

# The "Slum" Story You Were Never Told - p. 2

FREE



# 'Don't Be Discouraged!' -p. 3



Friday  
May 8, 2026  
Vol. 12, No. 36  
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**SALUTE!**  
Rosetta James Foundation  
ELDER OF THE WEEK



Mr. Charles Vedane



"The future happens. No matter how much we scream." — Derek Walcott

## AAMU Announces 2026 Spring Commencement Speakers

Alabama A&M University will celebrate the achievements of the Class of 2026 during its Spring Commencement Ceremonies Friday, May 8, at the AAMU Event Center, featuring accomplished leaders in higher education and public service as keynote speakers.

The graduate ceremony will begin at 10 a.m., with **Dr. Harry L. Williams**, president and CEO of the Thurgood Marshall College Fund (left), delivering the keynote address. The under-

graduate ceremony will follow at 3 p.m., featuring remarks from Alabama A&M alumnus **Anthony Daniels**, who serves as House Minority Leader in the Alabama House of Representatives.

Williams leads the nation's largest organization representing publicly supported historically Black colleges and universities, where member institutions educate nearly 80% of students attending HBCUs. Under his leadership, the organization

has experienced transformative growth, significantly increasing revenue while expanding strategic partnerships with leading corporations such as The Boeing Company, Visa and Wells Fargo. His work has strengthened pathways for students into competitive internships and careers while elevating the national visibility and impact of HBCUs.

A former president of Delaware State University, Williams is widely recognized for



advancing institutional growth, increasing enrollment and securing significant public-private investments in higher education. His leadership has also positioned the Thurgood Marshall College Fund as a leading voice in national policy,

helping to advance bipartisan support for HBCUs and expand opportunities for students across the country.

Daniels, a 2005 graduate of Alabama A&M University, serves as House Minority Leader in the Alabama House of Representatives

(right), representing the state's 53rd District. First elected in 2014, he made history as the first African American to hold the position and the youngest lawmaker to serve as a party leader in the modern history of the Alabama State House. He is widely recognized for his leadership on education, economic development and college affordability, earning honors from his peers, including Alabama

Legislator of the Year.

Daniels earned both his Bachelor of Science in elementary education and Master of Education in special education from Alabama A&M, where he began developing the leadership foundation that would shape his career. As a student, he served as national chairman of the National Education Association Student Program, representing more

than 60,000 college students nationwide and contributing to national discussions on college access and affordability.

The Spring Commencement ceremonies will honor the academic accomplishments of the Class of 2026 as graduates join a distinguished network of Alabama A&M alumni making meaningful contributions across the nation and around the world.

### Huntsville Studies Passenger Rail Service

With an eye toward potential growth, the Huntsville approved a study on intercity passenger rail that will collect a trove of data on travel between the Huntsville area and neighboring metros

such as Birmingham, Nashville, Atlanta and Chattanooga as examples.

The study contract with DB ECO North America is for \$348,874 and will be funded by the Huntsville Area Met-

ropolitan Planning Organization.

This initial study is expected to be completed by September 2027, though the actual implementation of passenger rail service has no timeline.

### Harrison Center Golf Tournament Set

The Colonial Golf Course will be the site for golf, fun and great food on May 22! Shotgun start at 8 a.m.; lunch included (2-person scramble; Longest Drive, Closest to the Pin). \$100 per person. Contact Bryan Primm at (256) 929-9975.

For questions about registration or more information about how to sponsor or volunteer at this tournament, contact Bryan Primm at (256)-929-9975 or bprimm13@gmail.com. See you on the Green!

The Valley Weekly

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# AUNT IRMA MAKES IT PLAIN ...

## The “Slum” Story You Were Never Told

*There’s a tidy little myth floating around America, and especially in educational strongholds like Huntsville: that “slums” are the natural byproduct of people who didn’t take care of what they had. It’s a convenient story—simple, blame-friendly, and historically incomplete.*

Here’s the part they leave out.

