

Updated Marker Honors Black Businessmen - p. 9

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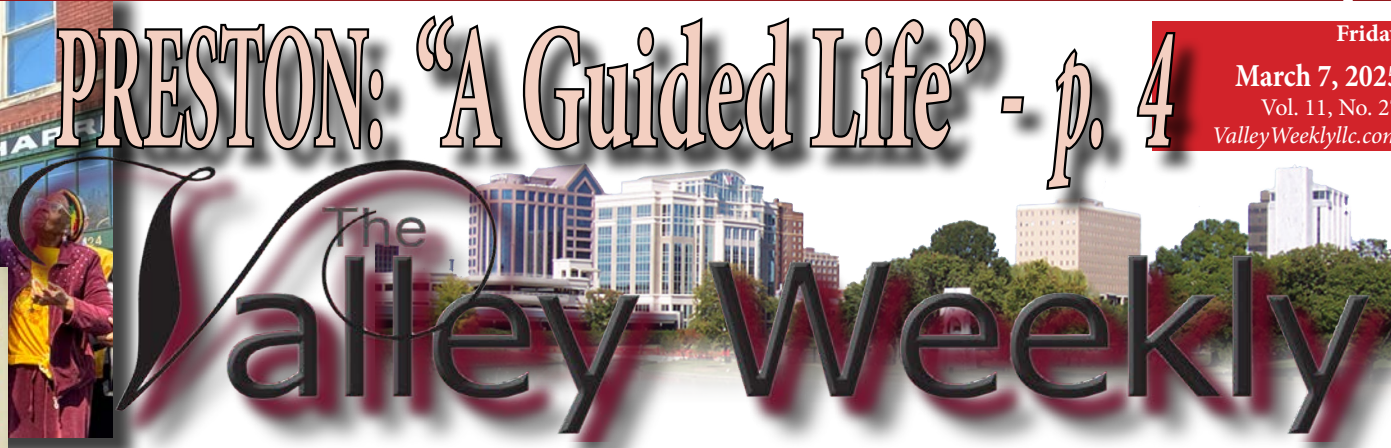
PRESTON: "A Guided Life" - p. 4

Friday
 March 7, 2025
 Vol. 11, No. 27
 ValleyWeeklly.com

SALUTE!
 Rosetta James Foundation
 ELDER OF THE WEEK



Mr. William James Davis



"The way to right wrongs is to turn the light of truth upon them." - Ida B. Wells-Barnett

AAMU CDC Registering for Summer Camp



The Alabama A&M University Child Development Center is gearing up for another exciting summer with its annual Summer Camp, open to children ages 3-8. Registration begins in person on Friday, February 28, 2025 at the center.

The camp will run from May 27 - July 25, 2025, operating Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. Families

can expect a summer full of engaging activities, including field trips to an indoor trampoline park, movies, and a splash pad.
 Camp Fees:
 Registration Fee: \$150
 Weekly Tuition: \$130 (all ages)
 Weekly Activity Fee: \$10

For more details or to secure a spot, please contact Dr. Ronay Hannah at (256) 372-8158.



HBCU STEM Education Run Set

The HBCU STEM Education Run (STEMER), a virtual run that strives to raise funds and awareness through fitness, will be held Sunday, April 6, at Big Spring Park in Downtown Huntsville at 8:30 a.m.

Each year, funds are dedicated to a historically black

college or university (HBCU). The signature 5K supports the mission to "Educate, Empower, and Elevate HBCU STEM Students through Scholarships and Career Resources".

Participants are urged to race alone, with a friend, or with a team. Whether one is

an HBCU alum/student, STEM graduate, or just passionate about education, this run is for everyone!

Come join the virtual or in Huntsville, Ala., to support STEM education at these crucial institutions.

OUC to Hold Community Guest Day

The Oakwood University Church (OUC) will host its Community Guest Day on Saturday, March 15, at 11 a.m.

The activity will be held at OUC, located at 5500 Adventist Boulevard, Huntsville, Ala. Community Guest Day "will bring the community together in a welcoming space to engage in fellowship and worship with one another," say organizers.

The worship ser-

vice will feature the music of Grammy-award-winning gospel singer and pianist Smokie Norful, along with a message by Senior Pastor Debleaire Snell.

