

AAMU Honors Retired Ag Dean Lloyd T. Walker - p. 8

FREE



“Are We There Yet?” - p. 4



Friday
February 13, 2026
Vol. 12, No. 24
ValleyWeeklyllc.com



SALUTE!
Rosetta James Foundation
ELDER OF THE WEEK

Mr. Richard Van Valkenburgh

“... You love despite; not for the virtues, but despite the faults.” — William Faulkner



Report: Huntsville's Growth Strong, Steady

Huntsville's growth continued at a steady pace in 2025, as strong housing demand, new neighborhoods and expanding businesses contributed to Alabama's fastest-growing city.

Nearly 5,000 new housing units came online last year, building on the record pace set in 2024, according to the City of Huntsville's 2025 Development Review. The annual report, prepared by the City's Planning Department, offers a clear picture of how people and investment are moving across the city and what those trends mean for Huntsville's future.

Much of last year's growth came from multi-family developments, reflecting a national surge in apartment construction. At the same time, single-family homebuilding is gaining momentum in Huntsville again.

“Huntsville's growth is not slowing down, but it is evolving,” said Mayor Tommy Battle. “We're seeing strong demand for new retail and for new and existing homes. That tells us people continue to see Huntsville as a place to build their future.”

- Huntsvilleal.gov

Fanfare Quilt Show Next Weekend

Heritage Quilters of Huntsville's Fanfare Quilt Show is set for February 20-21 at the Von Braun Center East Hall. Fanfare features more than 225 quilts and quilting activities.

The show has been a vital part of the Huntsville art scene since the first quilt show in 1987, and is the largest quilt show in the region. Quilts will



be featured in the judged show as well as in special displays, demonstrations and vendor booths.

This year, a special Red, White and Blue quilt display will honor

the nation's 250th birthday. Visitors to the show come from quilt guilds throughout North Alabama and even out of state. Local attendees include art and quilt lovers of all ages. Show hours are 10 to 6 on Feb. 20 and 10 to 5 on Feb. 21. There is a \$10 general charge to attend the show, and no charge for children 12 and under. (256) 508-9409.



HBC to Hold Roundup

The Huntsville Botanical Garden will host its Huntsville Roundup “Back to Basics” on Friday, February 20-21. The activity will be held at 5 p.m. Friday through 11 p.m. Saturday on site, 4747 Bob Wallace Avenue SW.

Huntsville Roundup is a week-end of recovery, hope, and fellowship that offers full garden access and family-friendly fun. Hear from speakers sharing experience, strength and hope. Enjoy great food, games and

meaningful connection. Organizers say the event is “kid-friendly,” with plenty of outdoor space for children to roam, as well as a designated baby and nursing room for caregivers. Tickets are \$35. Visit hsvbg.org.

Ribbon Cutting Set for enGenius

The public is invited to a ribbon cutting ceremony on Friday, February 13, for enGenius Consulting Group, 1525 Perimeter Parkway NW, Huntsville, Ala., at 10 a.m. A brief program should conclude at 10:30 a.m.

enGenius is a Small Business (SB) founded in 1996. It



is a leading provider of information technology, financial management, strategic business solutions, and software engineering services dedicated to delivering innovative solutions and exceptional service

to clients worldwide.

With a proven track record over 25 years, enGenius is the partner of choice for organizations seeking to achieve their goals and drive tangible results.

For additional information about enGenius, visit the company website at engenius.com.

The Valley Weekly

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Valley Weekly Washington One Minute

by Ron Hamm

Here is the recap of the latest top issues and events in Washington, D.C., during the previous week:

1. CONGRESS. The Senate was in session last week, and the House was out. Before leaving town, however, the House had approved a package of three FY2026 spending bills (Labor/HHS, DoD, and Transportation/HUD) by an overwhelming 341-88 vote and also approved the Homeland Security Appropriations bill on a 220-207 vote (with 7 Ds crossing the aisle to vote with the Majority), completing action in the House on all 12 FY2026 appropriations bills.

