and witness the impactful work of many African Americans who have left their mark.

This is by no means an exhaustive list, but it is our humble attempt to highlight a few individuals whose dedication to family, community, and professional excellence deserves recognition. They remind us why Black History Month is not just a celebration but a necessity:

Freeman & Battle Barbershop – The oldest African American barbershop
Mr. Hundley Batts, Sr. – Hundley Batts & Associates Insurance
Dr. John Clay - Pastor, St. Mark MB Church and President, Huntsville Bible College
Dr. John Cashin – Dentist and Community Activist
Mrs. Ollye Conley - Historian and Principal - Academy for Science and Foreign Language
Dr. William Hooper Council – Founder and President, AAMU
State Rep. Anthony Daniels – AL House of Representatives, Minority Leader
Dr. O. Wendell Davis - Pastor, Union Chapel MB Church
Dr. James I. Dawson – AAMU Administrator, Entrepreneur, and Huntsville City School Board Member
Dr. George Grayson – First African American elected from Huntsville to the State Representative position
Rep. Laura Hall – Alabama State Representative
Dr. Sonny Hereford – Physician and Community Activist
Mr. Sidney Hutchinson - MastorTailor
Mrs. Rosetta James – Servant-Leader, Community Activist
Rev. Dr. Homer McCall - Pastor, St. John AME Church and Chaplain AAMU
Dr. Dave McGlathery & Dr. Marvin Carroll – Led the fight for African-American enrollment at UAH
Rev. Dr. Oscar Montgomery - Pastor, Union Hill PB Church and Vice President for Research at AAMU
Dr. Ann Roy Moore – First African-American Superintendent of Huntsville City Schools
Mr. Albert Morris – Albert's Flowers and Greenhouses
Mr. Clinton "Jack" Parker - Parker Shoe Hospital
Dr. Prince Preyer – First African American elected to the Madison County Commission
Mr. Charles Ray, Jr. – Nelms Memorial Funeral Home and AMCOM EEO Officer
Royal Funeral Home – Founded in 1918 by Charles K. Binford, owned by David and Karen Jones Smith
Dr. Julius R. Scruggs – Pastor and President of the National Baptist Convention
Mr. Fletcher Seldom – First African American elected to the Huntsville School Board
Atty. Martha Lynn Sherrod – First African American Circuit Judge in Huntsville
Dr. Richard Showers – First African-American Member of the Huntsville City Council
Mrs. Delois Smith – Vice President for Diversity, UAH
Mr. John Stallworth – NFL Owner, Hall of Famer, and Founder of the John Stallworth Foundation
Mr. Thornton Stanley, Sr. – Stanley Construction Company
4 Star GEN Dennis L. Via – Commander, U.S. Army Materiel Command at Redstone Arsenal
Rev. Dr. Mitchell Walker - Pastor, Church Street CPC of America, Dean of Graduate Studies at Huntsville Bible College



Entrepreneurship and innovation are integral to Black history in Huntsville. Running a business, achieving excellence in education, and advocating for equality require more than just passion—it demands perseverance. The phrase that "PhDs are a dime a dozen" does not diminish the value of education, just as the assumption that owning a business is easy undermines the sacrifices made by entrepreneurs. Those who think otherwise are welcome to try their hand at earning a PhD from an accredited university or launching a successful business themselves.

As we celebrate Black History Month, let us not forget that the recognition and appreciation of African American contributions must extend beyond February. Let us continue to honor those who have paved the way while uplifting future generations to carry the torch forward. Until next week ...

Dorothy

February 7 - CHRIS ROCK - Christopher Julius Rock is an American comedian, actor, television producer, and filmmaker. After working as a stand-up comedian and appearing in supporting film roles, Rock came to wider prominence as a cast member of Saturday Night Live in the early 1990s. He went on to more prominent film appearances, with starring roles in *Head of State* (2003), the *Madagascar* film series (2005–2012), *Grown Ups* (2010), its sequel *Grown Ups 2* (2013), *Top Five* (2014), and a series of acclaimed stand-up specials for HBO. He developed, wrote, and narrated the sitcom *Everybody Hates Chris* (2005–2009).

