

# Rosetta James Foundation Day Gala Now in Countdown! - p. 8

**FREE**

## God Is in Control!" - p. 4



Friday  
**March 6, 2026**  
 Vol. 12, No. 27  
 ValleyWeeklyllc.com

**SALUTE!**  
 Rosetta James Foundation  
 ELDER OF THE WEEK



Mrs. Doris Ellison

*"The only way to make sense out of change is to plunge into it, move with it, and join the dance." — Alan Watts*

### The Hill Mourns Death of Trustee Hackett



Alabama A&M University is mourning the loss of Trustee John Hackett Jr., a proud alumnus, dedicated leader and longtime District 7 member of the AAMU Board of Trustees.

A native of

Birmingham, Ala., Hackett was a 1965 graduate of AAMU, earning a bachelor's degree in building construction engineering. He often spoke fondly of his student days on "The Hill," reflecting a lifelong love for

his alma mater and its mission.

Hackett served as president of the AAMU Alumni Association from 2012 to 2014, helping to strengthen alumni engagement and support for the institution.



### Pink, White & Blue Children's Ball Set

The Greater Huntsville Chapter of Jack and Jill of America, Inc., will hold its annual Pink, White & Blue Children's Ball on Saturday, March 7, from 6-9 p.m. at the Stovehouse Event Center in Huntsville, Ala.

Families, sponsors, and community partners are invited to attend this formal evening of dinner, dancing, and entertainment in support of children and families in our community.

Since 2010, the event has generated significant support for local charitable organizations. In recent years, the event has raised more than \$20,000 annually to benefit youth-serv-



**JACK AND JILL**  
 of America, Inc.

ing partners, including the Boys & Girls Club of North Alabama, Girls Inc., Village of Promise, and other organizations dedicated to serving children and families. Proceeds from the 2026 Children's Ball will benefit St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, the Jack and Jill of America Foundation, and additional local 501(c)(3) organizations.

The Jack and Jill of America Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Jack and Jill of America, Inc., has supported commu-

nity-based organizations nationwide since 1968.

"Our chapter remains committed to elevating excellence in all children and ensuring they have access to opportunities that help them thrive," said Richele Jordan-Davis, President of the Greater Huntsville Chapter. "The Pink, White & Blue Children's Ball allows us to celebrate our youth while investing in their dreams and future success."

Tickets are available **HERE**.

### AAMU Women Down ASU, Rise in SWAC

Alabama A&M women's basketball protected home court on Saturday afternoon, earning a 51-43 victory over Alabama State at the AAMU Event Center to improve to 19-9 overall and 15-1 in the SWAC. With the victory, Alabama A&M continues its strong conference run and winning streak of 15 straight games.

Jaida Belton led the Bulldogs with 12 points and eight

rebounds, while Kamiyha Griffin added 10 points off the bench on an ef-

ficient 5-of-6 shooting performance, also reaching a new career high.

Dawn Thornton's team prepares for an early week matchup against Grambling.

## The Valley Weekly

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Here are the top issues and events in Washington, D.C., for the week of March 2.

**1. CONGRESS.** The House and Senate are in session. A revised schedule for the week now includes a vote to reopen the Homeland Security Department (unfunded for 3 weeks). GOP leaders are using the Iran war as leverage to pressure Democrats to fund full DHS operations amid new security threats in the U.S. House Democrats and Republicans held separate emergency meetings Sunday night to discuss the U.S. strikes on Iran, with House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries (D-NY) affirming that House Democrats will force a vote on limiting the President's war powers in Iran without explicit congressional authorization. The Senate will resume consideration of an affordable housing bill that passed the House on Feb. 9 by a 390-9 vote. The bill would streamline federal programs, modernize zoning guidelines,

and expand manufactured housing financing. Last week, Senate Majority Leader John Thune (R-SD) rejected the idea of forcing Democrats into an old-style "talking filibuster" to advance a House-passed bill to require voters to show documented proof of citizenship (the "SAVE America Act") ...

