

ALLSTON: Mind Your Mentors, Honor First Commandment - p. 5

FREE

Building Legacy: - RUFUS GILMORE, p. 3

Friday
April 3, 2026
 Vol. 12, No. 31
 ValleyWeeklyllc.com

SALUTE!
 Rosetta James Foundation
 ELDER OF THE WEEK



Mr. Jesse Johnson



The Valley Weekly

“Let everything you do be done in love.” — 1 Corinthians 16:14

‘No Kings Huntsville’ Builds Solidarity

On Saturday, March 28, 2026, an estimated 6,000 people gathered in Huntsville, Alabama, “to stand in solidarity and speak out against racist, bigoted, and xenophobic attacks on our neighbors, our friends, and our families,” organizers say.

Planners aimed to make it clear that Huntsville rejects division and fear, along with attempts to erase shared history and roll back the rights of any community, including transgender friends and neighbors.

Additionally, women across this country will not stand by while fundamental rights—including the right to vote and the right to control our own bodies—are threatened,” said Kathy Jones of the League



of Women Voters Tennessee Valley Chapter. “The bottom line is simple: democracy is on the ballot. The No Kings rally and march were about building community power and recognizing

that holding leaders accountable is a voting issue. Those in power know it—and so do we.” Democracy does not run on apathy. It runs on participation. Every vote matters. Don’t wait—make a voting

plan. The primary election is May 19, and the general election is November 3. Contact the League of Women Voters at (205) 871-8194 or email communications@lwval.org.



WOMEN’S EXPO COMMUNITY HERO AWARDEES! *The 6th Annual Women’s Expo Leadership Huntsville, led by founder and president Tiffany Draper, presented Community Hero Awards during its annual gala to (l-r) Dr. Karockas Watkins, president and CEO of Ability Plus Inc.; Councilwoman Michelle Watkins, City of Huntsville; and Dr. Harry Hobbs, vice president-employee engagement, Huntsville Utilities. The Expo empowers, educates, and elevates women from all walks of life by creating dynamic spaces for connection, collaboration, and celebration.*

A&M to Hold Inaugural Suicide Prevention Walk

Alabama A&M University will host its inaugural Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Awareness Color Walk/Run on Saturday, April 18, from 2-5 p.m., with registration beginning at 1 p.m. The 5K event will start and end at The Quad and is open to students,

families and members of the surrounding community.

Organized by the AAMU Athletics Mental Health Services, the Color Walk/Run aims to raise awareness about mental health and suicide prevention while creating a supportive space for

reflection, remembrance and open dialogue.

Participants are encouraged to wear green in support of mental health awareness, arrive early for check-in and dress comfortably. Color powder will be featured along the route, and attendees are

advised to bring a towel.

Registration fees are \$5 (age 14+). The registration fee for adults 21 and older who are not AAMU students is \$20.

REGISTER

Upcoming Events at Drake State!

Career Week - April 13-16

Ellenae Fairhurst Automotive Center Announcement, April 27

Retiree Luncheon, April 28

Career Fair - April 15

Founder’s Week - April 27-30

Giving Day, April 28

Jazz in the City - June 19
Mars Music Hall/VBC Downtown Huntsville

The Valley Weekly

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Here are the top issues and events in Washington, D.C., for this week.

1. CONGRESS. The House and Senate are in recess for two weeks and will reconvene on Tuesday, April 14. Before leaving, both chambers passed competing measures to reopen the Department of Homeland Security, which has been closed for 44 days amid a deadlock over ICE reform — including disagreements over warrantless searches and the use of masked agents. The House approved a 60-day stopgap funding bill for the entire department, while the Senate passed a full-year appropriations bill that funds DHS except for ICE and Customs and Border Protection. Since neither chamber is willing to consider the other's bill before recess, DHS will stay closed until Congress returns in mid-April.