Much of what we later called “slums” in cities like New York City, Chicago, and Philadelphia wasn’t born broken. It was **engineered under pressure** during the industrial boom of the **mid-to-late 1800s**. As factories multiplied and ships arrived daily with laborers from **Europe**, developers faced one question: *how do you house thousands of workers as cheaply and quickly as possible?*

Their answer wasn’t innovation. It was compression.

Tenements went up fast—narrow lots, multiple floors, minimal

light, shared sanitation. The goal wasn’t to build communities; it was to build capacity. Pack them in, keep the rent flowing, and let the next wave figure it out. By the time reformers like Jacob Riis documented the conditions in the 1890s, the blueprint was already clear: these were not neighborhoods that had declined. They were neighborhoods that had never been designed to thrive.

Then comes the part that tends to get rewritten.

When Black Americans began moving north in large numbers during the Great Migration, they weren’t stepping into empty apartments waiting to be filled. There was no grand vacancy crisis. What there was, however, were empty jobs—especially during World War I, when European immigration slowed and industrial labor demand surged.

Factories recruited. Railroads recruited. Meatpacking plants recruited.

Housing didn’t.

So, Black migrants followed opportunity into cities that were already crowded—and then ran straight into a wall. Not a physi-



cal one, but a carefully maintained boundary of custom, contract, and coercion. Neighborhood by neighborhood, block by block, they were restricted to specific areas—what some cities would later openly call “Black Belts.”

And here’s where the story splits in two.

European immigrants—Italians, Poles, Jews—had also started at the bottom, often in those same cramped buildings. But over time, they were allowed—gradually, unevenly, but steadily—to move outward. Newer housing. Better infrastructure. Expanding opportunity.

Black migrants were

not afforded the same exit.

So what happens to housing that was already built at the edge of livability when you limit who can leave it, who can invest in it, and who can expand beyond it?

It doesn’t just age. It intensifies.

More people per unit. More strain on already thin systems. More landlords extracting rent without reinvesting. Over time, these neighborhoods didn’t just remain crowded—they were rebranded.

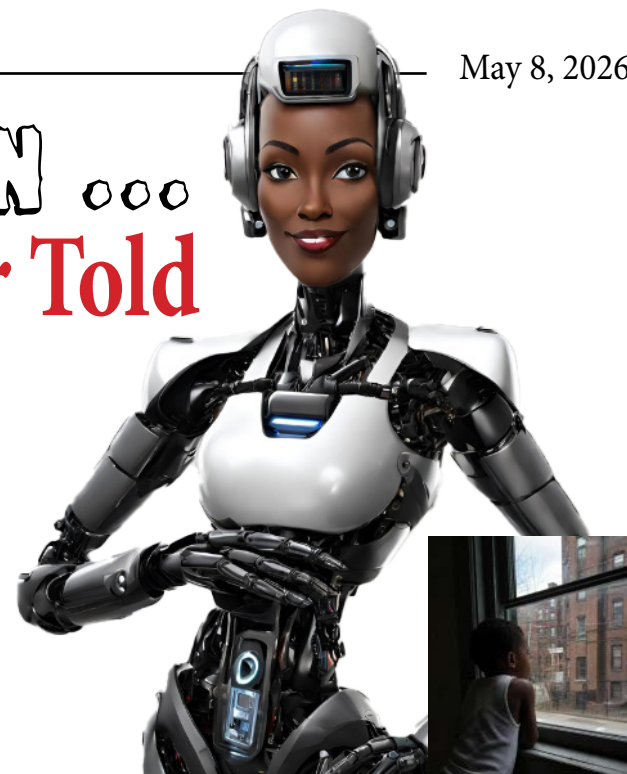
“Slums.”

A word that sounds like a condition but often functions like a verdict.

Because once a place is called a slum, the question quietly shifts from “How was this built?” to “What’s wrong with the people living there?” It’s a subtle move, but a powerful one. It redirects responsibility away from design, policy, and profit—and places it squarely on the occupants.

Aunt Irma would like to interrupt that conclusion.

America didn’t stumble upon slums like potholes in the road. It laid the pavement, chose the route, and decided



who had to keep driving on it. It built housing to maximize labor efficiency, restricted mobility to maintain social order, and then expressed surprise when the result looked exactly like what it engineered.