Norful is perhaps best known for his 2002 album, "I Need You Now" and his 2004 release, "Nothing Without You," which won a Grammy at the 47th Annual Grammy Awards for Best Contemporary Soul Gospel Album

in 2004. Norful received his second Grammy at the 57th Annual Grammy Awards for his song "No Greater Love", some 10 years after winning his first major recognition.

Lunch will be provided for guest attendees. The service is free and open to the public.

For additional information, contact Patti Conwell at (256) 714-3822 or e-mail communication@oucsda.org.

City, Sorority Initiative Honors Zeta's Littlepage

The Huntsville City Council approved a Memorandum of Agreement between the Department of Parks and Recreation and the Delta Omega Zeta Chapter of Zeta

Phi Beta Sorority, Incorporated, to set up the Harriett S. Littlepage Little Free Library at Lakewood Community Center, 3601 Kenwood Drive NW. A Little Free Li-

brary is a freestanding, book-sharing resource to promote literacy by offering reading materials.

The library is dedicated to the legacy of Dr. Littlepage, a

former chapter president and advocate for children's literacy and community service. For more info, contact Dr. Noelle Hunter at drnoellehunter@gmail.com.



INSIDE THIS ISSUE!

- Savings Strategies, Page 2
- Preston Brown's "Spiritual Game Plan," Page 4
- Gloria B. & Tim: Perspectives, Page 5
- "Jahni" Moore's PowerShots, Page 6
- Sunday Lectionary, Page 7
- Honoring Our Elders, Page 7
- Washington Update, Page 11

The Valley Weekly Washington One Minute

by Ron Hamm



Here are the latest top issues and events in Washington:

1. CONGRESS. The Senate and House are in session – and sat in Joint Session on Tuesday night to receive an address from the President. The Senate were scheduled to vote this week on Education Secretary Linda McMahon and Labor Secretary nominee Lori Chavez-DeRemer, as well as a House-passed bill to ban transgender athletes from playing on female school teams. Punchbowl News reports that Elon Musk will brief GOP Senators this week on where his DOGE Service will make cuts next. The House will continue a series of votes to revoke Biden era rulemakings under the Congressional Review Act (that allows Congress to vote on revoking any rules submitted to Congress after August 1, 2024), this week revoking regulations on energy-efficient appliances, rubber tire manufacturers, and oil and gas drillers. On Sunday, House Speaker Mike Johnson (R-LA) said he favors voting on another stopgap measure to keep the federal gov't open through Sept 30 (the current stopgap expires on March 14) in the absence of enacting any of the 12 annual appropriations bills

for Fiscal Year 2025.

2. U.S. DOGE SERVICE. Two million federal workers braced for another Elon Musk email over the weekend requiring them to explain their recent accomplishments. The first email, which was distributed a week ago, asked employees “what did you do last week?” and prompted them to list 5 tasks that they completed – although later many agencies told their workers not to respond. The second email has the subject line “what did you do last week? Part II.” The Washington Post reported on Sunday that some agencies, led by the State Department and NASA, were already telling their workers not to respond to the 2nd email.

3. EXECUTIVE BRANCH. The White House announced last Thursday that tariffs of 25% on imports from Canada and Mexico will go into effect on Tuesday as scheduled, due to those countries not doing enough to curb the flow of drugs into the United States. Additionally, China will face a further 10% tariff on Tuesday, on top of the existing 10% imposed in February (which will be added to the 10-25% tariffs that were enacted

on over \$300 billion worth of Chinese products during Trump's first term, which largely remain in effect). The President addressed Congress on Tuesday at 9 p.m. EST, with Senator Elissa

Slotkin (D-MI) delivering the Democratic response. Last Wednesday, the White House sent a memo to the heads of all executive departments and agencies directing them to submit any plans for relocating their offices from the National Capital Region to more affordable areas of the country by April 14. On the same day, the President issued an executive order giving agencies 7 days to submit an inventory of their real property and 30 days to identify any leases that can be terminated. The Washington Post reported last week that the Federal Aviation Administration is planning to cancel a 15-year, \$2.4 billion communications contract held by Verizon for the nation's air traffic control system, aiming to award it to Elon Musk's Starlink. Fox News reported on Saturday that Vice President Vance was compelled to change the location of his weekend ski trip to Sugarbush Resort in Warren, VT, after being confronted by hundreds of pro-Ukraine protesters less than a day after Vance had a tense exchange with Ukrainian President Zelenskyy at the White House, which began when the Ukrainian leader hesitated to sign a mineral rights deal advocated by the administration.