**2. EXECUTIVE BRANCH.** On Saturday, the President announced that U.S. and Israeli armed forces had launched the joint "Operation Epic Fury," a wide-ranging military attack on Iran intended to topple the Islamic Republic. On Tuesday afternoon, Secretaries Rubio and Hegseth were set to hold briefings for the House and Senate on the Iran action. On Friday, the President will host a White House meeting with college sports officials to discuss "name, image & likeness" (NIL) issues, athlete employment status, and antitrust protection for the NCAA and conferences. Last

Friday, the administration placed AI firm Anthropic on a far-reaching national security blacklist ... effective immediately. Anthropic countered that it will sue to overturn the action, which it said stemmed from its refusal to allow the Pentagon to use its AI tool, Claude, to power fully autonomous AI weapons and wide-scale surveillance of U.S. citizens.

Last Thursday, the Department of Labor issued a proposed rule affecting 12 million workers regarding its interpretation of who qualifies as an independent contractor under the Fair Labor Standards Act. The rule would rescind the Department's 2024 interpretation adopted during the Biden Administration—which narrowed the definition of independent contractor—and replace it with the 2021 Rule the Department previously adopted during the first Trump Administration.

**3. SUPREME COURT.** On

Monday, the Supreme Court heard the 2nd gun rights case of this term, a Texas case, on whether a federal law that prohibits users of illegal drugs from possessing a gun is constitutional (the administration is arguing that the law is valid). The Court will also issue opinions from its docket this week.

**4. INFLATION REPORT.** Last Friday, the Labor Department reported a stronger-than-expected increase in the Producer Price Index (PPI) for January. The cost of goods outside the volatile food and energy category rose the most in more than 3 years, as businesses passed on import tariffs to consumers and raised prices at the start of

2026. Core PPI rose 0.8% last month after increasing 0.6% in December. The Federal Reserve's next interest rate setting session is scheduled for March 17-18, when most observers expect the Fed to put any further interest rate reductions on hold, given persistent inflation numbers.

**5. HIGHER EDUCATION.** On March 4, community college leaders testified before the House Appropriations Committee on federal funding priorities, including Pell Grants and workforce development. Among the witnesses are Patricia Sims of Drake State Community & Technical College and Shawn Morgan of Beville State Community College, who will

highlight the sector's role in economic mobility and regional workforce needs. Their testimony comes as Congress confronts a growing Pell Grant funding crisis, with the Congressional Budget Office projecting a \$5.5 billion shortfall in 2026-27 and \$11.5 billion the following year due to expanded FAFSA eligibility. With one-third of Pell recipients enrolled at community colleges, the hearing is a pivotal moment to ensure students and institutions are protected in the upcoming budget cycle.

Hamm Consulting Group  
1717 K Street, NW, Suite 900  
Washington, D.C. 20006  
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rhamm@hammconsulting.com

## Upcoming Events at Drake State!

**Career Week**  
April 13-16

April 27 – 30

*Drake State Retiree Luncheon, April 28*

**Career Fair**  
April 15

*Ellenae Fairhurst Automotive Center Announcement, April 27*

**Jazz in the City**  
June 19

*Mars Music Hall/VBC Downtown Huntsville*

**Founder's Week Celebration**

*Giving Day, April 28*

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**The Valley Weekly**

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# DAMSON FAMILY: A Legacy of Giving

In a community as vibrant and growing as Huntsville, it is easy to celebrate innovation, industry, and expansion. Yet the true measure of a city is not only found in its skyline or economic success, but in the quiet, consistent generosity of families who invest in its people. This week, we pause to recognize one such family: the Damsons.

For many years, Butch and Jerry Damson owned and led Jerry Damson Honda and Jerry Damson Acura with integrity, professionalism, and a deep sense of responsibility to the community that supported their business. But their legacy extends far beyond the automobile industry. It is etched into the fabric of Huntsville through decades of philanthropy, faith, and servant leadership.

They faithfully supported St. Joseph Catholic Church and St. Joseph Catholic School, strengthening both spiritual and educational foundations for generations of families. Their generosity reached across our diverse nonprofit landscape — from Burritt on the Mountain to Huntsville Botanical Garden, to the Huntsville Museum of Art, and to the Rosetta James Foundation — just to name a few. Their giving reflected a belief that strong communities are built when arts, culture, education, and faith are nurtured together.