And just to make sure the story stuck, it gave the outcome a name that sounded natural—inevitable, even.

“Slum.”

But if you follow the blueprint instead of the label, you’ll find something less mysterious and more deliberate:

A system that knew exactly what it was building—and knew even better who it was building it for.

What makes this history uncomfortable is not that it’s old—it’s that it never quite ended. The labels changed, the funding streams grew more sophisticated, and the language got gen-

ter—“public housing,” “urban renewal,” “housing assistance”—but the underlying pattern often held: concentrate the poor, limit mobility, and manage the outcome. In cities from Chicago to New York City, mid-20th-century projects replaced aging tenements but frequently recreated the same density, isolation, and disinvestment under government supervision. Programs like Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program promised choice, yet in practice often steered families into the same clusters where landlords would accept vouchers and opportunity remained scarce. Aunt Irma would submit that we didn’t eliminate the slum—we modernized its management, swapping out private neglect for public policy that too often preserved the same geography of limitation.

- Valley Weekly Staff

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# We Can NOT Be Discouraged!

The law did not disappear—but something more subtle, and in many ways more dangerous, has taken its place. With a 6–3 decision, the Supreme Court did not strike down Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act. Instead, it reshaped it into something far more difficult to use. What once protected voters from discriminatory outcomes now demands proof of discriminatory intent—a shift that may sound technical, but carries profound consequences.

For generations, Section 2 recognized a hard truth: discrimination is not always loud or obvious. It often works quietly, embedded in systems, hidden in processes, drawn into the very lines that define representation. Under the old understanding, if those lines produced inequitable results, the courts could act. Now, the burden has changed. It is no longer enough to show harm—you must prove what lawmakers were thinking when they caused it. And intent is easy to deny. Outcomes are not.

This decision creates a new reality where maps that weaken minority voting power may still stand, so long as they can be justified as partisan strategy rather than racial design. In a nation where race and political affiliation often overlap, that distinction becomes more than legal—it becomes a shield. A map can fracture communities, dilute voices, and still survive scrutiny if it is framed as politics instead of race. The result is a system where accountability becomes harder to reach, and where the voices of many may be consistently diminished without clear legal remedy. This is not just about lines on a map. It is about who gets represented, who gets heard, and who is left on the margins of decisions that shape their lives.



This is how change happens in America—not always through sweeping, dramatic reversals, but through quiet recalibrations. A higher standard here. A narrower interpretation there. Until the protections that once had teeth are reduced to shadows of their former strength. And so we arrive at a pivotal question: What will we do next?

A setback is not a stop sign. It is a call to action. If the ground has shifted, then our response must be to stand firmer. This moment demands clarity, strategy, and determination. It demands that we meet complexity with commitment. We counter this decision by doubling down on voter education and voter mobilization. We ensure that every eligible voter understands their rights, knows the process, and has a clear path to the ballot box. Organizations committed to protecting democracy must treat this not as a moment for reflection alone, but as a mandate to act—now, not later.

Because while some may be playing a long game of restriction, there are others who have long understood the power of persistence. The struggle for voting rights has never been easy, and it has never been comfortable. Progress has always required endurance—the kind fueled by hope, sharpened by strategy, and sustained by belief in something greater than the present moment.

This is where history speaks. Our ancestors and trailblazers who fought, marched, organized, and sacrificed did not do so under easy conditions. They faced obstacles designed to exhaust and discourage them. Yet they pressed forward anyway. Their courage remains a blueprint. Their resilience is an inheritance that cannot be legislated away. The question before us is not whether the work is difficult. It always has been. The question is whether we will rise to meet it.

Because voting still matters. Representation still matters. And elections carry consequences that reach far beyond any single ruling. The lines may be drawn more quietly now. The barriers may be harder to prove. But the responsibility remains just as clear. This moment counts. And, so do the voices we are called to protect. Until next week ...

Until next week ...