A Democrat-sponsored War Powers Resolution to restrict the administration's use of the military in Venezuela without congressional authorization narrowly failed on a 215-215 tie (with GOP Reps. Bacon R-NE and Massie R-KY joining all Ds on the vote). The Senate last week began with debate on the Pregnant Student Rights Act, which passed the House, and then attempted to take up a final package of six FY2026 appropriations bills (Homeland Security, Labor/HHS, DoD, Transportation/HUD, Financial Services, and State). However, a partial government shutdown was deemed

more likely as Senate Democrats vowed to block funding for the Homeland Security Department in response to the fatal shooting of Alex Pretti, a 37-year-old intensive care nurse for veterans and Minneapolis resident, by U.S. Border Patrol agents.

2. EXECUTIVE BRANCH. The First Lady held a private screening of her new documentary, "Melania," at the White House just days before she rang the New York Stock Exchange's opening bell on Wednesday and, with the President, attended a

premiere of her film at the renamed Kennedy Center on Thursday.

On Tuesday, the President traveled to Des Moines, IA, to deliver a speech on energy and the economy.

In advance of the recent March for Life in DC, the administration announced that human fetal tissue derived from abortions can no longer be used in research funded by the National Institutes of Health.

Also, the President revoked an invitation for Canada to join his new Board of Peace, set up to oversee the reconstruction of Gaza — after Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney gave a speech at the Davos World Leaders Summit, in which he decried economic coercion by other countries and re-

ceived a standing ovation. On Wednesday, Secretary of State Marco Rubio testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on the administration's Venezuela policy.

3. SUPREME COURT. The White House asked the Supreme Court to block the new congressional map adopted by California voters in November, charging that the new map is "tainted by an unconstitutional racial gerrymander." The filing came just 2 months after the administration submitted a brief supporting a request by Texas to implement its new map, after a lower court ruled that the map unconstitutionally sorted voters by race. In December, the justices granted the request over a dissent by the court's three

Democratic appointees.

4. FEDERAL RESERVE. The Federal Reserve's first meeting of 2026 was Tuesday and Wednesday. The Fed was widely expected to hold the benchmark interest rate steady in the 3.50%-3.75% range. Following three consecutive cuts in late 2025, officials were likely to pause further cuts to assess economic data amid persistent inflation.

5. EDUCATION. The Department of Education withdrew its appeal of the August 14 ruling that found its February 14, 2025, Dear Colleague Letter on DEI to be unlawful.

With the appeal dropped, the court's decision stands, and the letter

remains null and void. Institutions are no longer at risk of losing federal funding tied to DEI activities. This development provides a clearer footing for campuses as they navigate federal expectations moving forward. Further guidance from the Department may follow as institutions continue to assess the implications of the ruling.

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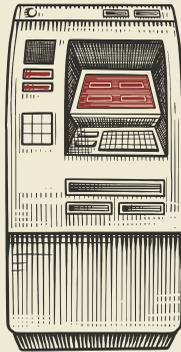
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The Valley Weekly

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Love That Shows Up

For many of us, Valentine's Day is about cards, red roses, candy and special dinners. Love is never meant to be a vague feeling or a collection of pretty words. Scripture reminds us that “let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth” (1 John 3:18).

Love, at its core, is something that *does*.

For 42 years, I was married to a wonderful man who taught me that lesson every day. Through him, I learned that real love is not only about being cherished, but about being respected and honored by the one who claims to love you. Love shows itself in patience, in listening, in kindness during ordinary moments, and in faithfulness when life is difficult.



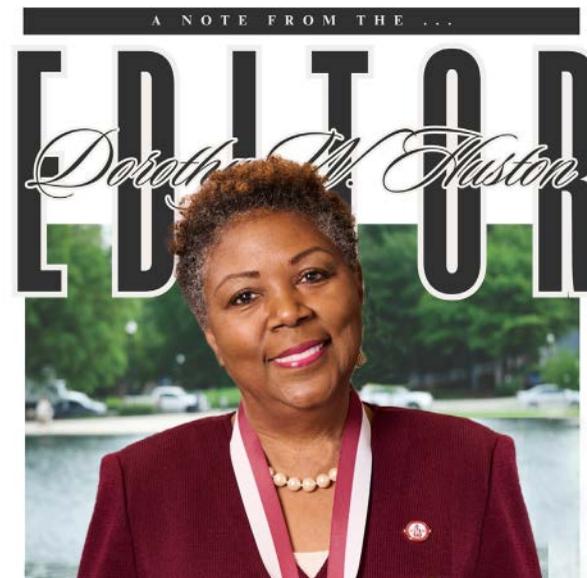
It is present not just in grand gestures, but in daily choices. We demonstrated love, honor and respect of each in our home each day so our children would see love in action!