2. EXECUTIVE BRANCH. Last week, the President directed new Homeland Security Secretary Markwayne Mullin to allocate funds with a “reasonable and logical nexus” to TSA operations — although the specific funding source has not been identified. On the Iran front: an expeditionary force of U.S. Marines arrived in the Middle East on Saturday; Pakistan's deputy prime minister announced that Iran agreed to allow 20 Pakistani-flagged vessels through the Strait of Hormuz at a rate of two per day; and last Wednesday Iran formally rejected the U.S.'s 15-point peace proposal—which included sanctions relief, nuclear rollback, missile limits, and reopening the Strait—countering with its own terms, including a halt to the killing of Iranian officials, war repara-

tions, and Iranian sovereignty over the Strait. The White House announced that the President's state visit to China, originally scheduled to begin this Wednesday, has been postponed to May 14–15 due to the ongoing Iran conflict. Separately, the President will host a UFC fight card for 5,000 guests on the White House South Lawn on June 14—his 80th birthday.

3. SUPREME COURT. On Wednesday, the Court will hear oral arguments in *Trump v. Barbara*, one of the most consequential cases of the 2025–26 term. The case challenges the President's January 2025 executive order seeking to end birthright citizenship for children born in the United States to parents who are in the country illegally or on a temporary basis. Every lower court that has ruled on the order has found it unconstitutional. The administration argues those rulings — and the longstanding interpretation that nearly all persons born on U.S. soil are citizens — rest on a misreading of the 14th Amendment's Citizenship Clause, which grants citizenship to all persons

“born ... in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof.” The Court also released opinions from its current docket on Tuesday.

4. CONGRESSIONAL EXITS. House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Sam Graves (R-MO) announced last week — just four days before the March 31 filing deadline — that he will not seek reelection after 26 years in the House. The announcement adds a prominent name to a growing list of departures: 61 House Members are now retiring or seeking other office (38 Republicans, 23 Democrats). The *Wall Street Journal* speculated that Rep. David Rouzer (R-NC) could be in line to chair the commit-

tee, a member with whom the Hamm Consulting Group works closely on behalf of its North Carolina clients.

5. HIGHER EDUCATION. The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) joined over 90 organizations last week in urging House and Senate education appropriators to increase funding for the Basic Needs for Postsecondary Students Program from \$10 million — its ongoing level since FY 2023 — to \$45 million in FY 2027. The program provides campus-based food assistance, housing, childcare, transportation, and other services aimed at helping underserved students stay enrolled and complete their credentials. This effort follows the

Education Department redirecting the program's FY 2025 funds into a revamped FIPSE initiative aligned with administration priorities. Historically, demand for these grants has far exceeded available resources. In FY 2023, only 13 percent of applicants received awards. Community college clients should be aware that the Trump administration's FY 2027 budget request is expected next week, with congressional hearings scheduled in the coming months.

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The Valley Weekly

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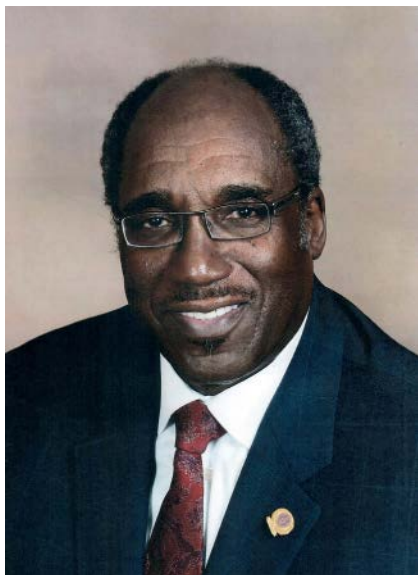
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Living an Impactful Life While Building Legacy: Professor Rufus Gilmore, III

As in every community, legacy in Huntsville isn't built in a single moment, day or year—it is shaped over decades of quiet consistency, faithful service, and a willingness to pour into others without seeking recognition. Few embody this truth more fully than Rufus Gilmore, III.

A product of Birmingham's public school system and a graduate of Carver High School, Mr. Gilmore's journey reflects the power of education paired with purpose. From earning his degree at Miles College to completing his MBA at Atlanta University, he laid a strong academic foundation—not simply for personal advancement, but for community impact.