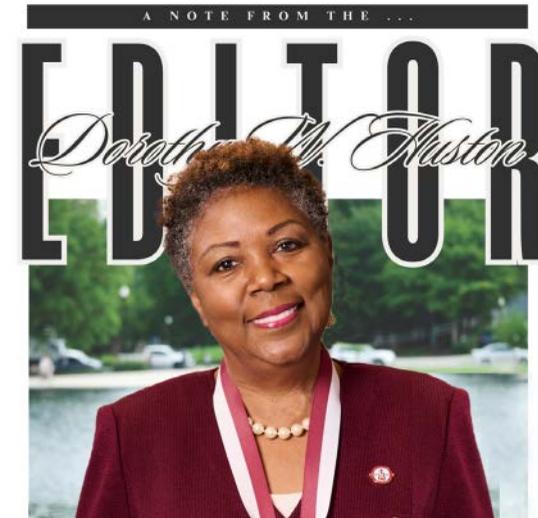
On a personal note, they were friends of ours for many years. Their kindness was not performative. It was genuine, steady, and rooted in humility. Jerry always teased that “Butch simply gave away everything that he earned!”



are being restored and futures reclaimed.

The Damson family’s impact is both immediate and generational. They are investing in students who will become tomorrow’s leaders. They are strengthening institutions that preserve culture and community identity. They are walking alongside families in crisis. Their influence is shaping trajectories — quietly, faithfully, and powerfully.

Too often, we wait until memorial services or milestone banquets to express gratitude. We assume people know how much they are appreciated. But gratitude left unspoken is gratitude unfinished. So this week, I want to say it clearly: Thank you. Until next week ...



When Butch passed away a few years ago, their son, Deke and Danielle Damson, honored her memory and legacy in a way that spoke volumes. They endowed a scholarship in Butch’s name through the Rosetta James Foundation, ensuring that her legacy would continue opening doors for students seeking higher education. That act alone would be meaningful enough. Yet it is only a glimpse of their continued servant-leader posture. Today, they continue to give and support our foundation.

Today, Deke serves as Board President and is deeply engaged in the Not One More Alabama initiative, supporting families affected by the disease of addiction. At a time when substance use disorder continues to touch households across every demographic, this work is not only necessary — it is transformative. Through advocacy, awareness, and compassionate outreach, lives

*Dorothy*

**MARCH 6 - TIMOTHY MATTHEW HOWARD** - Timothy Matthew Howard is the most capped goalkeeper of all-time for the United States men’s national team, with 121 caps between 2002 and his international retirement in 2017. He was an unused substitute for the 2006 World Cup but later established himself as first-choice keeper of the United States’ international tournament games beginning with the 2009 FIFA Confederations Cup, in which the U.S. ended as runner-up against Brazil. Howard participated at both the 2010 and 2014 World Cups, starting in all their matches.



- [Blackcelebritybirthdays.org](http://Blackcelebritybirthdays.org)

# Spiritual Game Plan

Valley Weekly  
PRESTON BROWNS



Today's Spiritual Game Plan:  
"God Is in Control"

and know that God is in control.

The devil will try to convince us that if we were following Jesus, we wouldn't be having all this trouble. We find this also in our scripture reading. When the disciples got in the boat to follow Jesus, they had no idea that a storm was about to happen. Sometimes in our lives, storms are not in the forecast. It is the same with the coronavirus: no one saw it coming or the effects it would have on our lives. Faith doesn't prevent us from being snakebitten or having problems. Our faith gives us the ability to shake it off and understand the new revelation and new direction that God has for our lives.

May God, with the



love of Jesus, give you spiritual success in overcoming the storms that come in your life.

*Question:* What new revelation and direction has God given you after a tragedy in 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](http://amazon.com).