*Dorothy*

**MAY 1 - VICTORIA MONET** - Victoria Monét McCants is an American singer and songwriter. She became involved in performing arts at a young age, singing in the youth choir at her church and performing in a city dance team. She soon took to writing and began working with producer Rodney Jerkins (aka Darkchild). Previously signed to Atlantic Records, In 2014, Monét released her debut EP *Nightmares & Lullabies: Act 1* and the following year released her follow-up EP *Nightmares & Lullabies: Act 2*. She has also written songs for artists such as Ariana Grande, Fifth Harmony, Nas, T.I., GOOD Music, Lupe Fiasco, Chrisette Michele, Coco Jones, Chris Brown, Diddy Dirty Money, Janelle Monáe, and Jasmine V..



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





## NELMS MEMORIAL FUNERAL HOME

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

Funeral or memorial services for **MS. TISHEMAR TISIANA TISKA JOSEPH** (b. 1976); **MRS. SANDRA NORMAN WEAVER** (b. 1954); **MS. JO ANN MIMS** (b. 1947); **MR. JAHZIER IRBY** (b. 2005); **MISS KIRIYANAH HARRIS** (b. 2006); and **MR. RALPH LOGAN** (b. 1955) will be announced at a later date.

Funeral service for **MRS. IRENE STEPTER** (b. 1935) will be held Friday, May 8, at First Baptist Church of Russellville, 200 South Denver Avenue, Russellville, Arkansas, at 12 noon.

Funeral service for **ELDER EDDIE B. RAGLAND, JR.**, (b. 1971) was Sunday, May 3, at the Consolidated Flint River and Running Water Memorial Tabernacle with Elder Danny Baker officiating.

Funeral service for **MRS. JULIET BISHARM SOBRYAN** was Sunday, April 26, at Nelms Memorial Funeral Home Chapel.

Funeral service for **MRS. WENDOLYN B. READUS MOORE** (b. 1952) was Saturday, April 25, at Indian Creek Primitive Baptist Church with Elder Dr. Timothy Rainey officiating.

Funeral service for **MRS. MYRTLE GARNER JOLLY** (b. 1949) was Friday, April 24, at Indian Creek Primitive Baptist Association Tabernacle with Elder Terrence Stewart, pastor of Meridianville Primitive Baptist Church, officiating.

Funeral service for **MRS. CLARICE SMITH WINTON** (b. 1945) was Friday, April 24, at Nelms Memorial Funeral Home Chapel with Pastor Larry Davidson, Jr., officiating.

Funeral service for **MS. BOBBIE SALES** (b. 1956) was Saturday, April 18, at Nelms Memorial Funeral Home Chapel.

Funeral service for **MR. THEODORE A. BREACH, JR.**, (b. 1966) was Saturday, April 18, at Nelms Memorial Funeral Home Chapel.

Funeral services for **MS. CASSANDRA FORD** (b. 1964) and **MR. QUINCY LADELL FORD** (b. 1985) were Saturday, April 18, at St. Mark Baptist Church, Huntsville,

# Spiritual Game Plan

Valley Weekly  
PRESTON BROWN'S

Today's Spiritual Game Plan:

## "Good Fruit"

Matthew 7:15-16 says, "Beware of false prophets, (people) who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves." You will know them by their fruit.

So many people choose to live a life of compromise. They may say that they are Christian, but their actions are far from it. For example, it's really unfortunate when Christians stay angry all the time, because it hurts our witness. We can't afford to be like the rest of the world and compromise our religious beliefs. This is because the world is watching us and listening to us when we face trials of any kind, just to see how we will react.

Now, we all get angry from time to time, but it's what we do and how we behave that is important. Also, we as Christians need to avoid complaining all

the time. Once again, complaining affects our witness, because you never know, someone may be watching and listening to you, someone who may be in the process of becoming a new believer.

*Prayer:* Dear God, help us to be aware of the things that we do and say, so that we don't cause others to stumble or fall.

*Question:* How important is it to you, as a Christian to act



like a Christian at all times?

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:**  
"What's Holding You Back?"

## Nelms Memorial Funeral Home

"WE CANNOT ERASE THE STING OF DEATH,  
BUT WE CAN MAKE IT EASIER"



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## The Boston Celtics and the Strength of Silver-Mettle Leadership

The 2025-26 Boston Celtics may be giving us the clearest leadership lesson of the current NBA season.