That purpose became evident early. Whether working in financial aid or later shaping minds as an accounting professor at Alabama A&M University, Mr. Gilmore invested deeply in his students. In the Business School, students dared not enroll in classes taught by certain faculty members. Unlike in those classes, Professor Gilmore did more than teach accounting—he opened doors. He spent extra time mentoring, advising and connecting students to professional opportunities, including national recruiting conferences, while preparing young scholars for careers that would change the trajectory of their lives and families. That is legacy work.



His leadership expanded when he was entrusted with directing the Alabama A&M University Foundation. Managing millions in assets with integrity and precision, he modernized systems and ensured accountability, earning clean audits year after year. In a world where stewardship is often tested, Mr. Gilmore demonstrated that excellence and ethics can—and should—walk hand in hand.

Yet, what makes his story especially powerful is that his service did not stop at the university gates. At St. John AME Church, Elder Gilmore's influence can be heard as much as it can be felt. For thirty years, he shaped the musical and spiritual lives of generations—directing choirs, organizing programs, and teaching young people how to find their voice not only in song, but in confidence. The piano lessons, recitals, and cantatas were more than performances; they were platforms for growth, discipline, and self-expression. Many who sat at those keys as children carry those lessons into their lives today. And still, he gave more. From writing benevolence policies to preparing financial budgets, from supporting alumni associations to strengthening local organizations, Mr. Gilmore has consistently used his gifts to uplift institutions that anchor our community. His work behind the scenes—often unseen—has helped ensure that these institutions remain strong, stable, and able to serve others.

That is the essence of building legacy: doing the work that sustains others long after the applause fades. In an age where recognition is often chased, Rufus Gilmore, III reminds us that the most meaningful impact is often quiet. It is found in balanced books, mentored students, nurtured talents, and strengthened communities. It is measured not in headlines, but in lives touched. He is generous with his gifts by volunteering his time to individuals and organizations and donating his resources to local non-profits.

As we reflect on what it means to build and leave a legacy in Huntsville and beyond, his life offers a clear and compelling example: legacy is not just what you achieve—it is what you invest in others, consistently, faithfully, and with purpose.

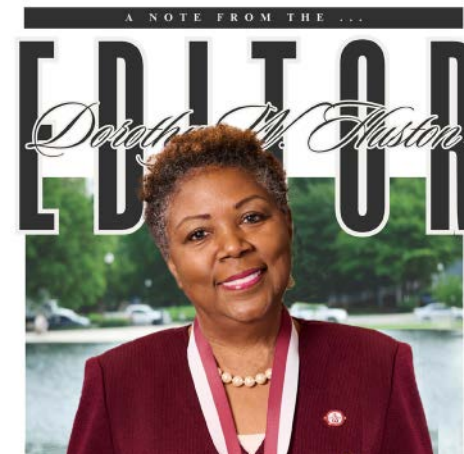
Until next week ...

Dorothy

APRIL 3 - EDDIE MURPHY - Edward Regan Murphy is an American comedian, actor, screen writer, singer, and film producer. Murphy was a regular cast member on Saturday Night Live from 1980 to 1984. He has worked as a stand-up comedian and was ranked #10 on Comedy Central's list of the 100 Greatest Stand-ups of All Time. In films, Murphy has received Golden Globe Award nominations for his performances in 48 Hrs., the Beverly Hills Cop series, Trading Places, and The Nutty Professor. In 2007, he won the Golden Globe for Best Supporting Actor and received a nomination for the Academy Award for Best Supporting Actor for his portrayal of soul singer James “Thunder” Early in Dreamgirls.



- Blackcelebritybirthdays.org



Spiritual Game Plan

Valley Weekly
PRESTON BROWN'S



Today's Spiritual Game Plan:

“Why Prayer Matters”

Luke 11:10 says, “For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.”

One of the things that I have come to realize is prayer changes things. If we look at one of the characteristics of Jesus, we see that He was consistent when it came to prayer. We also need to be consistent when it comes to our prayer lives because there will be disappointments and trials in our lives.

How we deal with the trials that come is very important. I believe that there are only two outcomes that we can expect. Either we survive or we are victorious.