**NEXT WEEK:**  
"A New Level of Praise!"

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THE VALLEY WEEKLY  
**VALLEY DEATHS**



### NELMS MEMORIAL FUNERAL HOME

2501 Carmichael Avenue NW - Huntsville, AL 35816  
[www.nelmsmemorial.net](http://www.nelmsmemorial.net) - (256) 539-8189

Funeral service for **MRS. JUDY ANN WILLIAMS-MCCARVER** (b. 1950) was Thursday, March 5, at Rudder Funeral Home—Scottsboro, Ala., with Reverend George Clay officiating. [Mrs. McCarver is the cousin of Ms. Brenda Friend, staff member at Nelms Memorial Funeral Home, and a member of the Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church Woodville, Ala.]

Funeral service for **MR. FREDDIE N. SCOTT** (b. 1954) was Saturday, February 21, at Pine Grove Missionary Baptist Church with Pastor C. Jermaine Turner officiating.

Funeral service for **MRS. KATHERINE FITCHERD** (b. 1955) was Saturday, February 21, at Nelms Memorial Funeral Home Chapel.

Funeral service for **MR. GLEN GARY FARRIS** (b. 1949) was Saturday, February 21, at The Fellowship of Faith Church with Pastor Troy Garner officiating.

Funeral service for **MR. JOHN WILLIAM HARDIN, JR.**, (b. 1956) was Sunday, February 15, at Nelms Memorial Funeral Home Chapel with Pastor Donald Barney officiating.

Funeral service for **MS. TERESA DIANE BRISTER** (b. 1972) was Saturday, February 14, at Nelms Memorial Funeral Home Chapel with Pastor Carolyn Baker officiating.

Funeral service for **MS. SHERIKA B. THOMPSON** (b. 1992) was Friday, February 13, at St. Rebecca Primitive Baptist Church with Pastor Perry Clark officiating.

Funeral service for **MR. KEVIN DWAIN THOMPSON** (b. 1973) was Thursday, February 12, at Union Chapel Missionary Baptist Church with Pastor O. Wendell Davis officiating.

### LEGAL NOTICE NOTICE OF COMPLETION

In accordance with Chapter 1, Title 39, Code of Alabama, 1975, as amended, notice is hereby given that **Apex Architectural Metal, LLC.**, Contractor, has completed the **Contract for the Reroofing and Repairs** for the **James A. Lane Boys and Girls Club**, a Stephen Ward and Associates, Inc. Project, at 103 Abingdon Ave. N.W., Huntsville, AL 35801 for the Boys and Girls Club of North Alabama (Owner), and have made request for final settlement of said Contract. All persons having any claim for labor, materials, or otherwise in connection with this project should immediately notify Stephen Ward and Associates, Inc. PO Box 6815, Huntsville, AL 35813.

## When F.I.G.L.E.A.V.E.S. Fail

There is a reason the Bible remains the best-selling book in human history.

In December 1989's Esquire Magazine, when asked what book people needed to read in the coming decade, Oprah Winfrey answered simply: "The Bible — because every answer to every question that man could ever pose has already been answered."

One of those answers appears in Genesis 3.

### Adam & Eve

Adam and Eve sinned. Immediately, they felt naked. And their first instinct was not confession — it was concealment. They reached for fig leaves.

Temporary coverings for permanent problems.

History shows us that whenever power is threatened — in politics, business, churches, or homes — the instinct is the same. Spin. Deflect. Control the narrative. Sew together fig leaves.

But fig leaves always wither.

Detached from their source, they cannot last.

I use **F.I.G.L.E.A.V.E.S.** as a leadership acronym:

Forgotten and Ignored God-voids in our Lives  
that we cannot Escape or Avoid  
because we are Vulnerable to them  
unless Emmanuel Saves Us.



Fig leaves represent our frantic attempts to mask ego-holism — whether inflated ego or deflated ego.

### "Lord, is it I?"

In Matthew 26:22, when Jesus tells His disciples that one of them will betray Him, they do not ask, "Is it him?"

They ask, "Lord, is it I?"

That is leadership maturity.

Exposure in public life is not merely political drama. It is a mirror. And mirrors are invitations.

Numbers 32:23 warns, "Be sure your sin will find you out." But 1 John 1:9 offers hope: confession leads to cleansing.

Better to take it to the T-O-P:

Target the problem.  
Own the problem.  
Proceed to action.

Because fig leaves fail.

Truth, however, endures.



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.