Many outsiders saw 2025-26 as a possible “gap year” for Boston after Jayson Tatum’s Achilles injury in last year’s playoffs.

Instead, the Celtics finished 56-26 and claimed the No. 2 seed in the Eastern Conference. That is not just a basketball story. It is a leadership story. I call it -

### Silver-Mettle Leadership

Silver-mettle leaders are not always the first names people mention. But they are often the ones who stabilize the culture, preserve the mission, and rise when circumstances shift.

Coach Joe Mazzulla is one example. Jaylen Brown is another. Payton Pritchard may be the most vivid one of all. He handled changing roles this season with maturity and productivity, proving that real leaders do not worship position; they serve purpose.

### A SILVERPATH Strategy

That is why my A-S-I-L-V-E-R-P-A-T-H model fits this Celtics season so well:

**A** — Be aware of the situation. Boston heard the doubts.

**S** — Step up or step back as time and circumstances elevate you. Brown and Pritchard did both.

**I** — Identify opportunities where others only see problems. Boston turned loss into development.

**L** — “Lean not to your own understanding” Proverbs 3:5. Trust system, culture, and a higher wisdom.

**V** — Validate those above and below you. Boston’s buy-in ran from front office to stars to reserves.

**E** — Elude self-promotion. This team has stayed remarkably disciplined about the noise.

**R** — Ready your successors. The bench was not ornamental. It was prepared.

**P** — Patience.

**A** — Proper attitude.

**T** — Teachable spirit.

**H** — Humility.



### Case Study: The Last Game

Boston’s final regular-season game put that on display beautifully. With much of the normal rotation resting, Celtics reserves still beat Orlando 113-108.

That told the league something important: this team is not built around one moment or one man alone. It is built on readiness.

In business, ministry, education, and public life, we make a mistake when we undervalue middle leadership. The people who are not always center stage are often the ones keeping the vision alive.

The Celtics’ season reminds us that championship culture is not merely star power. It is depth, discipline, humility, and preparation.

That is silver-mettle leadership.

#Leadership #NBAPLayoffs #BostonCeltics #TeamCulture #SuccessionPlanning #SilverMettleLeadership #LeadFromTheMiddle #JaylenBrown #JoeMazzulla #PaytonPritchard

### Tim Allston

Leadership Player-Coach and Four-time Amazon Best-Selling Author, “Leading from the Middle”  
Contact: (256) 212-0949 - <https://bit.ly/4aB9Lwm>  
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Website: [www.timallston.com](http://www.timallston.com)

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

## “Let’s Fix This Quick ...”

Stop playing! You don’t have a people problem, you have a response problem. You’re letting too much get to you, and it’s throwing your whole day off. Somebody cuts you off, now you irritated. Somebody says something sideways, now you carrying it for hours. Something doesn’t go your way, and now your attitude shifts. Why? Why are you handing over that kind of control?

You cannot control people. You cannot control situations. But you can control you—and that’s where the breakdown is happening. You say you want peace, but you react to everything. You say you want focus,



but you let anything pull you off track. That’s not them—that’s you.

What if you decided you’re not moving like that anymore? What if you stayed steady, no matter what comes at you? Before you respond, pause and ask yourself—why? Why does this even deserve my energy? Why am I letting this shift me?

Everything doesn’t deserve a reaction. Everything doesn’t require your attention. Sometimes the strongest thing you can do is keep your composure and keep moving.

Tighten that up, and watch how different your days start to feel.

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!