In other words, some people who have made it through hardships and disappointments may survive, but they come out tattered and torn. They come out of the

situation perhaps bitter, angry, and frustrated. However, they survived.

On the other hand, there are people who come out of their circumstances victorious. They have an attitude of triumph about them. They have evidence of God's goodness in their lives. Now why is this?

I believe the reason for this enthusiastic optimism has everything to do with their prayer lives.

Prayer changes things.

When we pray, it gives us a different perspective about our circumstances. When we pray, we bring God into our situation and everything changes. Praying forces us to live by faith. It also forces us to surrender our pride and self-sufficiency that so many of us have. Prayer



is the only way that we can keep the lines of communication open with God.

May God grant you spiritual success in your prayer life.

Question: What is the condition of your prayer life? Is it good, average, or poor? Why?

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:
“Atmosphere Is Everything”

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**VALLEY
DEATHS**



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Funeral service for **MR. CHARLES R. LYNCH** (b. 1966) will be announced at a later date.

Funeral service for **MRS. ANTWIONETTE MATTHEWS** (b. 1981) is incomplete and will be announced later.

Memorial service for **DR. ERNST CEBERT** (b. 1954) will be Sunday, April 12, at 11 a.m. at First Seventh Day Adventist Church. Public viewing will be Sunday, April 5, from 8 a.m.-7 p.m.



Funeral service for **MR. JOHN EDWARD KIBBLE** (b. 1954) was Wednesday, April 1, at Nelms Memorial Funeral Home with Minister Richmond Malone officiating.

Funeral service for **MR. WILLIAM EARL LANGFORD** (b. 1955) was Tuesday, March 31, at Indian Creek Primitive Baptist Church with Pastor Timothy Rainey officiating.

Funeral service for **MR. JEREMI “BART” DOUGLAS, SR.** (b. 1990) was Saturday, March 28, at House of Hope and Restoration with Elder Darron Jones Ford officiating.

Funeral service for **MRS. RUTH ANN BARLEY THOMPSON** (b. 1943) of Chicago, Illinois, formerly of Huntsville, Alabama, was Saturday, March 21, at Center Grove United Methodist Church, Huntsville, Ala.

Funeral service for **MR. WILLIE WILLIAMS** (b. 1943) was Saturday, March 14, at Hurricane Chapel Missionary Baptist Church with Pastor Gary Battles officiating.

Funeral service for **MRS. TERESA F. MURPHY** (b. 1967) was Saturday, March 14, at The Fellowship of Faith Church, Huntsville, Ala., with Pastor Troy Garner officiating.

Mind Your Mentors and Honor God's First Commandment

In reading the Bible, especially the Old Testament, I used to wonder: *why God so often warned Israel about false gods. Why repeat it so much?*

Then it hit me: if it were not that important, God would not have made it the First Commandment.

Recent news helps explain why.

- On March 23, 2026, a California jury awarded Donna Motsinger \$19.25 million after finding Bill Cosby liable for drugging and sexually assaulting her, [Bill Cosby Loses Sex Assault Lawsuit and Faces a \\$59 Million Judgment - The New York Times](#).

- Days earlier, revelations about César Chávez led to canceled celebrations and public statements of alarm from groups connected to his legacy, [Cesar Chavez, a Civil Rights Icon, Is Accused of Abusing Girls for Years - The New York Times](#). And

- The long-public record involving Rev. Jesse Jackson Sr. and Karin Stanford continues to remind us that admired public figures can also carry private moral failure, [Rev. Jesse Jackson's Love Child](#), and Ashley Jackson on her father Rev. Jackson: 'My father loved me out loud'.

These are not just stories about scandal. They are warnings about misplaced trust.



Too often -

We turn mentors into idols. We confuse charisma with character. We mistake gifting for godliness. We give leaders a place in our hearts that belongs only to God.

The Bible warns us against that very thing. David fell. Samson fell. Solomon fell. God repeatedly uses the failures of admired figures to teach us that no human being is safe enough to worship.

The Drug Addiction of Power

For leaders, the warning is equally clear. Influence is attractive. Power is attractive. Public affirmation is attractive. That is why leaders must build boundaries, guard their edges, and distrust themselves enough to remain humble.