To love someone is to see their worth and treat them accordingly. It means lifting one another up, not tearing one another down. It means honoring the image of God in the person we love. Words can comfort, but actions reveal the truth of the heart.

I am grateful to have known a love that lived out its promises. It reminded me that Christian love is not just spoken—it is practiced. And when love is lived this way, it becomes a blessing not only to those who receive it, but to everyone who witnesses it.

I hope that you will show love and be loved ... *Happy Valentines Day!*

Dorothy



FEBRUARY 13 - JESSICA “Jess Hilarious” MOORE - Moore started off her comedy in skits. She captured the attention of thousands within weeks with her witty humor. Shortly after, she introduced herself to the stage, where she began her craft in stand-up comedy. Jess has been storming the stage with her funny and keeping us entertained with her big personality and unique creativity. Her success has grown rapidly, opening up for the legendary comedian/actor Martin Lawrence in her hometown of Baltimore City. Jess has been featured on BET, VH1, TMZ, and Centric networks. In 2018, she won the BET Social Award for “Clapback,” the first celebrity to win. Moore also starred as “Tiffany” in the short-lived Fox sitcom, Rel. In 2019, Jess co-hosted the 2019 BET Social Awards with her fellow entertainer and Wild ‘N Out fellow cast member DC Young Fly.

- Blackcelebritybirthdays.org



Spiritual Game Plan

Valley Weekly
PRESTON BROWN'S



Today's Spiritual Game Plan: "Are We There Yet?"

Genesis 8:22 says, "As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest time will never cease."

The reason I like this scripture is that it helps me to understand that "time" is just as important as the "seed." You can't grow anything without the seed. And it takes time for the seed to grow and mature.

I remember taking my family to the beach when my daughters were young. It was about a six-hour drive. So every two hours they would ask the question, "Are we there yet?" Often we ask God the same thing as it pertains to our spiritual growth. Or as it pertains to our financial growth. Or even as it pertains to growth in our maturity. No matter what the situation is, we ask God the question, "Are we there yet?" When can I see the fruits of my labor? "Are we there yet?" When can I see a difference in my relationship with my spouse?

"Are we there yet?"

When will I see a difference in my children's behavior? "Are we there yet?" When will I see a change at my job? "Are we there yet?" In times like these, we have to remember that when we enter a relationship with God, we have to learn to be patient.

Just as I would tell my daughters to "just enjoy the ride." Remember in the words of King Solomon, "There is a time for everything." (Ecclesiastes 3:1). That's why we all need to understand this principle of patience. Just enjoy what God is doing in our lives. Because sometimes the more we focus on the outcome, the less we enjoy the journey.

Prayer: Dear God, help us to learn to be

patient while you are working in our lives.

Question: What are some things in your lives that are causing you to be impatient with God's timing for your life?

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:
"Looking More Like God"



pixabay.com

THE VALLEY WEEKLY

VALLEY DEATHS



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Funeral service for **MR. PAUL TOWNSEND** (b. 1940) and celebration of life service for **MRS. PATRICIA S. CARR** (b. 1956) will be announced at a later date.

Funeral service for **PASTOR ROBERT L. DOUGLAS, SR.**, (b. 1930) was Sunday, February 8, at Oakwood Seventh-Day Adventist Church with Dr. Carlton P. Byrd officiating.



Funeral service for **MRS. BETTIE J. PARKER** (b. 1941) was Saturday, February 1, at Briar Fork Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America with Rev. Maurice Irving officiating.

Funeral service for **MINISTER REMARCUS COLLINS** (b. 1980) was Saturday, January 31, at St. Rebecca Primitive Baptist Church with Rev. Stacey Stewart officiating.

Funeral service for **MRS. SHIRLEY ANN FULLER WILSON** (b. 1961) was Saturday, January 31, at House of Hope and Restoration Church.

Funeral service for **MRS. ROSETTA WYNN** (b. 1948) was Saturday, January 31, at Union Chapel Missionary Baptist Church with Rev. James Battles officiating.

Graveside service for **MR. JAMES CARL NANCE, JR.**, (b. 1947) was Friday, January 23, at Valhalla Memory Gardens with Rev. Earla Lockhart Officiating.