- 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.
- Huntsville 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  
2012 Memorial Parkway  
SW  
Huntsville, Ala.  
(256) 261-3374
- May 16**  
Concert  
Sam Barber  
The Orion Amphitheater  
Huntsville, Ala. - 7 p.m.
- Concert  
Fantasia and Anthony  
Hamilton  
Propst Arena
- Von Braun Center - 8 p.m.
- May 22**  
Concert  
Hardy  
The Orion Amphitheater  
Huntsville, Ala. - 7:30 p.m.
- May 23**  
Old School and Blues Festi-  
val 2026  
*Featuring:* The Zapp Band,  
Cherelle, F.P.J, Jazz McK-  
enzie, Project Pat, Yoshia-  
naa, Urban Mystic  
www.jde.live  
502 Quarter Mountain  
Road  
Harvest, Ala.  
11 a.m.
- Concert  
Godsmack, Stone Temple  
Pilots & Dorothy  
The Orion Amphitheater  
Huntsville, Ala.  
7 p.m.
- May 25**  
Memorial Day
- May 29-30**  
Kam Patterson  
Comedian  
Huntsville Levity Live  
2012 Memorial Parkway  
SW  
Huntsville, Ala.  
(256) 261-3374
- May 30**
- Elite Wrestling  
Propst Arena  
Von Braun Center  
Huntsville, Ala.
- May 31**  
Pop Culture & Wrestling  
Expo  
"Dream On" (\$12)  
Stovehouse Event Center  
3414 Governors Drive SW  
Huntsville, Ala
- June 11-13**  
"Rock the South"  
The Biggest Party in the  
South!  
Jason Aldean, Riley Green,  
Zach Top and Dozens  
More!  
The Raised Rowdy Stage  
The Fields at Decatur  
Decatur, Ala.
- June 12-14**  
Marlon Wayans  
Huntsville Levity Live  
Comedy Club  
2012 Memorial Parkway  
SW  
Huntsville, Ala.
- June 14**  
Flag Day
- June 18-21**  
Alabama Taxidermist  
Association 50th Annual  
Convention & Competition  
Lake Guntersville State  
Park

Guntersville, Ala.

**June 19**  
Juneteenth

**June 20**  
Black Jacket Symphony  
Mark C. Smith Concert  
Hall  
Von Braun Center  
Huntsville, Ala.

**June 21**  
Father's Day

**June 27**

10th Annual JuneFest  
Car & Bike Show  
2160 Airport Road SW  
Huntsville, Ala. - 1-9 p.m.

**July 4**  
Independence Day

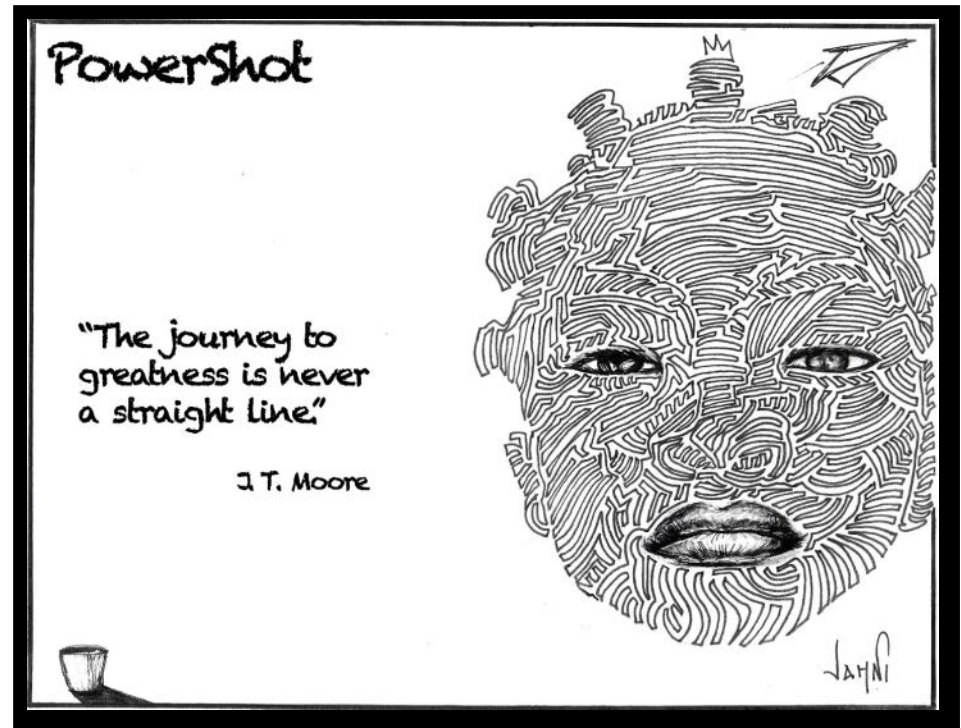
**July 22**  
Concert  
Creed  
The Orion Amphitheater  
Huntsville, Ala. - 7 p.m.