Billy Graham famously adopted a rule to avoid being alone with women other than his wife, not because he was weak alone, but because wisdom builds fences before disaster arrives.

So here is the lesson for all of us: mind your mentors.

Honor them. Learn from them. Respect them. But do not idolize them.

Because whenever we put human beings where only God belongs, disappointment is not just possible. It is inevitable.

#Leadership #FaithAndLeadership #EgoHolismRecovering #Character #Influence #Integrity
#FirstCommandment #EmergingLeaders #ServantLeadership

Tim Allston

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

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

Millennial Moment

by
Gloria B. Caldwell

"He Gives Direction ..."

Gerard Altmann - Pixabay

There have been many moments in my life when I wished God would simply hand me the entire blueprint. Every step. Every turn. Every answer laid out clearly so I could move forward without question. Like. Right now! If we are honest, most of us want that. We want certainty. We want guarantees. We want to know exactly where the road will lead before we ever take the first step.

But that is not how God works. God gives direction, not the entire map. He gives the next step. Sometimes just enough light to see a few feet ahead. And that can be frustrating for people, like me, who like to plan, build, and execute. So, trust me, I understand that feeling. But over time I have learned something important. If God gave us the entire path at once,



we might try to control it ourselves.

Direction requires trust. When God gives you direction, He is asking you to move! To take a step forward even when the whole plan is not visible. To believe that the same God who placed the vision in your heart is also guiding your path.

Many people sit there waiting for perfect clarity. They wait for everything to make sense before they move. But faith does not work that way. Direction often comes while you are already in motion.

Sometimes God whis-

pers through an idea. Sometimes through a door opening. Sometimes through a door closing that forces you to take another path. But if you stay alert and stay faithful, you will begin to see that He is always guiding you. Not always loudly. Not always quickly. But always faithfully.

So trust the direction He has given you. Take the step. Then take the next one.

One thing I know for certain is, God loves you, and so do I.

He has given you a gift; open it.

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The Valley Weekly

VALLEY EVENTS

HAPPENINGS, ACTIVITIES & MORE!

April 4

"Nothing But Gospel"
Concert
Featuring Le'Andria Johnson, Jazz McKenzie, Dynamic Praise
First SDA Church
1303 Evangel Drive
Huntsville, Ala. - 7:45 p.m.

April 5

Easter

April 10

The R&B Lovers Tour
Featuring Keith Sweat, Joe, Dru Hill and Ginuwine
Propst Arena
Von Braun Center
Huntsville, Ala. - 8 p.m.

April 10-11

Danae Hays
Huntsville Levity Live
Comedy Club
2012 Memorial Parkway
SW
Huntsville, Ala.

April 16

Spring Concert

Wiz Khalifa

University of North Alabama
CB&S Bank Arena
Florence, Ala.

April 17

Concert
Rod Stewart
"One Last Time"
(with Special Guest Howard Jones)-RodStewart.com
The Orion Amphitheater
Huntsville, Ala.

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.

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, April 3, 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.

Black Tie Scholarship Gala
Alabama A&M University
Featuring DJ Jazzy Jeff,
Tamia
The Event Center
Huntsville, Ala. - 6:30 p.m.

April 17-19

Jim Cummings
Huntsville Comic & Pop
Culture Expo
Von Braun Center
Huntsville, Ala.

April 18

"Finer en Blanc"
19th Annual Blue Revue
Delta Omega Zeta Chapter
Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.
Entertainment by DJ 4Klub
and The Brightlight Experience
(Attire: All-white cocktail
attire and fashionable hats
are highly encouraged to
honor the spirit of the occasion)
The Summit at Redstone

Arsenal
VIP Hour: 6-7 p.m.
Main: 7-10 p.m.
www.deltaomegazeta.com

Performance
Mario
Bulldog Choice Awards
Alabama A&M University
6 p.m.

Concert
ZZ Top & Dwight Yoakam
The Orion Amphitheater
Huntsville, Ala. - 7 p.m.

April 22
Earth Day

April 24
Cake
Orion Amphitheater
MidCity
Huntsville, Ala.
8 p.m.