4. SUPREME COURT.

At 9:30 p.m. on last Wednesday night, Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts granted the administration's request to temporarily block an order by a federal judge in Washington, D.C., that would have required the administration to pay nearly \$2 billion in foreign-aid reimbursements for work that has already been done and directed the plaintiffs in the case to respond to the administration's application by noon last Friday. On Tuesday, the court heard arguments in *Smith & Wesson Brands v. Estados Unidos Mexicanos* in a lawsuit by the Mexican government against U.S. gun manufacturers, in which Mexico argues that the gunmakers aided and abetted the illegal sales of guns to traffickers for Mexican drug cartels.

5. ECONOMIC INDICATORS.

In a surprise to economists, personal spending by Americans was down markedly in January by 0.2% when it had been expected to rise by 0.1% (adjusted for inflation, it fell 0.5%). In related news, the Atlanta Federal Reserve Bank on Friday predicted that 1Q GDP is on pace to shrink by 1.5%, which would be the GDP's first contraction since 1Q 2022. On Feb. 19, the Atlanta Fed had still predicted a rosy +2.3% for 1Q.

6. EDUCATION.

On February 25, the American Council on Education and various higher education associations sent a letter to Craig Trainor, Acting Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights at the U.S. Department of Education, requesting that the Department rescind its February 14 Dear Col-

league Letter regarding Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) and work to develop guidance that aligns with existing law.

7. TRUMP ADMINISTRATION LAWSUITS.

In the latest decision on the more than 80 lawsuits pending against Trump Administration orders, last Thursday a federal judge ordered the Office of Personnel Management to rescind directives that initiated the mass firing of probationary federal workers across the government, ruling that the terminations were probably illegal.

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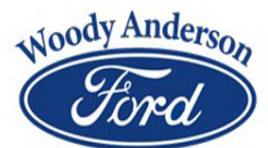


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ON THIS DAY

On March 7, 1965, civil rights activists were brutally attacked by police while attempting to march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, in what became known as “Bloody Sunday,” a pivotal moment in the fight for voting rights.

- Google.com



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The Valley Weekly

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Eighth Page	5x5 inches	\$300
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	Classified 1 col.x1 inch	\$100/Flat Fee

Unpredictability: Don't Get Trapped by the 'Easter Snap'

As you read this editorial, it's early March and Easter is still over a month away. The weather has been unpredictable—just two weeks ago, we had spring-like warmth, and now we're back to winter-like temperatures. My mother used to call this the "Easter snap." We were always warned not to throw off our coats too early, no matter how excited we were to show off our Easter dresses and spring suits. The cold weather wasn't over yet.

We tend to think of March as the start of spring, even if the groundhog's prediction on February 2nd suggests otherwise. According to astronomical calculations, spring officially begins in the Northern Hemisphere when the Sun crosses the celestial equator moving northward, typically on March 20th or 21st. As I write this, the temperature is hovering around a 62 degree high today and 31 degrees is predicted tonight—so keep those

jackets on a little longer and spare yourself the misery of runny noses, scratchy throats, and nagging coughs. Many are still dealing with long-haul symptoms of colds and flu.



Growing up, Easter was a significant time for our family. Even with limited resources, we could always go to Bedsole's department store on the square in Monroeville to put a few things on layaway. Whether it was our mother making payments or our Uncle Bill letting us put things on his account, we always had something new for Easter. But beyond the excitement of new outfits and egg hunts, we celebrated the resurrection of Christ. If you were old enough to walk and talk, you had an Easter speech—sometimes as simple as "Jesus wept." Our mom kept us focused on the true meaning of the holiday, a foundational principle of our faith.

As we celebrate Women's History Month in March, let's celebrate the accomplishments of Women in our community. Today, I celebrate the life and legacy of the Late Mrs. Rosetta James, community and civic volunteer. On this Saturday, March 8th, we will host the Rosetta James Foundation Day Gala at the Jackson Center in Cummings Research Park. Please join us as we celebrate local elders and support scholarships for local students. You can order tickets here: <https://rosettajamesfoundation.swell.gives/>

Until next week ...

