



POSITIVE-INSPIRATIONAL-EDUCATIONAL

'Jahni' Moore: A Future Worth Saving - p. 8

FREE



PRESTON: Your 'Full' Potential - p. 4

Friday
March 28, 2025
Vol. 11, No. 30
ValleyWeeklyllc.com

The Valley Weekly

Remembering Bradfords Event - Page 10

SALUTE!
Rosetta James Foundation
ELDER OF THE WEEK



Rev. Dr. Terrell Harris

"How many will have to die for this war against the poor to be over." - Marielle Franco

'Taste of Soul Family Fest' at Orion

Join fellow Huntsvillians for a taste of Huntsville soul on March 29 at The Orion Amphitheater at 12 noon! The event, presented by WeCare Alabama, will feature favorite food trucks from all over Huntsville,

vendors, live music, DJ entertainment by DJ Skeme, DJ Don Jr, Dre Smoove and more!

Taste of Soul Alabama Family Festival is a one-day event to celebrate the heart and soul of

Huntsville through music, food and fun. Local eateries, food trucks, and food entrepreneurs are the fabric of Rocket City and will be the main focus of this event. Local businesses provide a friendly and home-like envi-

ronment to all of our residents – and this hospitality will be on display at the Taste of Soul Festival.

With something for everyone, Taste of Soul will be a family-friendly event that will capture the

minds and taste buds of all of the individuals who represent who we are in Huntsville!

Tickets (\$20) include entry, live music, kid activities and an array of dishes and beverages for purchase.

Huntsville: 'Most Innovative' Companies

Huntsville has been named to Fast Company's prestigious list of the World's Most Innovative Companies of 2025, earning a spot in the Economic Development category.

This year's list shines a spotlight on businesses that are shaping industry and culture through their innovations to set new standards and achieve remarkable milestones in all sectors of the economy. Alongside the World's 50 Most

Innovative Companies, Fast Company recognizes 609 organizations across 58 sectors and regions.

Over the past 18 months, Huntsville has made transformational strides in leveraging music to drive economic success, including: 1) The creation of the Huntsville Music Office, which has spearheaded initiatives to support artists, venues, and the local music industry.

2) Significant investment in live music

venues, festivals, and public-private partnerships, including the renowned Orion Amphitheater, establishing Huntsville as a premier music destination.

3) Collaborations with industry leaders and local businesses to attract talent, create jobs, and foster a sustainable creative ecosystem.

4) The launch of South Star Music Festival with C3 Presents.

- huntsvilleal.gov

Panoply Arts Festival Begins April 25



Make plans to join Arts Huntsville in celebrating Panoply Arts Festival in downtown Huntsville's Big Spring Park April 25-27,

where organizers will welcome more than 100 visual artists from various mediums in the fan-favorite Art Marketplace, two

musical performance stages featuring 30+ musical acts by local bands and musicians, a variety of culinary artisan food trucks, kid-

friendly interactives and STEAM activities, community art projects, and so much more!

For more, visit artshuntsville.org.

e-STEAM Symposium Next Week

Area students are encouraged to pursue careers in Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math/Medicine, or STEAM. The 100 Black Men of Greater Huntsville Inc., in partnership with the Greater Huntsville Chapter of the Links Inc., National Society of Black Engineers



Professionals North Alabama Chapter, and National Coalition of 100 Black Women (Huntsville) are hosting the 2025 STEAMposium, Saturday, April 5. The event will be held

on the **Huntsville campus** of Calhoun Community College on Wynn Drive, 8 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

The theme this year is "ESTREAM, Empowering Youth through Science,

Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math" and it will serve as a platform to educate and expose participants to the various opportunities within the STEAM career fields.

Exciting programs are planned for the teens and important information to share with their parents. Sponsorship assists in funding STEAM-related activities and programming needs.

For more info, call James Matthewson Jr, at (256) 714-8921 or e-mail vp.programs@100bmogh.com.