- BlackCelebrityBirthdays.org



THE VALLEY WEEKLY
**VALLEY
DEATHS**



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Funeral service for **MR. JAESHAUN PLEASURE** (b. 1997) was Saturday, February 1, at Union Chapel MB Church, 315 Winchester Road, Huntsville, Ala.

Funeral service for **MOTHER MARIETTA JENNINGS** (b. 1941) was Saturday, February 1, at Madkins Chapel CPCA, 2403 Oakwood Road NW, Huntsville, Ala.

NELMS MEMORIAL FUNERAL HOME

2501 Carmichael Avenue NW- Huntsville, AL 35816
(256) 539-8189 - www.nelmsmemorial.net

Funeral service for **MR. ERNEST N. COWAN** (b. 1956) will be held on Friday, February 7, at 12 p.m. at Spring Hill United Methodist Church with Rev. Dennis Jones officiating.

Funeral service for **MR. TERRENCE D. ROBINSON** (b. 2005) was Saturday, February 1, at the Mae C. Jemison High School Gymnasium.

Funeral service for **MOTHER FANNIE PINCHEON BAKER MATTHEWS** (b. 1934) was Sunday, January 26, at St. Bethel Primitive Baptist Church with Elder Michael Mastin officiating.

ROYAL FUNERAL HOME

4315 Oakwood Avenue NW - Huntsville, AL 35810 -
(256) 534-8481 - www.royalfh.com

Funeral service for **MR. MICHAEL THADDEUS STARKS** (b. 1953) was Sunday, February 2, at First Seventh-Day Adventist Church, located at 1303 Evangel Drive NW, Huntsville, Ala.

Funeral service for **MR. STACY THURMAN BALDWIN** (b. 1969) was Saturday, February 1, at Saint Bartley Primitive Baptist Church, located at 3020 Belafonte Avenue, Huntsville, Ala., with Pastor Jaymes R. Mooney officiating.

Funeral service for **MR. JOHN LOUIS MATTHEWS, III** was Friday, January 31, at First Seventh-Day Adventist Church, located at 1303 Evangel Drive NW, Huntsville, Ala., with Dr. William Lee officiating.

Spiritual Game Plan

PRESTON BROWN'S

Today's Spiritual Game Plan: *"Roses Among Thorns"*

Philippians 4:8 says, "Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable, if anything is excellent or praiseworthy, think about such things."

Someone once wrote that "Some people complain because God put thorns on roses, while others praise Him for putting roses among thorns."

We are living in a time where, if we are not careful, it will become increasingly easy to see the bad things going on in our lives and harder to recognize all the good things. I realize that there is perhaps a reason for this. In the United States, we have so much social and economic unrest, our political landscape continues to divide us and so many other things that separate us and cause us to be bitter, not better. In other words, we are separated by our race, by our political stance, and by our social status. I can remember at one time we were separated by those who wanted to wear masks in public and those who didn't. It's enough to make you lose your mind and ask,

"When will it all end?" The answer is this: it doesn't end. However, there is hope. Our hope is in Jesus. Our hope is in our ability to ask Jesus to change the way we feel about the things that we cannot control. Our hope is in looking at life the same way that Jesus looks at us, which is through the lens of love and forgiveness. That's when real change will come.

Real change only comes through the

renewing of our minds, (Romans 12:2). That's why the apostle Paul was right when he said, "If anything is excellent or praiseworthy, think about such things."

For most of us, it's easier to be bitter, but much harder to be better, because being better requires more effort on our part. It's easier to be angry and stay angry than it is to love and forgive one another. Remember that being angry only leads to hate, and you can never rise above the thoughts that you have in your head unless you replace these thoughts with better ones.

My hope for all of us is this: As we experi-

ence things that cause us to be bitter, let us view life through the lens of love and forgiveness and remember to "praise God for putting roses among thorns."