April 24-26
Panoply

Monster Jam
Propst Arena
Von Braun Center
Huntsville, Ala.

May 1
Concert

Ty Myers
The Orion Amphitheater
Huntsville, Ala. - 7:30 p.m.

May 2
Ethel Cain
The Orion Amphitheater
Huntsville, Ala. - 8 p.m.

May 5-10
"Water for Elephants"
Mark C. Smith Concert
Hall/Von
Braun Center
Huntsville,
Ala.

May 9
Hosta and
Companion
Plant Sale
1022 Cook
Avenue NW
Huntsville,
Ala. - 8 a.m.

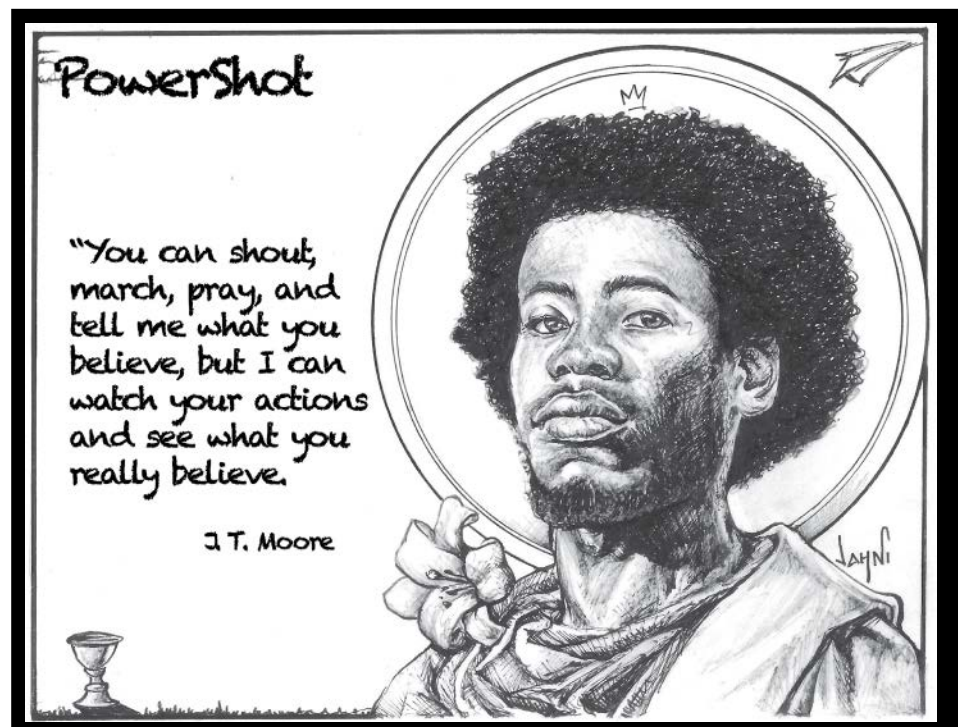
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Classic:
Rob Thomas
The Orion
Amphitheater
Huntsville,
Ala. - 7:30
p.m.

May 10
Mother's Day

May 15-16
Ms. Pat
Comedian
Huntsville Levity Live
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SW
Huntsville, Ala.
(256) 261-3374



NO KINGS! Measuring the vibes, local activist Benard Simelton (above, left) recently attended the No Kings demonstration held Saturday, March 28, in Athens, Ala. Simelton called the turnout impressive for a small town. The Tiplerville, Miss., native is a life member of the NAACP and has served as president of the Alabama State Conference of the NAACP since 2009, earning awards for outstanding leadership. He also serves on the NAACP's National Board of Directors.





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

Mr. Jesse Johnson

Korean and Vietnam War veteran Jesse Johnson, Jr., of Tampa, Fla., devoted more than 41 years to a career built on enlisted, civilian and corporate experiences. He served the Army as an enlisted officer and served in both Korea and Vietnam for almost 11 years.

From there, he served 30 years in the civil service arena as a specialist in equipment for the HAWK Missile System; to the Maintenance Engineering Directorate, USAMICOM; as a logistics and program management specialist; and as an international program management specialist.