The Valley Weekly

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Valley Weekly Washington One Minute

by Ron Hamm

Here are the latest top issues and events in Washington:

1. CONGRESS. The Senate and House are in session. The House will take up bills this week to cancel 2 Biden-era regulations on energy-efficient commercial refrigerators and walk-in freezers and a bill to prohibit universities from receiving gifts or signing contracts with China. The Senate will continue its votes on administration nominees, including Michael Kratsios to be Director of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, Jayanta Bhattacharya to be Director of the National Institute of Health, and Martin Makary to be Commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration.

2. U.S. DOGE SERVICE. The Defense Department has launched an official investigation into media leaks reporting that Elon Musk received a top-secret briefing Friday at the Pentagon on the U.S. military's plan for any war that might break out with China. The President and Pentagon officials deny that China was the subject of the briefing. The latest tally of savings of \$115 billion touted by DOGE is listed on its "Wall of Receipts" page on the doge.gov site (although a recent analysis by the Associated Press found that 40% of the federal contracts that the administration claims to have canceled as part of its signature cost-cutting program aren't expected to save the government any money).

3. EXECUTIVE BRANCH. This week, the administration is keeping the issue of controlling Greenland at the forefront by sending two U.S. delegations to the island: one led by Second Lady Usha Vance and the other by White House National Security Adviser Michael Waltz and Energy Secretary Chris Wright. On Friday, the White House released a memo directing Attorney General Bondi and Homeland Security Secretary Noem to pursue ethics charges against any lawyers or law firms that challenge the administration's actions in court (Fox News reported last Wednesday that over 160 lawsuits have been filed against various administration policies). The Washington Post reported on Saturday that, after weeks of negotiation, the Internal Revenue Service is finalizing an agreement with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to grant ICE access to the names and addresses of individuals suspected of being in the U.S. illegally. Last Saturday, the President and top adviser Elon Musk traveled

to Philadelphia to attend the NCAA collegiate wrestling championships.

4. SUPREME COURT. In a brief and unusual public statement on Tuesday, Chief Justice John Roberts criticized the President's call to impeach a federal judge who had sought to block his efforts to deport 200 individuals to El Salvador, stating that impeachment was "not an appropriate response to disagreement concerning a judicial decision." On Monday, the court heard two cases, *Louisiana v. Callais* and *Robinson v. Callais*, regarding whether Louisiana's creation of a second majority-Black congressional district was an unconstitutional racial gerrymander. In May 2024, the Supreme Court put a lower court's decision to strike down the district on hold, allowing the state to use the 2024 redistricting map with the two majority-Black con-

gressional districts in place for last year's elections.

5. EDUCATION. Last Friday, President Trump announced his immediate plan to transfer the management of the \$1.6 trillion federal student loan portfolio to the Small Business Administration (SBA) and move programs for students with disabilities to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), as his White House aims to wind down and ultimately eliminate the Education Department. Education Secretary Linda McMahon emphasized that these changes are designed to improve efficiency while maintaining funding for essential programs. She stated that the administration aims to ensure ongoing support for special education and student loans while encouraging state-level innovation in education. However, completely dissolving the Department of

Education requires congressional approval, which poses a significant legislative challenge. Critics argue that such a move could disrupt educational services and adversely affect students nationwide.

6. FIGHTING OLIGARCHY TOUR. Last Thursday, Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT) and Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY) launched the western leg of their anti-Trump/Musk "Fighting Oligarchy" tour, making stops in NV, AZ, and CO. News outlets reported that overflow crowds packed each venue, with 15,000 attendees in Tempe (AZ) and 30,000 in Denver (CO).

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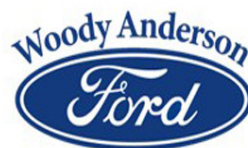


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ON THIS DAY

In 1968, Martin Luther King Jr. traveled to Memphis, Tennessee, to help Black sanitation workers fight for dignity and fair treatment. On March 28 of that year, he led a group of 6,000 people marching in support of their cause that unfortunately turned violent. One person died, 50 people were injured and hundreds were arrested.
- U. of Memphis Libraries



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The Valley Weekly

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Spring Is Finally Here!

Ahhh ... It's Springtime!

Spring is here! The unpredictable nature of today's weather makes planning a vacation a bit of a gamble. Even meteorologists, with all their expertise, sometimes miss the unexpected twists and turns of current weather patterns. Many families take this opportunity to travel, hoping to bask in the warmth of the sun, enjoy an early splash in the pool, or take a relaxing walk on the beach.