Funeral service for **MRS. ANNIE (ANN) AARON DICKERSON** (b. 1939) was Tuesday, January 20, at Progressive Union M.B. Church, Huntsville, Ala.

Graveside service for **MR. WILLIAM D. FAILS, II** (b. 1981) was Monday, January 12, at Valhalla Memory Gardens with Elder Dr. Oscar Montgomery officiating.



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Millennial Moment

by Gloria B. Caldwell

“Much-Needed Break ...”

There are times when life throws some curves and you just need a moment to take a much-needed break.

Do not quit, just recover, pray, reset, and go again. That is OK. If we look at The Word, God rested. During this break, you need to rest in God.

What does that mean?

It means to spend time with Him, open up your heart and mind to Him, be silent, and listen for Him to speak.

Sometimes that means stopping all things that you have your hand in. When you are tired, or worn out, you are not able to give.

What you may be giving, may not be anything valuable. It may be emotional and not true wisdom.

It may be weak and watered down. It may not



be your best whether at work, in your family, or in general.

To give your best, you have to be your best. Not THE BEST, YOUR best!

There is a quote that says, “Take care of your mind, your body will thank you. Take care of your body, your mind will thank you.” - Debbie Hampton.

This is so true.

They both go hand in hand. Don't lose sight

of the fact that YOU are responsible for both of them.

The Word says in Matthew 11:28 ESV, “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

Take that Much-Needed Break. Take it with Him! Come back restored!

God loves you, and so do I.

He has given you a gift; open it!

Your Prayer Breakfast’s “Daily Bread” (Part 2 of 2)

“Give us THIS DAY our DAILY BREAD.” - Matthew 6:11

In our last week’s installment, “Is Prayer in your National Breakfast . . . and Lunch ... AND Dinner,” I shared that prayer needs to be our country’s regular three-meals-a-day plan more now than ever.

How to effectively start a prayer life? Jesus answered this question for His disciples when He revealed prayer’s “secret sauce.”

When they asked, “Lord: teach us to pray,” His answer became “The Lord’s Prayer” (Matthew 6:9-13). In verse 11, He offered: “Give us THIS DAY our DAILY BREAD” (emphasis added).

Most of us fall short of reaching our goals because we miss Jesus’ simple seven-word formula. We focus more on longer-range yearly goals than daily executions. But the Bible and Jesus got it right.

For example, throughout the Bible, it references “year” or “years” 324 times, but uses “day” or “days” 1,431 times—a four-to-one ratio. Perhaps that’s why so many of us fail at keeping New Year’s resolutions: our focus is incorrectly long (yearly) when it should be shorter (doable and daily).

Now, let’s instead try filling each day by making New Day’s resolutions. Smaller, bite-sized daily goals and resolutions are easier to achieve than 365-day projections that often fail.

Prayer is—or should be—our daily bread, and it is enhanced by practicing it every single day.

Make It Personal, Practical, and Portable

- Start your day with a 5-minute prayer—praise God, thank Him, and ask for guidance.
- Keep a “Daily Bread” journal, noting what you’re grateful for and how God provides each day.
- Finally, set reminders for short 1-minute prayers throughout the day, inviting God into your moments.

By making prayer personal, practical, and portable, it becomes a lifestyle—sustaining your spirit just as bread sustains your body.

Tim Allston

Leadership Player-Coach and Four-time Amazon Best-Selling Author, “Leading from the Middle”

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Join us Mondays through Fridays for *Tim Allston’s Leadership Nuggets: Educating, Equipping, and Empowering Emerging Leaders to Manage Ego Problems in 60 Seconds* (7am, 1pm, and 7pm), as well as for *The Tim Commandments of Leadership* (4pm), all Central Time and all available on Facebook, YouTube, and LinkedIn.

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VALLEY EVENTS

HAPPENINGS, ACTIVITIES & MORE!

BLACK HISTORY MONTH "A Century of Black History Commemorations"

In-Person Class
North Huntsville Public
Library
Sparkman Drive
Huntsville, Ala.
(256) 851-7492
1 p.m.

February 12
"Basic Canva"
In-Person Class
North Huntsville Public
Library
Sparkman Drive
Huntsville, Ala.
(256) 851-7492
10 a.m.

February 13-15
Joe Gatto
Comedian
Huntsville Levity Live
2012 Memorial Parkway SW
Huntsville, Ala.
(256) 261-3374

Season Sips Cocktail Class
The Orion Amphitheater
701 Amphitheater Drive NW
Huntsville, Ala.
(256) 964-9556
6:30 p.m.