### Tim Allston

Leadership Player-Coach and Four-time Amazon Best-Selling Author, "Leading from the Middle"  
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Website: [www.timallston.com](http://www.timallston.com)

# Millennial Moment

by Gloria B. Caldwell

## "Small Steps to Big ..."

Five (5) days out of the week I get up to workout at 4 a.m. Some days tired, but I move past being tired and do it anyway. When working out, I set a mirror in front of me. I do this so I can motivate myself. When I feel fatigued, or the pain hits, I say to myself, "Build Gloria, Build!"



I think, brick by brick, layer by layer...small to big! I notice the definition in my body, and I say, "I've come too far to let go of what I have accomplished." Even if I take a 5-second break, I get right back at it.

I don't quit! Sometimes I slow down, but I don't quit! The moments I feel tapped out, I don't say "Forget this" and quit. I realize it takes small moves to get something big!!

Nothing in life comes all at once, and if it does, most

of the time "we" end up losing it, because we don't understand the process and how to keep it! In these small steps to big, you are building the foundation you need to keep what you have created.

You're learning yourself, your strengths, and your weaknesses. You capitalize on the strengths and work on those weaknesses, to be able to do it better the next time! Soon, you have

mastered those weaknesses or figured out how to work around them.

It's all part of the process of small to big! Small thoughts, coupled together, make big ideas! Small steps, in the same direction, cover big territory!

Take a moment to think about what you're trying to do.

Start today, one small step at a time!

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The Valley Weekly

# VALLEY EVENTS

HAPPENINGS, ACTIVITIES &amp; MORE!

**BLACK HISTORY MONTH**  
"A Century of Black  
History Commemorations"

228 Church Street NW  
Huntsville, Ala. - 4 p.m.

**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 7**

Spelman College Glee Club  
In Concert (Ticket: \$50)  
Church Street Cumberland  
Presbyterian Church

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

**March 12**

Season Sips Cocktail Class

## NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC CITY OF HUNTSVILLE CLOSEOUT PUBLIC HEARING

The City of Huntsville's **Community Development Department** will hold a **Public Hearing** on **Friday, March 27, 2026, at 12:30 P.M.** to receive input and discuss the **closeout of the City of Huntsville's CDBG Project**. The meeting will be held online via Microsoft Teams Meeting at: **CDBG Public Facilities - BGC Roof Rehab Closeout Public Hearing**. Meeting ID: 299 775 267 249 27, Passcode: 5QM2RR9Q.

The City of Huntsville is interested in obtaining all citizens' input on the performance of local officials, City of Huntsville staff, consultants and administrators, engineers, contractors, and the use of CDBG funds throughout the implementation of the Project. The City of Huntsville does not discriminate based on disability for the admission or access to its programs or activities. If you have any questions, or will need special accommodations, please contact Community Development Department prior to the Public Hearing at 256-427-5400 or comdev@huntsvilleal.gov.

03172025

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  
2012 Memorial Parkway SW  
Huntsville, Ala.  
(256) 261-3374

**March 27-29**

The 6th Annual Women's  
Expo Conference  
The Westin Hotel  
Huntsville, Ala.  
www.thewomensexpohsv.com



SPELMAN COLLEGE  
**GLEE CLUB  
CONCERT**

PRESENTED BY  
HUNTSVILLE AREA CHAPTER OF  
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**March 7, 2026  
4:00PM**