For my family, a trip to Edgewater Beach in Daphne, Alabama, was an extraordinary treat during my childhood. My late aunt Sarah Ann, owned property that bordered Mobile Bay along the Gulf of Mexico. We could visit whenever we managed to get there, and each trip felt like a piece of heaven. I still vividly remember running through the trails in the woods and racing toward the sandy shoreline.

The beach house itself was a simple wooden shack, but it held an undeniable charm. A jukebox sat in the corner, and giant jars of pickled cucumbers, eggs and pig's feet lined the counter. With just a quarter or fifty cents—what seemed like a small fortune at the time—we could buy just about anything. Earning that money took effort, though. We spent long hours picking up pecans, sweeping yards, cleaning houses, and babysitting, all for a precious few coins.

One major challenge during our beach days was keeping our hair dry. This was a serious concern because our hair care routine followed a strict schedule. Getting it wet outside of that schedule meant waiting until the next designated hair fixin' time. This was during the era of straightening combs and hot plates, so avoiding water was key. That's why, when afros became popular, I was beyond thrilled! Afros were like the wash-and-wear fabrics of the time—so easy and low maintenance. A little washing, oiling, and picking, and we were good to go! Paired with bell-bottom pants and mini skirts, we truly embodied the era's fashion. I often wish afros would make a full comeback because I am almost back!

I sometimes contemplate making the full leap back into the afro style. However, I've never been one to set fashion trends. I admire bright socks, skinny jeans, natural locks, and trendy sneakers on others, but when it comes time to transition, I tend to stick with the classics. I still love big hair, Ole School music, turnip and collard greens, sweet potatoes, and a pot of beans or peas—because some things just never go out of style.

Speaking of mini-skirts, my sisters and I were blessed with height and long legs—though we didn't see it that way at the time. Back in our school days, the tall, thin girls were often teased. It took years, even decades, for us to appreciate our natural features. By the time we realized that tall and lean had become fashionable, we were too reserved to enjoy wearing minis. It's similar to natural hair—by the time we finally embrace it, we hesitate to take the plunge. While I may never revisit mini-skirts, the thought of bringing back a full afro remains very, very tempting.

And speaking of "very, very," I seem to say that phrase quite a lot these days. I wonder why?

Blessings until next week ...

Dorothy



MARCH 28 - BERNICE ALBERTINE KING - is an American lawyer, minister, and the youngest child of civil rights leaders Martin Luther King Jr. and Coretta Scott King. She was five years old when her father was assassinated. In her adolescence, King chose to work towards becoming a minister after having a breakdown from watching a documentary about her father. King was 17 when she was invited to speak at the United Nations. King was elected president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in 2009. Her elder brother Martin III and her father had previously held the position. She was the first woman elected to the presidency in the organization's history, amidst the SCLC holding two separate conventions. King became upset with the actions of the SCLC, amid feeling that the organization was ignoring her suggestions and declined the presidency in January 2010.



- BlackCelebrityBirthdays.org

THE VALLEY WEEKLY
**VALLEY
DEATHS**



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Funeral service will be announced for **PASTOR FRANK FOSTER** (b. 1954) at a later date.

Funeral service for **MR. MARCUS "PIG" MALONE** (b. 1976) was held Sunday, March 23, at Round Island Creek Mission Center, 13829 Lucas Ferry Road, Athens, Ala.

Funeral service for **MR. DARRELL LACEY** (b. 1962) was held Saturday, March 22, at Lakeside United Methodist Church, 3738 Meridian Street, Huntsville, Ala.

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Funeral service for **MRS. SONDR A. KELLY** (b. 1943) will be announced later.

Funeral service for **MOTHER MARY FRANCES BOOKER ROBINSON** (b. 1937) was Saturday, March 22, at St. James #2 Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America with Pastor Byron McGlathery officiating.

Memorial service for **MR. CARL E. RAY, SR.** (b. 1950) was Saturday, March 22, at Church Street CPCA, 228 Church Street, Huntsville, Ala., with Rev. Dr. Mitchell Walker officiating and Pastor Harold Goodloe as eulogist.