May God grant you spiritual success in seeing roses among thorns.

Question: Is the life that you are living making you bitter or better?

Stay encouraged, my brothers and sisters, and make sure you purchase a copy of my books, *Spiritual Game Plans For A Successful Life* and *A Champion Game Plan for Life*, at amazon.com.

NEXT WEEK:
"Everyday Faith"

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A New Generation Of Service

Is Prayer in Your “National Breakfast, ... Lunch, ... AND Dinner”?

“And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint.” - Luke 18:1

On February 6, 2025, and each first Thursday in February since the 1930s, Washington, D.C.’s Hilton Hotel and members of the U.S. Congress host the National Prayer Breakfast. This annual event gathers top business, social, and political leaders to pray together.

In a world grappling with daily business, social, and political upheavals, prayer must become more than an occasional practice—it should be our “national breakfast, . . . lunch, . . . and dinner.”

For the next three weeks, let’s dive into how prayer can serve as our essential, everyday sustenance.



How Important Is Prayer?

Protestant Reformer Martin Luther once famously told his barber, “I have so much to do that I shall spend the first three hours in prayer.”

For many, our nation feels as though it’s plummeting to its lowest point. I recall hitting my own low in 1989—financially and emotionally. During that challenging season, Mom and Dad sent me a pick-me-up quote. Its message was so transformative that I committed it to memory (hint, hint):

“Prayer is the answer to every problem in life. It puts us in tune with Divine wisdom which knows how to adjust everything perfectly.”

So often we do not pray in certain situations because from our standpoint the outlook is hopeless. But nothing is impossible with God.

Nothing is so entangled that it cannot be remedied. No human relationship is so strained that God cannot bring about reconciliation and understanding.

No one is so weak that he cannot be made strong;

No one is so ill that he or she cannot be healed; and

No mind is so dull that it cannot be made brilliant.

Whatever we need, if we trust God, He will supply it.

And if anything is causing you worry or anxiety, let us stop rehearsing the difficulty and turn to God for Healing, Love, and Power.”

I share this timeless message with you because it remains powerful, personal, and portable. Read it, reflect on it, recite it, and even memorize it. I did—and it works. Every day.

So, is prayer on your breakfast, lunch, or dinner menu today?

Next week, we’ll explore prayer’s “secret sauce,” and in the final week, we’ll conclude with a powerful example of what prayer can accomplish.



Tim Allston
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Millennial Moment

by Gloria B. Caldwell

Get Up! ...

You have the habit of lying there and abiding in the moments of nothingness. You wake up, grab your phone, and scroll endlessly. Looking at what others are accomplishing or not, who knows what’s real on social media.

However, as you lay there, you reside in that comfort of laziness. You reduce the rationalization down to relaxing. But what are you resting from?

What have you done? What constitutes stopping? You have stuff to do. Get Up! What’s next?

Why are you giving away time? You know you’re not getting that back, right?

Let’s say that your body does need to rest.



That happens. While you’re relaxing, you can free your mind. Meditate, be grateful, and dream up new ideas.

Take the time to relax in healthy ways. Mental breaks are a good thing. So are physical breaks.

But don’t stay there too long and get comfortable. If you find yourself engaging in folly, it will throw you off track. When you realize you’re just wasting time, redirect and GET UP!

You’ve got real things to do. You’re purposeful. Let’s move. Get Up!

God loves you, and so do I.

He has given you a gift; *open it.*

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The Valley Weekly

VALLEY EVENTS

HAPPENINGS, ACTIVITIES & MORE!

February 7-9

Jehovah's Witnesses Convention
South Hall
Von Braun Center
Huntsville, Ala.

Mars Music Hall/VBC
700 Monroe Street SW
Huntsville, Ala.
Ticketmaster

February 8

Huntsville City Schools
Curriculum Showcase
East Hall 2 & 3
Von Braun Center
Huntsville, Ala.