February 22
Heart
Concert
Propst Arena
Von Braun Center
Huntsville, Ala.
7 p.m.

February 17
"Budgeting Basics"

February 24
"A Senior's Guide to Gam-
ing"/In-Person Class
Downtown Huntsville Pub-
lic Library
Sparkman Drive
Huntsville, Ala. - 1:30 p.m.
(256) 851-7492

February 26-March 1
Disney on Ice
Propst Arena
Von Braun Center
Huntsville, Ala.

March 5
KC and The Sunshine Band
Mark C. Smith Concert
Hall/Von Braun Center
Huntsville, Ala.
7:30 p.m.

March 6-7
Bill Bellamy
Comedian
Huntsville Levity Live
2012 Memorial Parkway SW
Huntsville, Ala.
(256) 261-3374

March 12
Season Sips Cocktail Class
The Orion Amphitheater
701 Amphitheater Drive NW

Huntsville, Ala.
(256) 964-9556
6:30 p.m.

Aaron Branch
Comedian
Huntsville Levity Live
2012 Memorial Parkway SW
Huntsville, Ala.
(256) 261-3374

March 13
Akeem Ali

Live
Mars Music Hall
Von Braun Center
Huntsville, Ala.

March 15
3rd Annual Rocket City
Blues Festival
Featuring:
West Love
J-Wonn
Tucka
King George

Mike Clark Jr.
EJ Jones (Ticketmaster)
Propst Arena
Von Braun Center
Huntsville, Ala.

March 20-21
DeRay Davis
Comedian
Huntsville Levity Live
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What Have You Been Missing?



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

Mr. Richard Van Valkenburgh

Richard Powell Van Valkenburgh, Jr., is a sixth generation native of Huntsville, Alabama, a graduate of Huntsville High School and Auburn University.

Richard's service to the community includes: longtime member and Past President of Huntsville Kiwanis Club (3rd Generation of his family to serve as President of this club); charter member and Past Chairman of Historic Huntsville Foundation and past Chairman of HHHF's Harrison Brothers Management Committee, during which time the store received a "Save America's Treasures" Matching Grant of \$100,000.

He is a lifelong member of First United Methodist Church, a member of the Sanctuary Choir and is a Trustee of the Huntsville Symphony Orchestra. He is a member of the Huntsville/Madison County Chamber of Commerce, as well as one of its CEO groups. He was part of the 2015 Huntsville-Madison County Masters' Leadership Class.

Richard and his wife, Nancy Wilkinson Van Valkenburgh, started their real estate firm, Van Valkenburgh & Wilkinson Properties, Inc. in 1985. He is President of the firm.

He has served in all the officer positions of the Huntsville Area Association of REALTORS

(HAAR) and was President in 2004. He served as President of the Alabama Association of REALTORS in 2013. He has served as a Director of the National Association of REALTORS and on the NAR Communications Committee. He is a member of the Council of Residential Brokerage Managers (CRB) and has served as President of the Alabama Chapter of CRB.

In 2005, Richard was chosen as REALTOR of the Year for the Huntsville Area Association of REALTORS and also for the Alabama Association of REALTORS. In 2013, Van Valkenburgh and his wife Nancy were awarded a resolution by the Alabama House of Representatives commending them on 50 years of marriage and their service to their community and the real estate industry.

In 2016, Richard received the David D. Roberts Award given annually to one REALTOR for community service. This made the third of the 3 major awards given by the Alabama Association of REALTORS.

At Robert Burns Night 2016, the Tennessee Valley Scottish Society surprised Richard and Nancy by awarding them TVSS's highest honor and lifetime membership.

Richard loves music and has sung in his church choirs since kindergarten –



presently being a member and Past President of the First United Methodist Church Sanctuary Choir. He is an accomplished guitarist and folk singer and was three times winner of folk singing at the Athens Old Time Fiddlers' Convention. He is a board member of the Tennessee Valley Scottish Society and often performs Scottish and Celtic songs at Festivals and Programs. For years he was in a rock n' roll band with businessmen who played at Panoply Festival of the Arts and the summertime Arts in the Park concerts.