Funeral service for **MS. SYLVIA NANCE** (b. 1955) was Friday, March 21, at Hopewell Missionary Baptist Church with Rev. Dr. Jessie Hambrick officiating.

Funeral service for **MR. EARL JAMES "AKA BJ" MCDONALD** (b. 1943) was Saturday, March 15, at Hopewell Missionary Baptist Church with Pastor Larry Davidson officiating.

ROYAL FUNERAL HOME

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(256) 534-8481- www.royalfh.com

Funeral service for **MS. MARGARET ELLEN JONES** (b. 1939) was Saturday, March 22, at Lucas Street Church of Christ, 824 Lucas St, Athens, Ala., with Bro. Cedric McNeill officiating.

Funeral service for **MRS. DARLENE ANITA POELLNITZ-WHINFIELD** (b. 1964) was Saturday, March 22, at Royal Chapel of Memories.

Spiritual Game Plan

PRESTON BROWN'S

Today's Spiritual Game Plan: "Realizing Your Full Potential"

Luke 5:5, Simon, who is later called Peter, says, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets."

When Jesus saw Peter fishing, He saw the potential in Peter to do greater things. He saw that he could be a fisher of men. But there was a process that he and the disciples would have to go through.

You see, one of the ways we realize our full potential is through our process—the little things that we do everyday that help us prepare for the great things that God wants to do in our lives.

Our process reveals our potential, especially when it is tied to a purpose. For example, if you are training to run a marathon, there is a process that you have to go through that will help you realize your full potential. Our spiritual journey requires a process, as well. And that process involves reading God's word, daily prayer, and meditation, as well

as fellowshipping with other believers.

Anything in life worth doing has a process. All we need to do is apply our potential to the right purpose. And that purpose is whatever God has gifted you to do.

Prayer: Dear God, help us to realize that in order for us to reach our full potential, we have to embrace the process that helps us achieve the goals that you have for



us in our lives.

Question: What are some things that you can do to help you reach your full potential?

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:
"Anxious for Nothing"

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Springtime, Lawns, and Leadership: Why Managing Your Ego is Like Managing Your Yard ...

“Can a leopard change its spots, or an Ethiopian his skin?” - Jeremiah 13:23

**Spring is here. And with it comes the return of two unmistakable signs—fresh green grass and stubborn weeds.

If you’ve ever maintained a lawn, you know this: **lawns don’t take care of themselves.** They require mowing, trimming, and constant upkeep. The moment you neglect them, **overgrowth and weeds take over.**

Leadership and personal growth work the same way.

Your **ego**—your sense of self—is neither good nor bad. Like a lawn, it **naturally grows.** The challenge isn’t having an ego; the challenge is **keeping it in check.**

- ◇ **Leave it unchecked? It spreads uncontrollably.**
- ◇ **Ignore the warning signs? It stifles growth.**
- ◇ **Manage it well? It thrives in balance.**

In my work with leaders, I’ve identified what I call **“ego-holism”**—the addiction to self. It appears in two ways:

- ◇ **Inflated Ego** – Overconfidence, arrogance, and resistance to feedback.
- ◇ **Deflated Ego** – Self-doubt, insecurity, and fear of stepping up.

Both extremes are **toxic.** A leader who refuses to manage their ego creates **micro-management, high turnover, and a culture of disengagement.**

So, what’s the solution?

Much like lawn care, **ego management is not a one-time fix—it’s an ongoing practice.** For example:

- ◇ **Trim Back the Overgrowth** – Seek feedback. Recognize blind spots. Adjust.
- ◇ **Don’t Let the Weeds Take Over** – Catch small ego-driven habits before they spread.
- ◇ **Balance Confidence with Self-Awareness** – True leaders listen more than they speak.

Leadership isn’t about **eliminating ego—it’s about managing it wisely.**

So, here’s my challenge: **Where do you need to “trim” back your ego this season?**

Because just like your lawn, **your leadership is only as strong as the care you give it.** Go lead, go inspire, and go **manage those weeds!**



Tim Allston
Leadership Player-Coach & Four-time
Amazon Best-Selling Author
“Leading from the Middle”

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Millennial Moment

by Gloria B. Caldwell

There was a statement my father used to say to me, “Baby, sometimes when you want it in the worst way, you’ll get it in the worst way!” At the time, I was a child, I wanted EVERYTHING I could imagine. Aside from what came with it. I just wanted what I saw that looked good to me!