**Ticket Cost: \$50.00**

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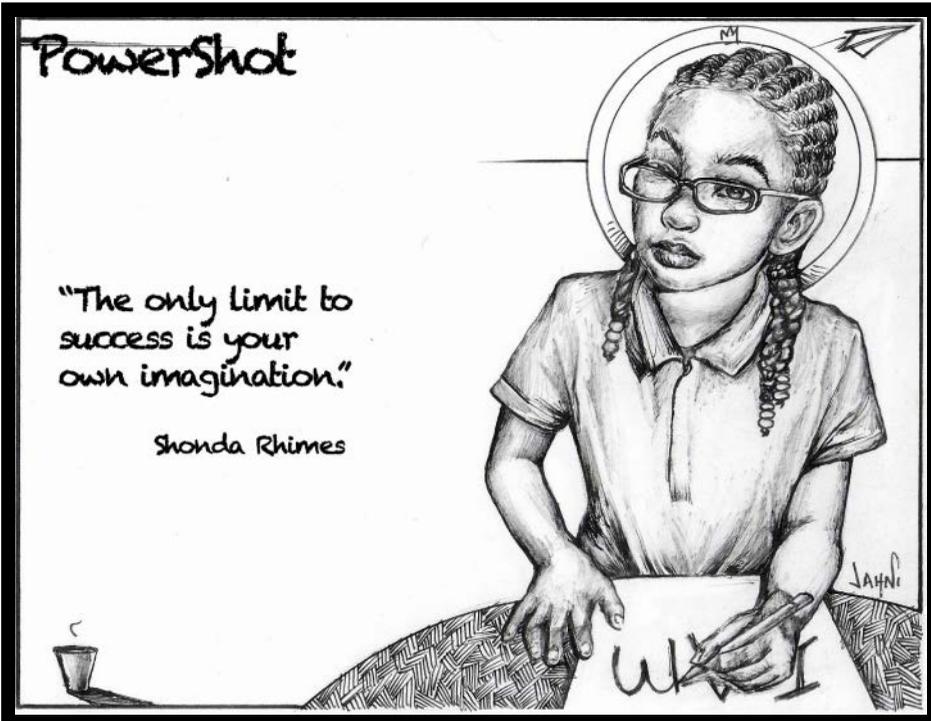
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Rosetta James Foundation "Spotlight on Our Elders" ... Featuring

## Mrs. Doris Ellison

Huntsville, Ala., resident Doris Ellison attended and graduated from Council High School. A retiree of Bellsouth AT&T, where she worked for 32 years as a service representative (business), Ellison and her husband, the late Perry Ellison, Jr., had five children.

Mrs. Ellison praised and glorified God for the fact that her five children completed college and became successful professionals in the world of work. As an active and productive member of the community, she volunteered with the Salvation Army, Huntsville Hospital and the Bellsouth AT&T Pioneers.

On Wednesdays, she volunteered at the Huntsville Hospital, performing such duties as answering the telephone, providing information to visitors and delivering flowers to patients' rooms.



With the Salvation Army, she answered the telephone and took requests for donations, such as furniture, clothing, etc.

Additionally, as a volunteer with the Bellsouth AT&T Pioneers, she assisted with the screening of volunteers for the Pioneers and assisted Top of Alabama Regional Council with its Annual Senior Day. Following the death of her husband, Mrs. Ellison and her children established the Perry Ellison Scholarship Foundation.

The Foundation sponsors an annual drama produced by her daughter, Mrs. Delanus Sharpe. The proceeds support scholarships.

Ellison was a longtime and active member (more than 57 years) of Pine Grove Missionary Baptist Church. At Pine Grove, she served as a member of the Senior Usher Ministry and Senior Missionary Ministry. Also, she worked with the Youth Department, where she assisted youths with career development preparation.

"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](http://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](mailto:info@valleyweeklyllc.com).



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THERE ARE MANY COLUMNISTS, BUT ...

**They're Not Like Tim!**

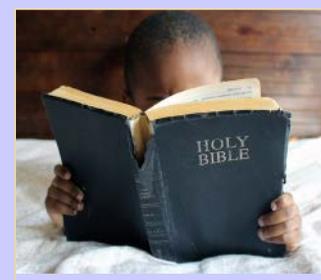
The Valley Weekly

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## This Sunday's Lectionary

Sunday, March 8, 2026  
The Third Sunday  
in Lent



(Track 2, Year A)

**First Lesson:**  
Exodus 17:1-7  
Psalm 95

**Second Lesson:**  
Romans 5:1-11  
**GOSPEL:**  
John 4:5-42

# Rosetta James Foundation Celebrates 20th Anniversary

The Rosetta James Foundation will celebrate its 20th anniversary of honoring active senior citizens and encouraging volunteerism among the nation's newest leaders.

The Honoring Our Elders Celebration will be held at The Jackson Center, 6001 Moquin Drive NW (Cumplings Research Park), Huntsville, Ala., on Saturday, March 14, at 12 noon. For ticket and other information, click [HERE](#) or visit [www.rosettajames-foundation.org](http://www.rosettajames-foundation.org).