He enjoys his six grandchildren – three boys and three girls, sharing interest in rock n' roll with two of them, one of whom has a band that played at the 2015 Panoply. As a sixth generation Huntsvillian, Richard is a big supporter of the community he loves.

"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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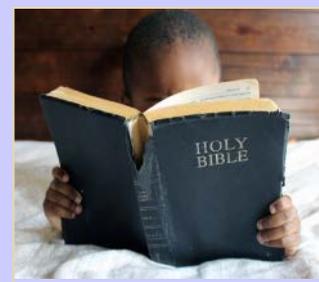
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This Sunday's Lectionary

Sunday, February 15, 2026

The Last Sunday after
the Epiphany



(Track 2, Year A)

First Lesson:

Exodus 24:12-18

Psalm 2

Second Lesson:

2 Peter 1:16-21

GOSPEL:

Matthew 17:1-9

THERE ARE MANY COLUMNISTS, BUT ...

They're Not Like Tim!



The Valley Weekly

"A thought-provoking and insightful take on the latest news and views. Join TIM ALLSTON every week for interesting perspectives you can't find anywhere else!"

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Long-time AAMU Ag Dean Presented Well-Deserved Tribute

Alabama A&M University administrators, students, faculty, staff, alumni and community partners filled the Ernest Knight Center Thursday evening to honor longtime professor and newly retired dean of the College of Agricultural, Life and Natural Sciences (CALNS), Dr. Lloyd T. Walker.

The celebration recognized Walker's 34 years of service to Alabama A&M University and marked his official retirement effective Jan. 1.

Walker joined Alabama A&M in 1992 as a young scientist whose poultry science research was already gaining national recognition. After the University learned of his work and invited him to campus, he began what would become a distinguished career defined by scholarship, leadership and an unwavering commitment to students.

Throughout his tenure, Walker served in numerous teaching and administrative roles, ultimately becoming dean of the College of Agricultural, Life and Natural Sciences and director of 1890 Research. Colleagues noted that across every position, his focus remained consistent: strengthening academic programs, supporting students and advancing Alabama A&M University's 1890 land-grant mission.

The evening program opened with greet-



Dr. Lloyd T. Walker, recently retired dean of AAMU's College of Agricultural and Natural Sciences, center, receives keepsake tribute from State Representatives Laura Hall and Anthony Daniels, in honor of his 34 years of service. (Photo Courtesy of AAMU)

ings from Dr. Douglas LaVergne, CALNS interim dean and associate vice president for faculty and undergraduate studies, followed by a meditation from the Rev. Dr. Oscar Montgomery, pastor of Union Hill Primitive Baptist Church. Grace was offered by Dr. Josh Herring, professor of food biochemistry and coordinator of the Bachelor of Science in food science degree program. Dr. Cynthia Smith, retired professor and former chair and emeritus faculty member in family and consumer sciences, served as mistress of ceremonies.

The celebration was facilitated by Dr. Ethel G. Jones, chair of the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences, along

with CALNS department chairs, students, faculty and staff.

Tributes throughout the evening reflected the breadth of Walker's influence across the University and beyond. Former Alabama A&M University President Dr. Andrew Hugine Jr. noted that current President Dr. Daniel K. Wims was unable to attend the celebration due to travel commitments. Hugine then shared reflections on their professional relationship and friendship, including collaborative efforts—such as multiple trips to China—to expand agricultural and academic programs for students.

Additional remarks were offered by Dr. Alton Thompson of the As-

sociation of Research Directors; Dr. Tau Kadhi, associate vice president for academic affairs and dean of graduate studies; Dr. Zhengtao Deng, dean of the College of Engineering, Technology and Physical Sciences; Dr. Ernst Cebert, retired manager of the Winfred Thomas Agricultural Research Center; retired Maj. Joseph Rucker on behalf of the ROTC program, which falls under CALNS; and Dr. Bernice Richardson, retired chair of the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences. Each shared personal reflections on Walker's leadership, congratulated him on his retirement and, often with humor, offered advice for his next chapter, while underscoring his dedica-

tion to students and the continued growth of the University.

Alumnus and University partner Billy Bridgforth, owner of Bridgforth Farms, reflected on his years of working with Walker, including traveling to the U.S. Capitol for funding. Katelyn Boyle, a doctoral candidate in food science, offered remarks from the student perspective, highlighting Walker's mentorship and encouragement.