Now, we all know, all that glitters “ain’t” gold, right? However, as a child, you have no clue. As an adult, I have grown to understand the difference between what seems attractive but isn’t good for me, and what my desires are to push for! Some situations/circumstances/relationships arise in our adult lives where we need to be reminded, “if you want it in the worst way, you may get it in the worst way!” If you have to force someone to pay attention to you, love you, respect you, or be kind to you ... that’s NOT your soul mate! I know some people say, “Persistence beats resistance ... Yada Yada” ... He/She is not the one!!! Unless you plan on being persistent all of your days to keep this person semi-interested. Now, don’t misconstrue this with attempting to get to know someone, and making an effort to give them your attention, etc. ... that’s not what I’m saying. You can’t be any more than what you are!! Your true self! If it’s not a situation where you know you need to change, you’re just changing to pacify that person, and YOU’RE doing all the work

... that isn’t the one!

That job you “think” you want. Why do you want it? What do you have to gain FROM it, or give TO it? Are you willing to do the work? Is it a true fit? Or, are you awe-struck by what it pays, the “clout” you obtain by the title? Possibly you “feel” you need to be in it, but you KNOW you’re lazy and not going to do the work! Be honest with yourself! That material item you want! What is it about it that you want? Is it something you like ... or is it trendy? Does it satisfy your needs and desires, or does it make you appear as if you’ve “arrived”? Can you afford it? Or do you have to buy it (clothing, purses, shoes) on a payment plan just to show you can “keep up” with other people?

That has got to be the dumbest thing ever! Yet, people do it. Trust, the industry loves it, because they understand they can milk any weak-minded person out of anything if they dangle any opportunity, at any cost, in front of people! Who is stuck with that grief or payment at the end of the day? You are! Who is there when those payments hit, and you are no longer excited about the item you are still paying for? Now, most people need credit to buy big dollar items, certain cars, homes, boats, RVs... Some are fortunate to buy them, flat out! But even with that, don’t put yourself in a situation where you are stressed out, every

What’s Required ...

month, to drive or live in something you know you can’t afford. That’s not peace, that’s ridiculousness. No one cares, and the only person struggling is you. Someone may say, “That’s nice” but, they aren’t thinking about it when they lay down at night unless they can’t afford it, either, and why are you trying to impress THEM? Side note, there is always someone doing better than you, so stop!

Understand what you want, and why! Pursuing goals takes hard work, dedication, compromise, time, and discipline. You better know that you want it! To succeed you can’t quit! You can’t slack! Recognize what you truly want!! Pain comes with it! Long nights come with it! Tough lessons come with it!

Be honest with yourself, and your God! Be true to yourself! Above all, be prayerful! Stay in touch with the master! If He gives you signs that a business partner you have chosen is not the one, don’t force it. That move is not the one, don’t force it! That building is not the one, don’t force it! There may be something you can’t see right now, that isn’t good for you!

Don’t force it guys. Don’t be lazy, but be prayerful, think about it, understand why you want it, then proceed!

Remember, God loves you and so do I.

He has given you the gift of life, open it.

The Valley Weekly

VALLEY EVENTS

HAPPENINGS, ACTIVITIES & MORE!

Thru March 30

Rocket City Fair
2195 Jaycee Way
Huntsville, Ala.

“Brantley Gilbert: The Tattoos Tour 2025”

The Orion Amphitheater
701 Amphitheater Drive
Huntsville, Ala.
7 p.m.

March 27

City Council Meeting
Chambers of Municipal Building
Huntsville, Ala.
5:30 p.m.

March 27-30

5th Annual Women’s Expo
Von Braun Center
www.thewomensexpohsv.com
Huntsville, Ala.

March 29

Taste of Soul Family Festival
701 Amphitheater Drive
NW

Huntsville, Ala.
12 noon

March 29-30

Pokemon Takeover
EarlyWorks Museum

March 31

Girls on the Run
Fern Bell Recreation Center, 107A Sanders Road
Huntsville, Ala.
4-5:30 p.m.