February 28

Heritage Entertainment:
The 2nd Annual Rocket
City Blues Festival
"Blues Is Alright"
VBC Propst Arena
Huntsville, Ala.
Ticketmaster - 8 p.m.

R&N Invitation

Featuring:
Eric Benét, Joe & Musiq
Soulchild
VBC Propst Arena
Ticketmaster - 8 p.m.

February 28-March 2

"Tony Rock"
Comedy Standup
Levity Live
2012 Memorial Parkway SW
Huntsville, Ala.

February 14-16

"Arnez J"
Comedy Standup
Levity Live
2012 Memorial Parkway SW
Huntsville, Ala.

March 8

16th Annual Rosetta James
Foundation "Honoring
Our Elders" Celebration
and Day Gala
The Jackson Center
6001 Moquin Drive
Huntsville, Ala. - 12 noon

February 15

"4 Phase of RNB"

March 20

Spring Equinox Camping
Retreat: Joy Journey
Camp Edwards, LLC
205 A Water Tank Road
Toney, Ala.
campedwardsllc.com

April 10

"Jay Jurden"
Comedy Standup
Levity Live
2012 Memorial Parkway SW
Huntsville, Ala.
Times: Vary

April 11

Comedian Kevin Hart
The Orion Amphitheater
Huntsville, Ala.
kevinhartnation.com

April 11-13

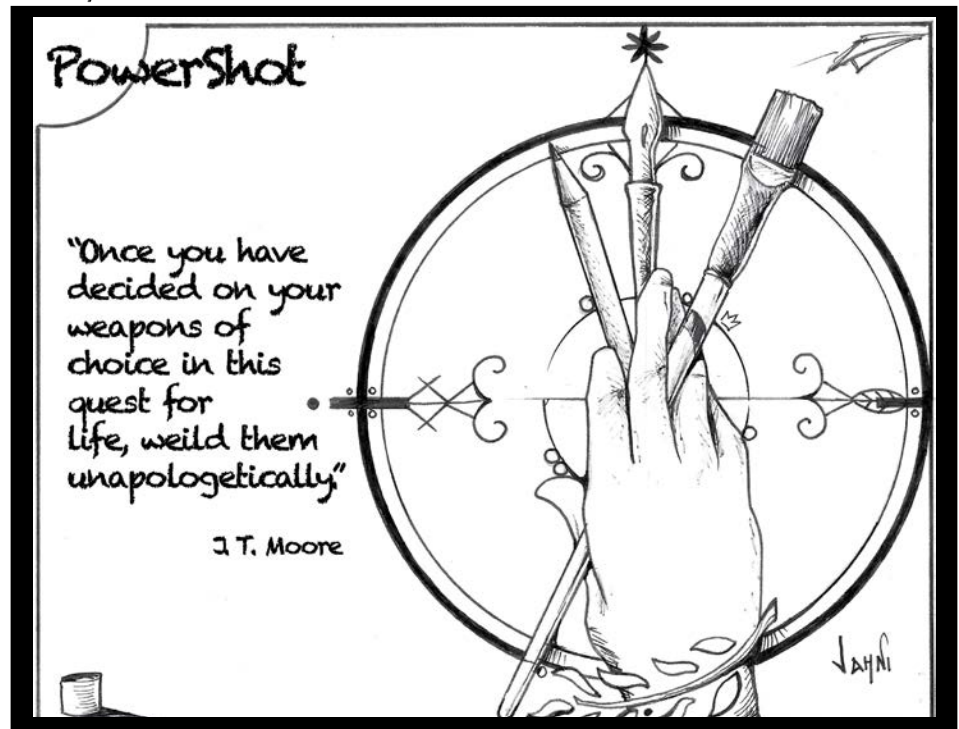
"D.L. Hughley"
Comedy Standup
Levity Live
2012 Memorial Parkway SW
Huntsville, Ala.
Times: Vary

April 24

The War and Treaty Plus
One Tour
Princess Theatre
Decatur, Ala.
princess theatre.org

April 25-27

Comic & Pop Culture Expo
Featuring Mario Lopez
Von Braun Center
Huntsville, Ala.