Several dignitaries presented proclamations and plaques honoring Walker, including Alabama State Reps. Dr. Laura Hall and Anthony Daniels. Dr. Jeanette Jones, University Distinguished Professor, University trustee and Faculty Senate president, presented a plaque on behalf of the University faculty. The chairs of CALNS departments also presented Walker with a plaque to honor his years of mentorship and service.

Family tributes provided some of the evening's most heartfelt moments. Walkers' wife of 45 years, Fay Walker, shared that retirement will allow her husband more time to rest, travel and be with family. "He's been married to this job all these years, but now we have him to ourselves," she said.

Their daughter, Dr. Karlene Walker Shirley, reflected on growing up in her father's laboratory and the lessons she

learned by watching his commitment to science and students. She also read a poem written by her sister Carol titled "Daddy." With one of Walker's grandchildren seated on the dais—occasionally greeting guests—the moment underscored the central role of family in his life.

A video tribute followed, featuring the Walkers' son, Kibwe, an AAMU biology graduate, along with students, faculty and staff from across CALNS, each offering congratulations and gratitude for Walker's leadership and legacy.

Walker closed the program with remarks of appreciation.

"I don't know what to say," he began. "Thank you all so much." He thanked former President Hugine and First Lady Abbiegail Hugine for attending and reflected on his decision to retire.

"Dr. Hugine told me, 'You will know when it's time,' and he was right," Walker said. "It was a tough decision, but I'm looking forward to spending time with my children and grandchildren and traveling with my wife. I will miss the students here most."

Referring to plans to establish a scholarship in his name, Walker concluded, "I want to kick it off with a \$25,000 donation. I will always put students at Alabama A&M University first."

City Plans African American Art Festival

Parks & Recreation will host an African American Art Festival in celebration of Black History Month in February.

The inspiring exhibit will be displayed Saturday, Feb. 21, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the Dr. Robert Shurney Legacy Center, 3011-A Sparkman Dr NW. The free event will feature local artists and their works.

The all-ages event will include creative learning and community connection. Kids will have the chance to participate in



interactive art activities, including digital art experiences.

Other features include artist interviews and discussions that give attendees an opportunity to learn more about the creative process and the stories behind the work.

“We’re excited to host an event that celebrates

Black History Month while highlighting the creativity and talent of local artists,” Parks & Recreation Superintendent of Recreation for Community Services Dorianne Johnson said. “Our hope is that residents of all ages leave feeling inspired, connected and proud of the stories and culture represented through art.”

While the festival runs from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., residents are welcome to stop by at their convenience and enjoy the display and event at their leisure. - Huntsville.gov

A&M Police Force Debuts First Electric Fleet

The Alabama A&M University Department of Public Safety (DPS) has debuted four new electric vehicles, becoming the first university campus in the state of Alabama to operate an electric police vehicle fleet.

The rollout builds on the University’s leadership in sustainability. In 2019, Alabama A&M became the first campus in the state to introduce electric buses and the first HBCU in the nation to do so. These latest additions are part of the University’s long-term goal to achieve zero emissions by 2031.

“We’re the first police department in the state to have this type of vehicle supporting a university campus,” says Chief Montrez Payton, Chief of Police and Executive Director of Emergency Preparedness. “That’s something we’re very proud of—supporting green initiatives while still being able to respond efficiently to the needs of our students and campus community.” Payton says the new Chevy Blazer EVs are state-of-the-art and fully equipped for law enforcement operations.

“These are police-pack-

aged vehicles—they’re not just EVs,” says Payton. “They have all the same capabilities and equipment as traditional patrol vehicles. Even though they’re fully electric, they support everything we need from a functionality standpoint.”

The vehicles were acquired through federal appropriations, making the investment cost-free for the University.

“The federal government wanted to invest in our campus and campus safety,” Payton adds. “That support made this possible at no cost to Alabama A&M.”

AAMU Reopens ‘Career Closet’ for Success

Alabama A&M University students preparing for interviews, internships, career fairs and other professional opportunities now have renewed access to free career-ready attire with the reopening of the Diann H. Greer Career Closet.

The Career Closet provides students with access to casual and professional clothing at no cost, helping ensure students can present themselves confidently and professionally.

The Career Closet was renamed the Diann H. Greer Career Closet in honor of



was introduced by students and approved by the AAMU Board of Trustees.