April 1

“Chicago Stepping”
Ballroom
Robert “Bob” Harrison Senior Wellness and Advocacy Center
6156 Pulaski Pike NW
Huntsville, Ala. – (256) 519-2040
4 p.m.

April 3-5

Comedian
“Henry Cho: The Empty Nest Tour”
Huntsville Levity Live

2012 Memorial Parkway SW
Huntsville, Ala.

April 5

2025 STEAMposium
Sponsors: 100 Black Men of Greater Huntsville, Inc., in partnership with the Greater Huntsville Chapter of the Links, Inc., the National Society of Black Engineers Professionals North Alabama Chapter, and the National Coalition of 100 Black Women (Huntsville)
Calhoun Community College (Wynn Drive, Huntsville)
8 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

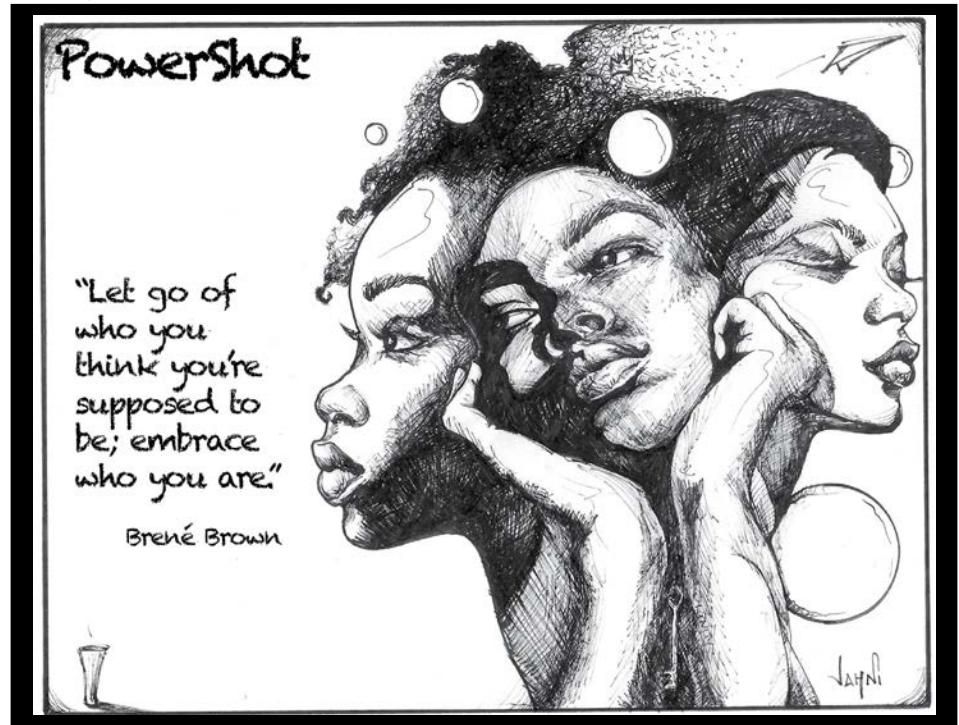
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April 7

Girls on the Run
Fern Bell Recreation Center
107A Sanders Road
Huntsville, Ala.
4-5:30 p.m.

April 8

“Chicago Stepping”
Ballroom



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**“You can’t use up creativity.
The more you use, the more you have.”**
- Maya Angelou



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

Rev. Dr. Terrell Harris

Rev. Dr. Terrell Harris, Jr., is the senior pastor and founder of the True Light Church of God In Christ. He was appointed as District Superintendent of the Huntsville, Ala., Church of God In Christ. Pastor Harris is the oldest son born to the union of the late Mr. Terrell Harris, Sr., and the late Mrs. Unreared Burton Harris.

He was blessed to be born into a family of nine children, five (5) sisters and four (4) brothers. He is happily married to Dr. Hattie Jones Harris, and they celebrated 55 years of marriage in December 2022. To this union three children were born: Apostle Derek Terrell Harris, Trudy Harris Moore, and Mark Christopher Harris. Rev. Dr. Harris is the very proud grandfather of three grandchildren—Chelsea, Kentiara and Christopher. Superintendent Harris is saved, sanctified, and filled with the Holy Spirit. He loves the Lord and the Lord's people.