Dorothy



MARCH 7 - WANDA SYKES - Wanda Sykes is an American actress, comedian, and writer. She was first recognized for her work as a writer on *The Chris Rock Show*, for which she won a Primetime Emmy Award in 1999. In 2004, *Entertainment Weekly* named Sykes as one of the 25 funniest people in America. She is also known for her role as Barb Baran on CBS' *The New Adventures of Old Christine* (2006–10) and for appearances on HBO's *Curb Your Enthusiasm* (2001–11). Aside from her television appearances, Sykes has also had a career in film, as well as voicing characters in animated films.

- BlackCelebrityBirthdays.org



THE VALLEY WEEKLY
**VALLEY
DEATHS**



SERENITY FUNERAL HOME

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Funeral service for **MR. CHARLES EZELL** (b. 1951) was Sunday, March 2, at Saint Bartley Primitive Baptist Church, 3020 Belafonte Avenue NW, Huntsville, Ala.

Funeral service for **MR. KEVIN LANGFORD** (b. 1980) was Saturday, March 1, at Eagle's Nest Ministries, 6831 Hollow Road NW, Huntsville, Ala.

NELMS MEMORIAL FUNERAL HOME

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

Celebration of life for **MRS. JOYCE THOMPSON WEST** (b. 1951) will be held on Saturday, March 8, 2025 at 12:00 p.m. at Phillips Christian Methodist Episcopal Church.

Funeral service for **MR. FRANKLIN "DIRTY" DRAKE** (b. 1950) was Monday, March 3, at Progressive Union Missionary Baptist Church with Dr. Edward Anderson, eulogist, and Pastor Dion Watkins, officiant.

Funeral service for **MR. DANTRAIL Q. PINCHEON** (b. 1994) was Saturday, March 1, at the Nelms Memorial Funeral Home Chapel.

ROYAL FUNERAL HOME

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

Graveside service for **MR. ROBERT LEWIS J. WALTON, JR.** (b. 1947) will be held at 12 p.m., Monday, March 10, at Meadowlawn Garden of Peace, 450 Mt. Lebanon Road, Toney, Ala., with Brother John Branch officiating.

Funeral service for **MRS. MAZIE ZUMA MASON** (b. 1928) was held Wednesday, March 5, at St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church, 229 Church Street, Huntsville, Ala., with Pastor Maurice Wright officiating.

Funeral service for **MR. LABRONTE ALEXANDER SMITH** (b. 1997) was Monday, March 3, at Fletcher's Chapel Primitive Baptist Church, 30592 Hardiman Road, Madison, Ala., with Pastor William Garth, Jr. officiating.

Funeral service for **MRS. WANDA FAYE LEWIS GHOLSTON** (b. 1954) was held Saturday, March 1, at Royal Chapel of Memories, 4315 Oakwood Avenue NW, Huntsville, Ala.

Valley Weekly
**Spiritual
Game Plan**
PRESTON BROWN'S



Today's Spiritual Game Plan: "A Guided Life"

Proverbs 3:8 says, "Acknowledge God in all your ways, and He will guide your steps." I think that our lives would be more enjoyable if we knew how much God wanted to get involved. We don't need to settle for mediocrity when God has called us to excellence. The word *mediocre* implies, a halfway point between success and failure. You see, when we delight ourselves in the Lord, He will give us the desires of our hearts (Psalm 37:4), not the desires of our flesh. So much of life is about the choices we make, and there are principles that we need to live by to make those choices. One of the things we can start doing is to stop being miserable about things we can't do anything about. Instead, we can meditate on God's word and allow Him to guide us to a place in our minds that will keep us in perfect peace. Let us all get the spirit of "dread" out of our lives, which can dominate our thoughts. Like when we dread getting up in the morning, or we dread going to work, or

we dread working out. Remember, dread is the opposite of hope. So, let us learn to stay focused on the abundant life that God desires for us to have. Let us stay focused on having a spirit of excellence in all that we do. When we do these things I can assure you, there is an amazing life waiting for you!

Prayer: Loving Father, guide our steps while we run the race that you have set before us, in Jesus' name we pray




Question: Have you allowed God to guide your steps or do you depend on your own understanding when it comes to handling situations?

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:
"Winning the Spiritual Battles"



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“Having Celebrated February as Black History Month— But What’s Next?”