"We are going to emancipate ourselves from mental slavery because whilst others might free the body, none but ourselves can free the mind."

- Marcus Garvey



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Rosetta James Foundation "Spotlight on Our Elders" ... Featuring

Mother Betty Craighead

Mother Betty Joyce Ford Craighead is a native Huntsvillian who is the first of four children born to the late Walter and Lucy Steele Ford. She attended Winston Street Elementary School, Councill High School and Alabama A&M University. She married Willie Mack Craighead, her high school sweetheart, and they are the parents of Karen Craighead McGlathery and Roderrick T. Craighead; two grandsons, and three great-granddaughters.

She joined Huntsville Hospital as a unit secretary in the Pediatrics, Medical/Surgical Unit, and Labor & Delivery in 1965. Exposed to every facet of medicine, she gained a great love for and knowledge of the medical profession. However, the Labor & Delivery area was truly her passion--recording and witnessing the births of many babies in Huntsville.

In 1970, Medical Center Hospital was opened by a group

of doctors and Mrs. Craighead was hired, taking her to another level in the medical field. Medical Center was later purchased by Humana Hospital but kept her in the same position as operating room secretary. She was promoted to customer service representative and then to customer service supervisor, retiring from Humana in 1996.

A faithful member of Union Chapel Missionary Baptist Church for over 45 years, she has served in positions ranging from the Stitching and Quilting Ministry to Superintendent of the Sunday School. In 2012, she was asked to do a commercial for First Community Health Plan due in part to her work in health insurance and her affiliation with the Stitching and Quilting Ministry. She is indeed a dedicated leader who loves people.

Among her many community service projects are her service as director of Rural Senior Services



(Union Chapel Center); advisor, Alabama Cooperative Extension System-Alabama A&M University Successful Aging Initiative, 14 years; representative, Alabama Alzheimer's Campaign, 2010; St. Jude Children Research (Campaign for a Cure); and others.

Mrs. Craighead enjoys sewing and creative arts. She has traveled throughout the United States and several foreign countries, including Israel, Bahamas; Cozemul, Mexico; Ontario, Canada; Tanzania; and Nairobi, Kenya, where she was adopted by the Kuria tribe and given the tribal name of "Robi." She has been abundant-ly bless by God.



"Spotlight on Our Elders" is a weekly feature sponsored by the Rosetta James Foundation to promote **volunteerism** and **activism** in our community among those who are 70-plus. The Foundation also provides scholarships. Learn more about us at www.rosettajamesfoundation.org. Know an outstanding elder (70+) that you would like to see featured? Send us a photo and 250-word write-up to info@valleyweeklyllc.com.

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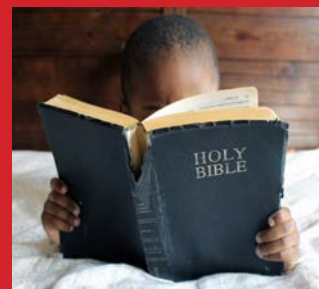
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168974

This Sunday's Lectionary

Sunday, February 9, 2025

Fifth Sunday
after the
Epiphany



(Track 2, Year C)

First Lesson:

Isaiah 6:1-8, 9-13

Psalms 138

Second Lesson:

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

GOSPEL:

Luke 5:1-11



Come Discover
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No matter what time of year you explore Burritt on the Mountain, there is something delightful and new to see. And no matter how young – or old – you are, there is something for you on the Mountain! If you've never visited, you're in for a treat. If it's been awhile, what are you waiting for? Come on up and let the Magic begin!

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AAMU Releases 2025 Black History Month Events

The Office of Student Activities & Leadership Development invites the Alabama A&M University community to celebrate Black History Month (BHM) 2025.

This year, the University honors the rich history, vibrant culture, and invaluable contributions of the Black community under the national theme, "African Americans & Labor."