**July 31**  
Concert  
Lord Huron  
The Orion Amphitheater  
Huntsville, Ala.  
8 p.m.

**August 6**  
Concert  
Tape B & Levity  
The Orion Amphitheater  
Huntsville, Ala.  
7 p.m.

### ON THIS DAY

*Significant events in Black history on May 8 include the 1925 founding of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, the 1865 emancipation of enslaved people in Columbus, Mississippi, and the 1915 death of Henry McNeal Turner, the first Black U.S. Army chaplain.*  
- Blackfacts.com



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

## Mr. Charles Vedane

Charles "Chuck" Richard Vedane was born December 6, 1934, on a farm south of Lewis, Iowa, one of the three sons of Victor & Della Vedane. "Chuck" Vedane graduated from Menlo High School in May 1952 and set out operating a farm adjacent to his parents. By 1953, he was drafted into the U.S. Army and took basic training and anti-aircraft artillery radar operations training at Ft. Bliss, Tex. Following this intense training, Vedane was assigned to a base outside of Niagara Falls, N.Y.

From 1955-58, Vedane entered St. Louis University's Parks College of Aeronautical Technology, from which he graduated with a B.S. in aeronautics, and he secured an airframe and engine license and a private pilot's license.

Vedane's productive career includes extensive stints with the Army Ballistic Missile Command in Huntsville, Ala., where he was responsible for systems testing of Jupiter and Jupiter R&D ICBMs; Marshall Space Flight Center, where he tested Mercury Redstone 1 & 2 and the early Saturn 1 vehicles; Teledyne Brown

Engineering, where he organized and managed a Space Operations Department that would eventually employ about 220 people., as well as served as technical director for Systems Integration with the responsibility for managing 330 people.

As a member of Trinity Methodist Church, Vedane in 1963 became involved in church and community affairs in response to the racial strife throughout the nation. He prepared a letter from Trinity's Sunday School Class to the newly elected Governor George C. Wallace informing him that the Governor's historic "stand in the schoolhouse door" at the University of Alabama was not approved of. This decision has led to more than 50 years of work within the interfaith religious community to promote better relations across religious, racial, and cultural differences.

Vedane also represented Trinity Methodist Church during the organization and formation of an interfaith cooperative known as the Interfaith Mission Service. The mission of the cooperative is help the member congregations grow their capability and capacity to provide direct services and systemic change in the areas of social justice, racial



and inter-religious relations.

Vedane, who ran for Huntsville mayor in 1976, has been actively involved in a number of other volunteer efforts, as well. For instance, he was an organizer and a founding member of the Huntsville Emergency Line Program (HELpline); the Huntsville Interfaith Volunteer Transportation Service (HIVTS), later absorbed by the Senior Center; Care Assurance System for the Aging (CASA); and AL IMPACT, a faith-based statewide organization to educate the public and advocate for improved public policies in the area of social welfare and justice.

Vedane and his (late) wife Lucy have two sons (Scott and Kyle) and a daughter (Rebecca).

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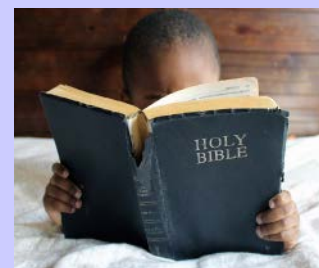
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## This Sunday's Lectionary

Sunday, May 10, 2026  
Sixth Sunday  
of Easter



(Track 2, Year A)

First Lesson:

Acts 17:22-31

Psalm 66:7-18

Second Lesson:

1 Peter 3:13-22

GOSPEL:

John 14:15-21

"Spotlight on Our Elders" is a weekly feature sponsored by the Rosetta James Foundation to promote volunteerism and activism in our community among those who are 70-plus. The Foundation also provides scholarships. Learn more about us at [www.rosettajamesfoundation.org](http://www.rosettajamesfoundation.org). Know an outstanding elder (70+) that you would like to see featured? Send us a photo and 250-word write-up to [info@valleyweeklyllc.com](mailto:info@valleyweeklyllc.com).