Even for a few years following his retirement in 1995, he continued to serve as a consultant for international program management at Sigma Tech, Inc., of Huntsville, Ala. Mr. Johnson has been married to Mrs. Ella Mary Harris for 55 years and they are the parents of three children, one daughter in Hoover, Alabama and two sons one in Huntsville and the other in Jacksonville, Florida.

One of his grandsons was accepted into Harvard University of

which he was awfully proud. They also have five beautiful grandchildren, three grandsons and two granddaughters. In addition, he has one sister and two brothers.

His religious and community service is legion and encompasses contributions to the Alabama A&M University Alumni Association, Defense systems Management College Alumni Association, Pacesetters Lions Club, International Association of Lions Clubs, Blacks in Government, The American Legion, the National Court Appointed Special Advocate Association, the North Alabama International Trace Association and the Alabama Association of Human Resource Boards.

Additional service includes membership and board positions with the Alabama Lions Sight Conservation Association, the Eyesight Foundation of Alabama, the Huntsville/Madison County Senior Center, the Madison County Department of Human Resources, Harris Home for Children, First Community Health Plan, TARCOG Area Agency on Aging, Alabama Silver-Haired Legislature, AL Institute for the Death and Blind, Volunteers of America, State Bible Bowl Coordinator for the Scholastic Motivation Ministries of the AL 2nd Jurisdiction



Lions Club, Loan Executive for the United Way, Child Protection Board of Madison County, Madison County Juvenile Courts Dependency Task Force, Madison County/Limestone County Community Action Agency, C. H. Mason Bible College within the Church of God in Christ, the Nike Gold Tournament, and a Deacon, Past Trustee, Sunday School and Bible Teacher at First Church of God in Christ.

A sociology and economics graduate of Alabama A&M University, Johnson still enjoys golf, chess, home construction projects and gardening. He has awards and commendations too numerous to articulate. Johnson works out twice a week and finds himself volunteering somewhere within the community almost daily.

"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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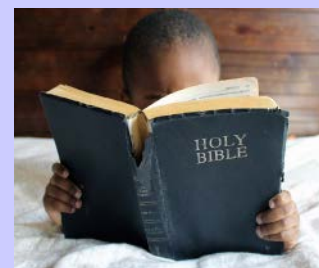
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This Sunday's Lectionary

Sunday, April 5, 2026

Easter Day



(Track 2, Year A)

First Lesson:

Acts 10:34-43

Psalms 118:1-2, 14-24

Second Lesson:

Colossians 3:1-4

GOSPEL:

John 20:1-18

AAMU Named Regional Lead for Amazon Web Services-Machine Learning University

Alabama A&M University (AAMU) has been selected as a regional lead institution for Amazon Web Services-Machine Learning University (AWS-MLU), further elevating the University's role as a leader in artificial intelligence and machine learning education, research, and workforce development.

AAMU joins Delaware State University, Howard University, City Colleges of Chicago, and Oklahoma City Community College as one of five institutions nationwide chosen to serve as a regional lead by AWS-MLU.

"Establishing five regional lead institutions for the AWS-MLU Program marks a powerful step forward in scaling AI and machine learning education nationwide," said Dr. Margie Vela, head of Strategic Initiatives, Machine Learning University, Amazon Web Services. "I am especially enthusiastic about co-developing content with HBCUs and community colleges — uniting faculty expertise with industry insight to create learning experiences that are rigorous, relevant, and accessible. HBCUs continue to lead at the forefront of AI innovation, while community colleges serve as critical engines of workforce mobility and technology adoption. Together, they are not simply participating in the AI future — they are defining it. This is how we build national momentum: through regional leadership, shared creation, and a collective commitment to preparing students

everywhere to thrive in an AI-driven world."

"This designation recognizes Alabama A&M as a leader in AI and machine learning education and research," said Dr. Majed El-Dweik, Vice President for Research and Economic Development. "It gives our faculty and students access to world-class resources, strengthens collaborations with industry and other HBCUs, and helps prepare a diverse generation of technology leaders who will drive innovation across our region and beyond."