Dr. Harris received his Master of Divinity and doctorate degrees from the international Seminary, Orlando, Fla. He earned his Bachelor of Science degree in math-

ematics, with emphasis in computer science from Jackson State University in Jackson, Miss. Since that time, he has taken graduate courses in the field of computer science at Alabama A&M University, Normal, Ala. He has also received a diploma in pastoral theology from the C.H. Mason System of Bible College, Huntsville Campus.

Rev. Harris has been a faithful worker in the Church since accepting the Lord Jesus Christ as his personal savior. He began his walk with God by faithfully attending the Sunday School, where he was later appointed as Sunday School superintendent. He was a faithful deacon, minister and ordained elder. He is currently president of the Department of Education - Huntsville District, Former Dean and teacher of the O.L. Meadows School of Ministry (OLMSOM), formally the C.H. Mason System of Bible Colleges - Huntsville Campus; superintendent of the Huntsville District; and Jurisdictional General Board Member for Alabama Jurisdiction #1. He further serves as the Pastor of the True Light Church of God In Christ,



Huntsville, Ala., which he founded.

Dr. Harris retired from the Computer Science Corporation (CSC) as a computer scientist on January 2, 2003, and now enjoys full-time employment for the Lord.

Dr. Harris' character is one of trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship. His sound and wise godly counseling brings forth deliverance to people from their everyday issues of life. His current work includes a local cable television ministry entitled, "The Blessed Hope Ministry," through which the congregation, community and city are blessed. Superintendent Harris is a great man and is an example of the Gospel that he preaches.

"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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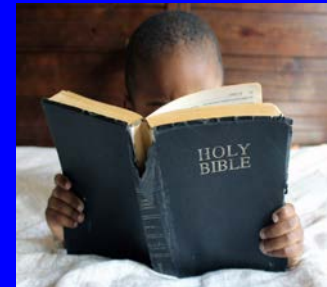
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This Sunday's Lectionary

Sunday, March 30, 2025

Fourth Sunday

in
Lent



(Track 2, Year C)

First Lesson:
Joshua 5:9-12
Psalm 32

Second Lesson:
2 Corinthians 5:16-21

GOSPEL:
Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32



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NOTES OF A NATIVE SON

A Future Worth Saving

by afroblastik [John 'Jahni' Moore]



“... We have to matter. If we don't, there is no future worth saving.” +Ms Marvel

We are all born with something—an energy, a light, a force uniquely ours. But it doesn't come fully formed. It's shaped and forged in the fire of life's torque. Our superpower is not limited to our natural abilities. They are the sum of us, our defeats, our victories, our past, our pain, and our passion. It is rooted in everything that has tried to break us and/or has built us to now. It's all hammered into a weapon of choice for this life journey.

As an creative, art has been my magic carpet ride, my hammer, my wings. Not easy by any stretch, but the thing that has carried me as I was carrying it. The thing I have fought with, danced with, and ultimately surrendered to. We wrestle daily with who we are and who we think we should be. But true power is in ac-

ceptance—the acceptance of all of who we are— the best and the beast. Think about superhero characters like Batman, Daredevil, or The Hulk. Their power isn't just in their strength, intelligence, or skill. It's in their wounds. Batman's greatest weapon isn't his wealth or gadgets, but the trauma that turned into his mission. Daredevil's blindness became his most heightened sense. The Hulk? His curse became his power. They didn't run from their pain; they harnessed it. And that's the secret: our power isn't just in what we're naturally good at—it's in what we've survived, what we've wrestled with, and how we choose to wield it.

I think back to a moment of revelation years ago, standing atop an old building in a small municipality in Antioquia, Colombia, South America, preparing to do a mural with my team of local children.