Among the dozen distinguished 2026 RJF honorees are: Mrs. Linda Casselman Akenhead, Ms. Lynne Berry, Ms. Phyllis Chunn, Mrs. Pam Curry, Mrs. Veronica Curtis-Richie, Mr. Johann Moore, Dr. Evelyn Penn, Dr. Bernice Richardson, Mr. Robert Richardson, Rev. Dr. W. Temple Richie, Mr. Willie Smith and Ms. Clarene Teague-Johnson.

**Mrs. Linda Casselman Akenhead** has served as an officer, board member and volunteer for the following organizations: Trustee with Randolph School; Chair for Vive Le Livre for the Library Foundation; Christian Women Job Corps; Blount Hospitality House; Huntsville Hospital Foundation Board of Trustees and Millenium Society Founder; First United Methodist Church having served as a Recording Secretary, Altar Guild, Meal Prep for members who are homebound as well as a Liturgist; Arts Council Advisory Committee; Leadership Greater Huntsville Graduate and

Committee of 100.

**Ms. Lynne Berry** is a respected non-profit executive, community leader, and philanthropy professional whose career spans more than four decades of service to North Alabama and the state of Alabama. Her work reflects a consistent commitment to strengthening communities through strategic fundraising, public service, historic preservation, education, and civic engagement.

After relocating out of state, **Ms. Phyllis Chunn** built a distinguished career in the technology sector, holding positions with major corporations including IBM and MCI WorldCom. She concluded her professional career at Hewlett-Packard, retiring as a Senior Project Manager. Along the way, she gathered experiences that sharpened her leadership skills and deepened her understanding of people, purpose, and perseverance.

In 1982, **Mrs. Pamela Murray Curry** relocated to Huntsville, Alabama, where she devoted many years of professional service to the Huntsville City Schools system as a licensed social worker. Through her work, she touched countless lives with compassion, discern-

ment, and quiet strength, retiring in 2007 after a career marked by integrity and dedication to children and families.

**Mrs. Veronica Curtis-Richie** devoted thirty-four years of professional service to the Huntsville City School System, where she held a wide range of demanding and impactful roles. Her work included serving as a Learning Disabilities Teacher, Drug Education Instructor, and ultimately Coordinator of Drug Education for the entire school system. She also served as a school counselor and curriculum specialist, bringing insight, compassion, and rigor to every assignment.

**Mr. Johann Moore** is a lifelong servant-leader whose legacy is defined by disciplined mentorship, intergenerational stewardship, and more than four decades of service to youth, community, and country.

Born in Mobile, Alabama, he completed his primary and secondary education there before attending college and later pursuing a distinguished military and civic career.

**Dr. Evelyn Penn's** spiritual foundation is supported by rigorous theological study. She attended the Birmingham Baptist Bible Institute and, in 2014, earned the Doctor of Theology degree from the Minnesota Graduate School of Theology. Her doctoral dissertation focused on Pneumatology—the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit—reflecting a lifelong devotion to understanding and teaching the work of God's Spirit.

**Dr. Bernice Richardson** held several leadership roles at Alabama A&M. She served as Coordinator of Human Development, Chair of Home Economics Education, Associate Dean, and Chair of the Depart-

ment of Family and Consumer Sciences. In these roles, she helped secure accreditation for academic programs and later led efforts to renew that accreditation. She also helped change the program's name from Home Economics to Family and Consumer Sciences to reflect the field's broader focus.

**Mr. Robert Richardson** became a computer programmer at Computer Sciences Corporation, working with scientists at the Marshall Space Flight Center on projects such as the Magnetohydrodynamics Sun-Spot Model, and lending programming expertise to the NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory. He later returned to AAMU as the institution's first full-time computer center director, where he also taught computer science classes. He played a critical role in modernizing the university's computing infrastructure.