Throughout February, AAMU encourages

students, faculty, and staff to participate in an exciting lineup of events showcasing Black excellence, creativity, and resilience. These events are designed to educate, inspire, and bring the community together to reflect on the past, embrace the present, and empower the future.

Events include:

Feb. 3: R&B, Paint, & Shatter
6:00 p.m. | Clyde Foster



Auditorium
A soulful evening blending music, creativity, and self-expression.

Feb. 10 – 14: Arts in Movement Courageous 8 Exhibit

Noon – 2:00 p.m. daily | Drake Learning Resources Center
Presented by the State Black Archives & Drake LRC. Discover the

stories of the courageous individuals who shaped history through art.

Feb. 12: The Legacy Marketplace
12:30 p.m. | Knight Courtyard
Explore and support Black-owned businesses and creators in a vibrant marketplace setting.

Feb. 13: Fashion Speaks: A Night of Style & Expression

6:00 p.m. | Elmore Gym
Celebrate Black creativity and culture through an inspiring showcase of fashion and design.

Feb. 26: BHM Legacy Gala
6:00 p.m. | Knight Ballroom
RSVP required – details coming soon
A grand evening of reflection, celebration, and connection to close out Black History Month.

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Introducing ...

The Rosetta James Foundation
19th Annual "Honoring Our Elders" Gala

Rev. Dr. Theodis ACKLIN	Mrs. Mary Lanier CURRY	Dr. Dorothy DOWNING	Rev. Dr. Oscar MONTGOMERY	Mr. Charles Wayne SCRUGGS	Mr. William SMOTHERS	Mrs. Nancy VALKENBURGH	Mr. Richard VALKENBURGH	Rev. Jacqueline WILSON

The Rosetta James Foundation is a registered 509(a)(2) Public Charity and educational organization founded for the sole purposes of providing scholarships to deserving students and recognizing the contributions of the elderly in the community while promoting volunteerism and community outreach.

Saturday, March 8, 2025
The Jackson Center
6001 Moquin Drive (Cummings Research Park)
Huntsville, Alabama
12 Noon
CLICK HERE
(for Tickets/Sponsorship)
<https://rosettajamesfoundation.swell.gives>

NOTES OF A NATIVE SON

IF NOT ... FOR THE BIRDS

by afroblastik [John 'Jahni' Moore]

This year, I had the privilege of attending the renowned Festival of Cranes—a celebration of grace, migration, and one of the natural world's many intricate dances. While the elegant sandhill cranes captivated the crowds, my own attention was pulled away by an unexpected guest: a back and forth game of male cardinals darting through the naked wintry limbs, the red plumage striking against the bare landscape. This simple encounter took me on a journey of reflection, one centered on hope, intention, and the messages we receive, if we pause to notice.

As a child, whenever we spotted a cardinal, we'd shout, "Redbird, somebody comin'!" It was part superstition, part playful belief that the bright flash of red

was a herald of change, a sign that someone—or something—was on its way. Back then, we didn't think much of it beyond the joy of the moment. But as I stood there watching the cardinal at the Festival of Cranes, I felt the significance of that childhood exclamation in a new way.

Cardinals have long been seen as symbols of hope and renewal. Their brilliant crimson feathers stand out unapologetically, even in the bleakest seasons, reminding us to embrace our individuality and worth. They seem to carry messages from beyond—a gentle nudge to reconnect with faith, spiritual practices, and the peace that comes from being present. In their quiet grace, they offer a sense of life's con-



tinuity, a whisper that even in hardship, beauty endures.

That day, watching the cardinal, I felt

these lessons deeply. It wasn't just a moment to observe but a call to participate—to take the hope the cardinal symbolized and turn it into

intention. Hope, when passive, is like a seed left unplanted. To elevate it into intention means to act on it, to let it shape how we move through the world. The cardinal's red plumage wasn't just a signal to stop and notice; it was a challenge to lean into that moment of reflection and ask, "What next?"