These children had a fraction of what they have in the United States in terms of material possessions, yet standing there, with the connection we had, looking out over the area, we felt invincible, wealthy in spirit and verve—on top of the world. I was right where I was supposed to be and the world was my palette. There was no lack, only creation. No limits,

only possibility. That's the essence of power: not what you have, but what you create from what you have. It is of utmost importance that we spread our wings. We have to matter. If we don't, there's no future worth saving. Our existence, our struggle, our triumphs—they matter. We matter. We don't fight just to fight. We fight because what we do, what we cre-

ate, and how we live shapes the world present and future. If you're reading this and thinking this is about someone else and not you. Please be reminded that it is you that make up the us. It is the we that will ultimately win. Every time we rise from pain or paralysis, bite our lip and keep on keeping on we lay claim to a little more of our power. We command our space

and carve out a chunk for those who come after us.

We can spend an entire lifetime running from ourselves, trying to be what the world deems acceptable, or we can own our superpower—our full, unfiltered truth—unapologetically. Our stories are not just the parts that shine or look good in snapshots of social media. It is also the shadows, the scars, the doubts, and the falls. The key is in bringing it all together, forging it into something undeniable, unfolding our tomorrows of choice. So, I take this loving liberty to challenge you: Own your superpower. Wield it unapologetically. Stand in it fully. Because once you do, nothing—not circumstance, not rejection, not fear, not even that ragged voice that's plagued you all of your days—can keep you from rising. Allow no thing on this side of glory to break the rhythm of your stride...let's go dammit..!

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Honoring Nine Years of Service: The Legacy of the Bradfords Scholarship Foundation, Inc.

Nine years ago, on March 25, 2017, the Friends of the Bradfords came together to celebrate the remarkable lives of the late Dr. Henry Bradford, Jr. and Mrs. Nell Lane Bradford. It was a night of music, reflection, and heartfelt gratitude at the Inaugural Gala Banquet of the Bradfords Scholarship Foundation, Inc., held in the North Hall of the Von Braun Center.

Founded by Drs. Willie Cowan, G. Lynne Herring, and Mr. Craig A. White, the Foundation was established to honor the Bradfords' unwavering commitment to education, service, and community empowerment. That evening, the Valley Conservatory, under the direction of Dr. Renee Collins Williams, and the legendary Alpha Ensemble, accompanied by Mrs. Mary Curry, set the tone for an unforgettable celebration!

A Life of Service and Inspiration

The gala, themed "Celebrating a Life of Service," was a fitting tribute to a couple whose influence continues to shape lives. The evening's Master of Ceremonies, the late Dr. Anthony B. Stinson, welcomed attendees, followed by an invocation from Dr. G. Lynne Herring. The keynote address was delivered by Dr. Andrea Bradford, daughter of the honorees and a human resources executive in Boston. She eloquently shared seven life lessons imparted by her parents:

1. Be kind, loving, and compassionate.
2. Be encouraging.
3. Be generous.
4. Be respectful.
5. Be your best and do your best.
6. Be humble and grateful.
7. Praise the Lord at all times and serve Him tirelessly.

The Bradfords' impact extends through their children and grandchild. Their son, Dr. Henry Lane Bradford, is a Podiatry Specialist in Gadsden, Alabama, while their grandson, Henry Lane Bradford, Jr., is a dedicated principal in Nashville, Tennessee.

A Lasting Legacy

During that inaugural evening, Dr. & Mrs. Bradford were presented with the first-ever Bradford Humanitarian Service Award, a distinction created to honor individuals who exemplify service and leadership. Moving forward, this award continues to recognize those who follow in their footsteps.

Speaking on behalf of the family, Dr. Henry Lane Bradford expressed gratitude for the establishment of the Foundation and the overwhelming community support. The success of that night was made possible by the dedicated Steering Committee, which included Ms. Vernessa K. Midgett, Rev. Barbara Clemons, Rev. Versey Jones, Ms. Nina Phipps, Mr. Lamont Reddrick, Mr. James Reynolds, Ms. Patricia Ward, Ms. Veronica Winston, and Ms. Andrea Brandon.

Celebrating Nine Years of Impact

As we mark the 9th anniversary of this unforgettable event, we reflect on how the Bradfords Scholarship Foundation, Inc. continues to transform lives through education and service. The late Dr. Henry Bradford, Jr. and Mrs. Nell Lane Bradford's dedication to faith, family, and community remains an inspiration to all who seek to make a difference. Here's to nine years of honoring a legacy—and many more to come.



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