“... but this one thing I do: forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize ...” —Philippians 3:14

Every year, February 28 exhausts me. The corporate tributes, kente cloths, and stirring renditions of Lift Ev’ry Voice and Sing vanish overnight—silence for the next 11 months.

Let’s Make a Deal:

Let’s keep celebrating Black HISTORY in February but use the rest of the year to amplify Black PRESENTS and Black FUTURES.

Why?

The November 2024 elections were a wake-up call. Despite passionate efforts—including Kamala Harris’ historic 103-day campaign—young people neither voted nor even registered.

Why? They focus on *today*. They’re unmoved by past marches, sacrifices, and struggles. Sad? Maybe. But ignoring their reality won’t change it.

Instead, let’s meet them where they are—on their cell phones.

Ask them: **Do you use FaceTime, Zoom, Skype, or Wi-Fi?**

When they say, “Yeah, duh,” tell them about **Dr. Marian Croak**, the Black woman whose technology powers those platforms. Inducted into the National Inventors Hall of Fame in 2022, she holds 200+ patents.

Compare that to Black HISTORY: George Washington Carver developed 300 peanut-based products but secured only three patents. *See the difference?*

Then ask: **Do you use GPS?**

When they nod, introduce **Dr. Gladys West**, who helped develop the Global Positioning System (GPS).

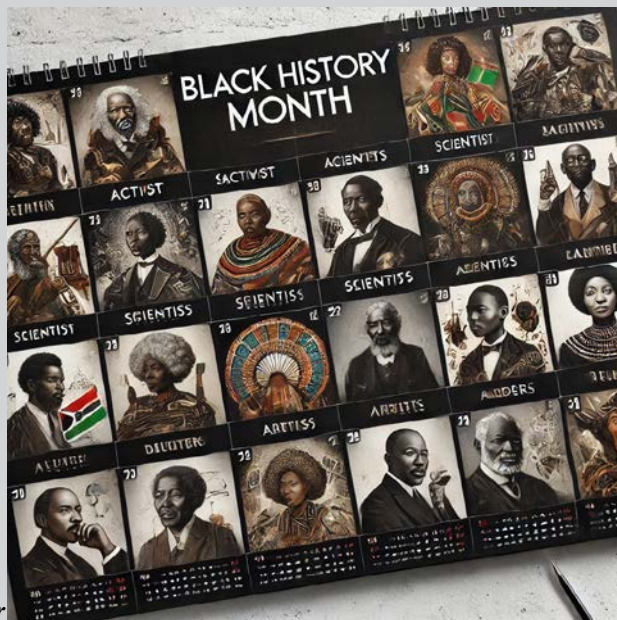
NEWSFLASH: These Black innovators aren’t just history—they’re *now and look like us*.

Bridging Black HISTORY to the PRESENT and FUTURE

Let’s use Drs. Croak and West to transition from Black History Month into March’s Women’s History Month—and keep building from there.

Because our past is powerful. But our present and future? Even more so.

Drop the mic.



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Millennial Moment

by
Gloria B. Caldwell

The Question Is ... ‘Who?’

Who are you? Have you taken a moment to think about that question? Oftentimes, we find ourselves caught in the hype of comparison, measuring our worth against others, and forgetting the unique gifts we bring to the world. (Your Superpowers) Why do we shortchange ourselves, believing we are less than we are meant to be? As the kids say, “Who does that?”

Life is not about fitting into someone else’s mold! Life is about embracing the potential within you. Imagine for a moment what it feels like to be unapologetically you. You have a unique purpose, talents,



and dreams waiting to be recognized. Don’t let fear or doubt keep you from entering what God has for you.

Instead of imitating others, focus on discovering your authentic self. Every quirk, all your strong points, and even your flaws are what

make you, you. Every step you take towards self-discovery is a step away from mediocrity (something I can’t stand) and a move in the direction of fulfillment.

So, ask yourself: What are you doing with your life? (I ask my friends this all the time) Are you chasing your true passions, or are you settling for less? Remember, being yourself is the easiest thing to do—it requires no effort, but the ROI is the greatest reward.

Embrace who you are and watch your world flourish! You are meant for greatness!

Lace Up! Let’s Go!

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Valley Weekly
VALLEY
EVENTS
 HAPPENINGS, ACTIVITIES & MORE!

March 7

15th Annual Black & White Charity Ball - Harlem Nights
 Von Braun Center - 7 p.m.