**Rev. Dr. W. Temple Richie, Jr.** is a distinguished pastor, scholar, writer, and chaplain whose life reflects a profound inheritance of faith, intellectual rigor, and service to church and community. A native of Washington, D.C., Dr. Richie possesses a ministry grounded in distinguished academic

preparation. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Philosophy from Virginia State College (now University), followed by the S.T.B./Master of Divinity degree in Theology and Biblical Studies from Harvard Divinity School. He later completed the Doctor of Ministry degree at Louisville Seminary.

**Mr. Willie Smith** has a work history that includes two years at Redstone Arsenal as a projectionist, followed by three years at Alabama A&M University. He later spent three years at University Volkswagen as an auto body repairman before beginning a 28-year career with Goodyear Dunlop Tires, where he ultimately retired. Alongside his full-time employment, Smith devoted an additional 25 years—to weekends and evenings—to documenting life's most meaningful moments as a videographer.

**Ms. Clarene Teague-Johnson** is an educator, administrator, entrepreneur, and mentor whose life reflects a steadfast commitment to service, leadership, and empowerment. With a career spanning more than four decades, she has devoted her talents to education, community development, and institutional advancement—leaving an enduring impact on Alabama A&M University, the Cooperative Extension system, and the Huntsville community.

RJF was founded by Dr. Dorothy W. Huston.



MRS. LINDA CASSELMAN AKENHEAD

MS. LYNNE BERRY

MS. PHYLLIS CHUNN

MRS. PAM CURRY

MRS. VERONICA CURTIS-RICHIE

MR. JOHANN MOORE



DR. EVELYN PENN



DR. BERNICE RICHARDSON



MR. ROBERT RICHARDSON



REV. DR. W. TEMPLE RICHIE



MR. WILLIE SMITH



MS. CLARENE TEAGUE-JOHNSON

# Public Commentator Addresses AAMU BHM Event

Alabama A&M University welcomed nationally recognized scholar, author and public commentator Eddie S. Glaude Jr. on Feb. 19 for its Black History Month Legacy Gala in the Knight Center Ballroom, where he delivered a thought-provoking address examining race, democracy and the meaning of American patriotism as the nation approaches its 250th anniversary.



country's founding. Unlike previous commemorations, he said, the 250th anniversary arrives at a time of deep division.

"What I am trying to suggest is the double consciousness that's often attributed to us is actually a consequence of the double consciousness of the nation," Glaude said. "Y'all feel me?"

Glaude pointed to the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement as a moment when the country briefly confronted those contradictions.

"You have this Black Lives Matter movement that's exposing this divided soul of the nation, and the backlash has been swift and harsh," he said. Reflecting on the rapid shift in public discourse, he added, "The only thing you can conclude, given the swiftness of the backlash, is that folks were lying. They didn't mean what they said."

He cautioned that some observances of the 250th anniversary risk returning to what he described as a "storybook America," one that minimizes the role of

Black Americans in order to preserve a more comfortable national narrative. In contrast, he highlighted the long tradition of Black freedom celebrations — from early abolition commemorations to Juneteenth — as examples of how Black communities have historically held the nation accountable to its own democratic ideals.

Throughout his address, Glaude emphasized that celebrating Black history in the current moment is itself a meaningful act. He encouraged the audience to engage the American past honestly, arguing that a truthful reckoning is essential to realizing the promise of a more perfect union.



## Council Meetings

**Huntsville City Council's regular meetings are held on the 1st floor of the Municipal Building.**

**The meetings are held on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month at 5:30 p.m.**

**Woody Anderson Ford**  
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# Book Club Takes on Award-winning “The Chinaberry Tree”

Organizers and attendees of the Same Book, Different Pages book club at the Robert “Bob” Harrison Senior Wellness and Advocacy Center recently experienced a literary treat.

The February 20 discussion focused on *The Chinaberry Tree*, a literary work by local author Jerome

Saintjones.

“We’re so grateful to have shared this special afternoon with such thoughtful readers and engaging conversation,” planners noted in a weekly newsletter highlighting previous and upcoming activities.

“A heartfelt thank you

to Mr. Saintjones for being our guest and giving us a deeper look into his work—your insights made the story come alive in new ways. We appreciate everyone who came out to connect, share perspectives, and celebrate the power of storytelling together,” said Theresa Cawthorne.



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