I carry the memory of the cardinal with me, its image etched into my mind as a vivid reminder to live with intention. The cranes taught me about harmony and connection, travel and poise while the cardinal urged me to take those lessons and weave them into my daily life. Hope, I realized, is not just something to feel—it is something to live ... on purpose.

The next time you see



a cardinal (or anything that pulls your attention away from the order of the day), pause. Breathe. Let its message remind you of hope, not as a passive lottery style wish but as an invitation to act, to engage.

Take that hope, plant it, and nurture it into something that can grow and sustain you—and perhaps others. After all, "somebody" is always coming. Maybe it's you.

AAMU Promotes MMW's Participation in Honda Battle of the Bands

A new Alabama A&M billboard campaign highlighted the Marching Maroon and White band ahead of its performance at the 2025 Honda Battle of the Bands at SoFi Stadium in Inglewood, Calif.

Recently launched along the Inglewood's high-traffic Manchester Boulevard, multiple signs featured a bold image an-

nouncing AAMU's arrival in Southern California and inviting passersby to "explore Alabama's largest HBCU."

The Alabama A&M University Marching Maroon and White Band was one of six bands set to perform Saturday, February 1, in the event's first-ever West Coast activation.

Known as the nation's premier showcase for HBCU marching bands, the Honda Battle of the Bands continues to evolve into a platform built for and by the HBCU community. Considered the marching band homecoming event of the year, it has hosted some of the greatest performances and moments in HBCU battle of the bands history.

THE STARS CAME OUT

GRAMMY-nominated recording artist GloRilla performed as the closing act at this year's event, which was hosted by 'Drumline' star Nick Cannon.

The Honda Battle of the Bands was streamed at www.hondabattleofthebands.com/home and on Facebook.



Retired AAMU Professor Pens Book on 1970s Women's Basketball Star

Dr. Rena Newson Lott, a retired Alabama A&M University professor, has written the *first* book about Lucy Harris -- *Meet Lusia (Lucy) Harris-Stewart*.

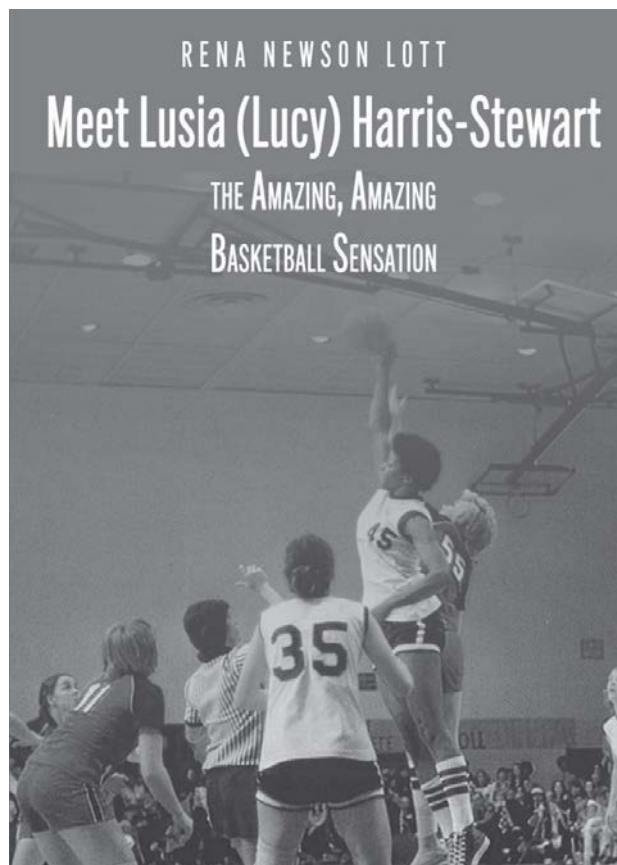
Lusia Harris is a name forever written in basketball history. She was a pioneering force that transformed the game for women. As a dominant center, Lucy broke barriers in both national and international arenas, paving the way for future generations. From her humble beginnings in the small town of Minter City, Mississippi, to becoming the first woman officially drafted into the NBA, Lucy's journey is one of perseverance, passion, and unparalleled talent.