205 A Water Tank Road
 Toney, Ala.
 campedwardslc.com

March 8

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

March 20-30

Rocket City Fair
 2195 Jaycee Way
 Huntsville, Ala.

March 27-30

5th Annual Women's Expo
 Von Braun Center
 www.thewomensexpohsv.com

March 13

Shen Yun 2025
 Von Braun Center Concert Hall

Huntsville, Ala.

March 29

Taste of Soul Family Fes-

Huntsville, Ala.

March 20
 Spring Equinox Camping Retreat: Joy Journey Camp Edwards, LLC

tival
 701 Amphitheater Drive
 NW
 Huntsville, Ala.
 12 noon

April 10

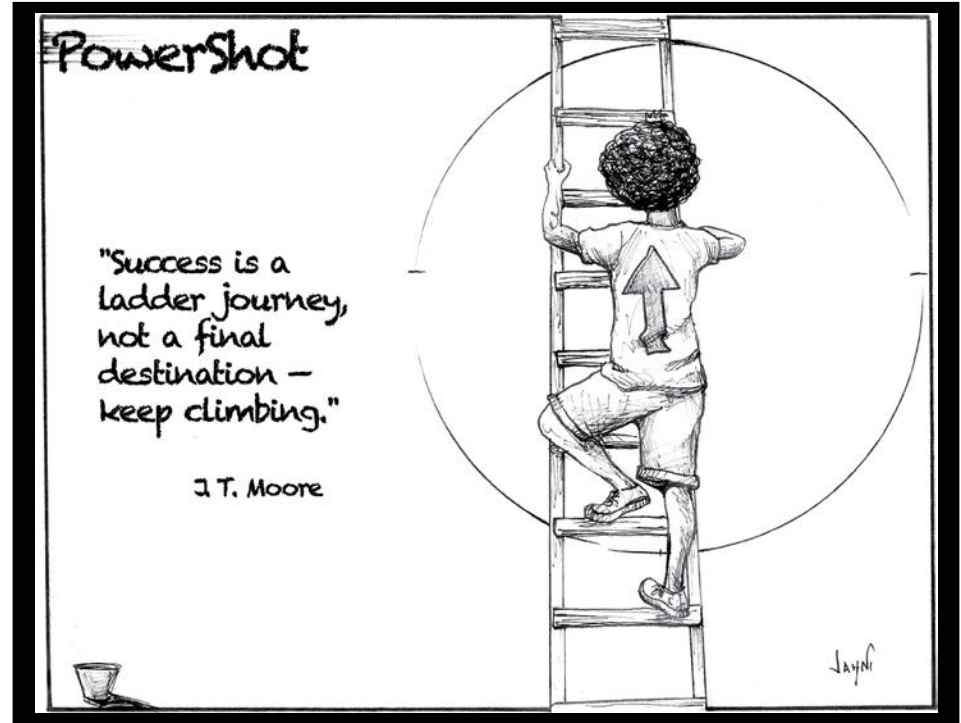
"Jay Jurden"
 Comedy Standup
 LeVity Live
 2012 Memorial Parkway SW
 Huntsville, Ala.
 Times: Vary

April 11

Comedian Kevin Hart
 The Orion Amphitheater
 Huntsville, Ala.
 kevinhartnation.com
 8:15 p.m.

April 11-13

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



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*"Life is an unfoldment, and the further we travel
 the more truth we can comprehend."*

- Hypatia



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

Mr. William James Davis

William James Davis, Jr., was born to the late William and Nora Davis in Gadsden, Ala. Thanks to his musical family, Davis was formally introduced to the world of music through classes and encouragement at Alabama A&M University, where he developed an equal love and proficiency for vocal and instrumental music. Among his mentors were Dr. and Mrs. Henry Bradford, Jr., Dr. Malcolm Breda and Mr. Thomas Dawson.

While at AAMU, Davis was recruited by Dr. Barbara Anthony to sing in the adult choir at Fellowship Presbyterian Church, an honor that also entailed picking up others for practice. After graduating from AAMU, he entered the graduate music program at Dillard University in New Orleans, La., which was directed by the famed Dr. Frederick Hall.

Davis' first teaching position was at Councill Training School, where he taught band and social studies under the late A.G. Adams. The band program engaged in many activities, including football games, parades, local and state contests, regular school activities and community-sponsored programs. Councill Training School opened in 1948 as the first public school for African Americans in Madison County.