Students may browse and select a variety of items, including suits, blazers, shirts, blouses, pants, skirts, dresses, coats, shoes, purses, accessories and other career-related attire. All items are free to students, and no appointment is required.

The Career Closet is staffed by student employees who assist with organizing donations, maintaining inventory and supporting their peers during operating hours.

the longtime director of Student Activities & Leadership Development, whose dedication to student growth left a lasting impact on the AAMU community. The idea to rename the space



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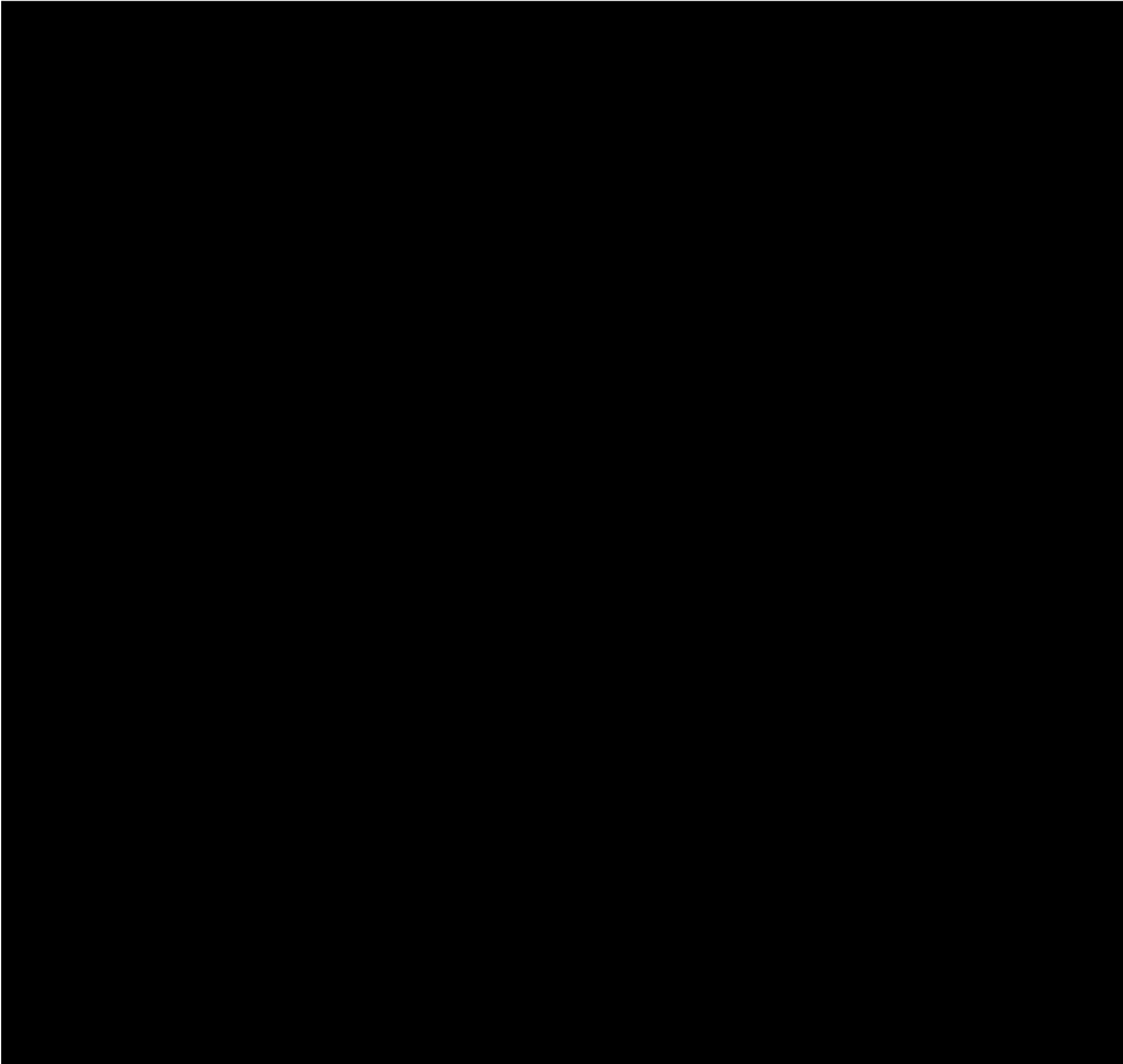
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