Lucy was a superstar

in women's basketball in the 1970s, leading her team at Delta State University (Mississippi) to national championship titles. Lucy also was selected to play on the first Olympic women's basketball team in 1976.

Harris was one of the first women to make a significant impact on the national stage, writes Lott, and she played for Delta State, exhibiting the exceptional skills that propelled her to be included as one of the inaugural members of the Women's Basketball Hall of Fame in 1999, one of several Hall of Fames that honored her with membership.

This inspiring biography tells the story of a young girl who, through grit and determination,



rose above social and racial barriers, becoming a three-time national champion at Delta State University and an

Olympic silver medalist. Known for her quiet demeanor but fierce presence on the court, Lucy Harris revolutionized women's basketball, setting the standard for others on the court.

A true pioneer in sports and a role model for countless athletes, Lusia Harris' legacy endures today--this is her remarkable story.

Lucy is considered by many the prototype for the center position in women's basketball. Persons interested in reading about the fascinating native Mississippian can click [HERE](#).

“Education must not simply teach work - it must teach life.” - W.E.B. Du Bois



Council Meetings

Huntsville City Council's regular meetings are held on the 1st floor of the Municipal Building on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month at 5:30 p.m.

HMBCC Meetings

The Huntsville Metro Black Chamber of Commerce promotes, creates and fosters economic development opportunities. HMBCC meets monthly on the 3rd Tuesday at 12 noon. Call (256) 427-2650 or e-mail info@hsvblackchamber.org. [VISIT](#)

Community Foundation Announces 2025 Board of Directors

Earlier this month, the Community Foundation of Greater Huntsville welcomed its 2025 Board of Directors. The leading organization on strategic philanthropy in the area, the Foundation mobilizes generosity in the North Alabama region.

The board announcement follows another year of significant growth for the Community Foundation. In December, the organization's Corporate Giving Network granted more than \$2 million to

189 area nonprofit organizations. This concluded 2024's trajectory of giving, during which the Foundation processed a record \$23.7 million in gifts.

The incoming board consists of local leaders who aim to guide the vision of the Foundation as it continues to serve the region. Representing a diverse cross-section of the community, the board will be chaired by Lynn Troy, President of Troy 7, Incorporated.

“As we welcome our new board of directors for 2025, I am eager to work alongside them to continue our growth,” said Melissa Thompson, CEO of the Community Foundation of Greater Huntsville. “The diverse expertise, passion for our mission, and dedication to our community will be invaluable as we continue to mobilize generosity for the region.”

The board includes: Elizabeth W. Abel, Lanier

Ford
Penny Billings, Cadence Bank
G.W. Boon III, Modern Technology Solutions, Inc.
Leta DeMaiores, Community Volunteer
Jay Dryden, Vector Wealth Strategies
Brad Garland, Honeycomb CPAs & Advisors
Kristina L. Hendrix, Univ. of Alabama in Huntsville
Hank Isenberg, IronMountain Solutions
Ashley Jones, Lanier Ford
Jessica Luther, Mazda

Toyota Manufacturing
Doug Martinson, II, Martinson & Beason, P.C.
Chris Russell, Linscomb Wealth
Beth Sippel, Synovus
George Smith, Bradley Arant Boult Cummings LLP
Lynn Troy, Troy 7 Incorporated
Cindy Walz, Torch Technologies, Inc.
Gary T. Whitley, Jr., Huntsville Utilities
Lori A. Womack, Womack & Associates, LLC
“The leaders serving on

our board make a significant difference in our community,” said Melissa Thompson, CEO of the Community Foundation of Greater Huntsville. “I look forward to the fresh perspectives and innovative ideas they will bring to our organization. Together, we are here for good.”

Additional information about the board can be found on the Community Foundation's website at www.givehsv.org.