When Councill closed, Davis began a journey of several schools, still acquiring commendations from

such notables as Congressman Bob Jones and former U.S. President Richard Nixon. While at Bob Jones High School, the band was involved in many historic events, including writing the school hymn and even playing for former First Lady Rosalyn Carter and former Senator Walter Mondale. After leaving Bob Jones High School, Davis was given the opportunity to start from scratch a band program at Liberty Middle School. In a very short period of time, the enrollment in band exploded in numbers to over 300 students. This was the largest middle school band in the state of Alabama. He also started the first middle school jazz band in Madison County and within two years began receiving superior ratings in concert and jazz competitions.

Davis and his wife Brenda have been married for over 40 years and have two wonderful and loving daughters—Diedre Danielle and Stefanie Lo'Nore—and one amazing grandson, Demetrius DeShae. With their shared appreciation for music, Davis and his wife founded the Huntsville Spiritual Chorale in 2002 and have been co-directors of the non-profit organization since its inception. The Chorale was created to preserve and perform the original art form called the Negro Spiritual. Davis has often been in demand for his gifts



as a tenor soloist, and he performed for numerous balls, meetings, weddings, funerals, church services and other special occasions. Additionally, as a member of Fellowship Presbyterian Church in Huntsville, Ala., Davis has served as an Elder and Deacon, and currently sings in the Chancel Choir, Unity Choir and Men's Chorus. He has also conducted workshops for the Presbyterian Women Alabama/Mississippi Conference. Moreover, Davis has volunteered for the church's Food Distribution Program and the Community Crop Drop, a mission project based on local farmers' vegetables that require sorting and bagging at various preparation sites.

Davis and Brenda were honored by RiahRose Home for Children and Pregnant Teens on Grandparents Day in 2016. He is a volunteer with the Neighborhood Community Watch Program and is a member of the Golden Charmers--an older adult volunteer group.

"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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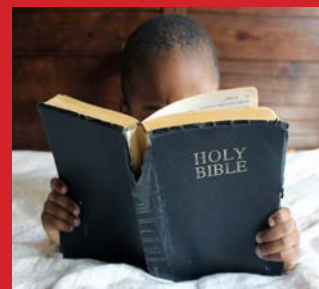
This Sunday's Lectionary

Sunday, March 9, 2025

First Sunday

in

Lent



(Track 2, Year C)

First Lesson:

Deuteronomy 26:1-11

Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16

Second Lesson:

Romans 10:8b-13

GOSPEL:

Luke 4:1-13



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NOTES OF A NATIVE SON

Constructing a Sentence

by afroblastik [John 'Jahmi' Moore]



This past weekend, in Montgomery, AL I stood in the Legacy Museum and the National Memorial for Peace and Justice surrounded by the weight of history—our history. I saw the names, the chains, the terror written into law, the bodies strung from trees like strange fruit, the incarceration statistics. I felt the gravity of centuries of pain, and yet, what shook me just as deeply was not only what was behind us—but what is still wrapped tight around us.

Complicity - the quiet acceptance of injustice. Ignorance is not the act of not knowing, but the passive choice of ignoring. The refusal to confront truth. Consider the audacity of a system that still forces Black and Brown children to learn and thrive under the names of those who fought to keep their ancestors enslaved, and their descendants who don't realize they lost (or did they?). I speak from a space of knowing, having once taught at Lee High School in Huntsville, Alabama. I walked those halls, labored in the classrooms, and looked into the eyes of those students—brilliant, gifted, filled with promise—and I asked myself the same question I ask today: How can they truly learn and be whole under the banner of their oppressor? Would the Jewish people require their children to attend a school named after Adolf Hitler? Would Germany even allow a



school to be named after him? Would America ask Japanese American students to pledge allegiance in a school named after the architects of their internment? I would think not. Because we recognize that names carry weight. Names shape perception. Names have power.

Yet across Alabama, across the South, we still expect our children to sit in classrooms, to dream, to rise—while the very walls around them whisper, Know your place. This isn't history. This is now. Schools named after Robert E. Lee, J.E.B. Stuart, and others weren't built in the 1800s. No, they were erected in the heart of the 20th century, long after the Civil War, as a direct response to the Civil Rights Movement.