The designation follows AAMU's convening of a national gathering of Historically Black Colleges and Universities focused on artificial intelligence, underscoring the institution's growing leadership in expanding access to emerging technologies and strengthening collaboration among HBCUs.

As a regional lead, AAMU will expand access to Amazon's industry-leading machine learning curriculum — the same content used to train Amazon engineers — while providing low to no cost cloud-based computing resources through Amazon SageMaker Studio Lab. These resources support hands-on learning and research in machine learning, deep learning, natural language processing, and computer vision, giving students practical experience with real-world applications.

Faculty will receive professional development, lesson-planning support, course playbooks, and AWS cloud credits



to strengthen classroom instruction and advance research initiatives. The regional lead designation also creates expanded opportunities for collaboration with AWS experts and peer institutions in the AWS-MLU network, enhancing the University's research capacity in artificial intelligence, machine learning, and data science.

For students, the initiative establishes direct pathways to high-demand careers in AI and ML fields. By pairing applied learning experiences with real-world industry applications, the program addresses the national shortage of technology talent while expanding access for students historically underrepresented in computer science and related disciplines.

Beyond the classroom, AAMU will serve as a regional resource for AI and ML education and training, collaborating with industry partners and community organizations to help drive economic development through technology workforce preparation. Faculty and students will have opportunities to present research at annual AWS symposiums and engage in broader scholarly and industry collaborations.

and student enrollment in AWS-MLU courses — developed by faculty members of the 2025–2026 AWS-MLU cohort — to follow in the fall semester.

"We are excited to collaborate with AWS to support faculty learning and advance workforce development across Alabama and the Southeast region," said Dr. Peter Eley, Professor and Interim Director of Research. "Through this collaboration, we are positioned to lead in AI innovation and remain at the forefront of artificial

intelligence development by leveraging Amazon's resources."

As a regional lead for AWS-Machine Learning University, Alabama A&M University is committed to advancing equitable access to AI and machine learning education across the Southeast. Through this initiative, AAMU will continue to build a pipeline of faculty and students equipped with the skills and knowledge to lead in an increasingly technology-driven workforce and economy.

Programs under the regional lead designation are scheduled to launch in the upcoming academic year, with faculty training and curriculum integration beginning this summer

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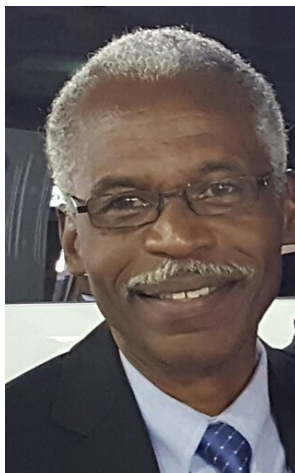
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AAMU Mourns Death of Noted Researcher

The Alabama A&M University community is mourning the recent death of a longtime retired researcher and former manager of the 1,000-acre Winfred Thomas Agricultural Research Station (WTARS).



Throughout his productive tenure as manager of WTARS, Dr. Ernst Cebert was responsible for maneuvering all the parts of the entity's operations. Under his watchful eye were the facilities and grounds for massive agricultural equipment; the housing and fields for research

projects, primarily involving an extensive variety of plants; similar areas and

equipment for numerous animals; as well as an expansive, rolling, green agricultural enterprise, set among an ever-increasing vine of suburban sprawl.

Although Cebert's research specialties encompassed plant breeding and genetics, feedstock development and renewable energy, he was a key contact for a wide range of research interests which spanned cannabis research to the growth of healthy talapia for the market.

The Haiti native retired from AAMU after 30 years of service.



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ON THIS DAY

This Day in Black History: On April 3, 1968, civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. delivered what turned out to be his final speech, telling a rally of striking sanitation workers in Memphis, Tennessee, that "I've been to the mountaintop" and "seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you."

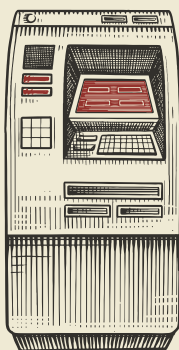
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