These names were chosen with intention. They were planted like landmines, meant to remind us that while laws may change, power does not surrender easily. J.E.B. Stuart High School in Virginia has been renamed Justice High School. Lee High School, in what its said to be the most progressive city in Alabama, has survived every move to get the name changed. Perchance the mindset of those who put it in place is alive and well. The wish to hold the name and what it stands for seems more desirable than the true intent to move beyond. With that, I quote the words of Dr. Martin King, Jr. in his Letter From A Birmingham Jail, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

Some will always say, "It's just a name." But the truth is, names have always been tools of control. That's why enslaved people had their names erased. That's why schools, streets, and institutions were named to honor those who upheld white mental impoverishment (I do not use the term white supremacy on purpose as there is nothing supreme about it). That's why the fight to reclaim

names, to rename spaces, is a battle for dignity and a strong nod toward justice. It is not enough to say we have moved past the inglorious past when it still creeps among us, etched in bronze, carved into stone, stitched onto letterman jackets, and typed on diplomas. A better nation is not one that simply acknowledges wrongs—it is one that corrects them. It's past time for change.

Rename the schools. Reposition the monuments to treason. Confront the truth, not for comfort, but for justice. Anything we are seeing in today's climate - and we are seeing it, is a direct result of seeds planted...and nourished. If we are to truly move forward exemplifying an honorable legacy, we must cease laboring under the weight of those who chained us to the past.

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Courthouse Square Marker Recognizes Early Black Business Owners

A newly updated historic marker on Huntsville's courthouse square now recognizes the significant contributions of Henderson and Daniel Brandon, founders of the city's most successful Black-owned business in the late nineteenth century.

The Brandon family's masonry firm, active from 1887 to 1921, constructed 14 buildings across north Alabama, including Huntsville's iconic Harrison Brothers Hardware, built by Daniel Brandon in 1902.

The updated marker not only highlights the Brandon family's achievements but also incorporates the intertwined history of the Harrison and Brandon families, replacing the original marker dedicated in 1989. Mayor Tommy Battle was among those on hand for the updated marker's unveiling.

"It's crucial for us to honor the contributions of individuals like Henderson and Daniel Brandon, whose legacies still influence our community today," Mayor Battle said.

"Their voices reflect the diverse experiences and enduring spirit that make Huntsville a special place."

District 4 Council Member Bill Kling, who represents much of downtown Huntsville on the City Council, said historic markers like the one honoring the Brandons ensure the City's history isn't forgotten.

"Our historic downtown is the heart of our city and holds a treasure trove of stories to be shared and discovered," Kling said. "From the buildings to the streets, each brick and corner has a narrative that shapes who we are today."

A Storied History

Harrison Brothers Hardware, founded in 1879 by brothers James and Daniel Harrison, has been a staple of Huntsville's courthouse square since 1897. In 1984, to preserve this historic building, the Historic Huntsville Foundation (HHF) – a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving the city's



heritage – purchased the building and retail store from the Harrison family.

HHF first learned of the connection between Daniel Brandon and the Harrison Brothers building several years ago, thanks to Ollye Conley, a retired educator who has long documented the history of Huntsville's Black community. The Foundation then embarked on further research, sharing these discoveries through public history exhibitions and walking tours.

"The Foundation has preserved the history of the Harrison family and their store for over 40 years, and

weaving their stories together for a richer, more nuanced understanding of Huntsville and Alabama history."

The Brandon family's history spans the journey from slavery to entrepreneurship. After being emancipated, Henderson Brandon established a brickmaking business, a mill and a store on his property near what is now Pulaski Pike and Holmes Avenue. His son, Daniel Brandon, joined the family enterprise in 1886 and became a highly respected community leader. He was elected to the Huntsville Board of Aldermen, where he served from 1897 to

1905.

This updated marker stands as a testament to the contributions of the Brandon and Harrison families and their lasting impact on Huntsville's development.

Photo caption: Effie Gaines, center, looks up at the historic marker honoring her great-great-grandfather Henderson Brandon and her great Uncle Daniel Brandon outside Harrison Brothers Hardware in downtown Huntsville. The Historic Huntsville Foundation hosted an event to unveil an updated historic marker that honors the Brandons' contributions to Huntsville.

- Courtesy Huntsvilleal.gov
Submitted by Gary T. Whitley, Jr.

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