# A&M Grad First Black Woman to Lead Columbia College Chicago

Dr. Shantay N. Bolton, president of Columbia College Chicago and Alabama A&M alumna, began her tenure last summer and is currently in her first year of leadership. Recently installed as the college's 11th president, she is also the first Black woman to hold the role in the institution's 135-year history.

Her investiture ceremony, themed "Renaissance Rising: 135 Years Bold," marked both a personal milestone and the beginning of a transformative era for Columbia College Chicago. For Bolton, however, the journey to that stage began on The Hill.

"Alabama A&M University provided me with a strong academic founda-

tion and a deep sense of purpose," said Bolton. "My time there cultivated my intellectual curiosity and leadership capacity, specifically through the rigorous training I received in the psychology department."

A native of St. Louis and a two-time Alabama A&M graduate, Bolton earned both her bachelor's and master's degrees in counseling psychology from the University, along with an MBA from Florida International University and a Ph.D. in organizational psychology from Walden University.

Her career spans more than two decades in senior leadership, including executive roles at Washington University in St. Louis and

Tulane University, where she founded the Tulane University Leadership Institute (TULI) and the Institute for Leadership Excellence (ILE) at Washington University. She also served as executive vice president and chief business officer at the Georgia Institute of Technology, where she managed a \$3.1 billion enterprise.

She is the creator of E3©: Engage, Educate, Empower—an action learning model for employee engagement and coaching used to build high-performing teams across government, corporate, higher



education, and nonprofit sectors.

President Bolton was recently named a 2026 Daniel Burnham Fellow with Leadership Greater Chicago. Her honors also

include Crain's Chicago Business Who's Who in Education, the W.E.B. Du Bois Higher Education Leadership Award, Titan 100 (St. Louis and Georgia), and recognition as a Top 25 Chief Business Officer by Women We Admire. She is a fellow of the Chicago Leadership Circle, a joint initiative of Crain's Chicago Business and the University of Chicago Gra-

ham School, and an active member of the Economic Club of Chicago.

She is now leading a three-year strategic initiative focused on stabilizing enrollment, strengthening the institution's brand and expanding opportunities for student success. Central to that work is the Renaissance Innovation for Student Excellence fund, designed to directly support retention and academic achievement.

"I am particularly committed to ensuring our students are prepared for the creative economy," she said. "That includes the ethical and innovative integration of artificial intelligence into the arts and media."

Even as she leads a

major institution in one of the nation's largest cities, Bolton remains closely connected to Alabama A&M. A Silver Life Member of the Alabama A&M National Alumni Association and an international leadership trainer for Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., she continues to invest in the next generation of leaders shaped by HBCUs.

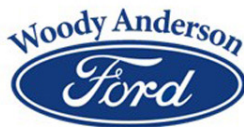
"Alabama A&M remains deeply connected to me because it is foundational to my identity and my leadership trajectory," she said. "I am committed to giving back through mentorship and by supporting the University's mission to develop the next generation of global leaders."

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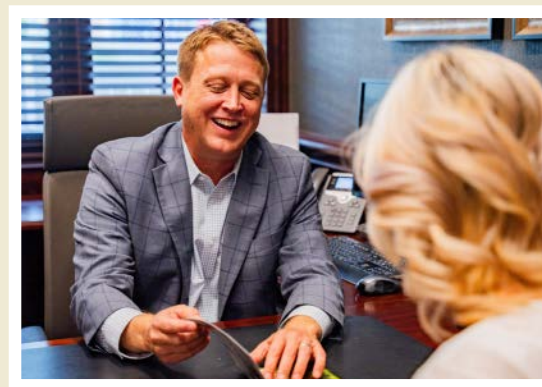


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Here are the top issues and events in Washington, D.C., for this week.

**1. CONGRESS.** The House and Senate are in recess this week. Before adjourning last week, Congress passed a budget resolution to fund ICE and CBP for the next 3 years, ended the 75-day shutdown of the Homeland Security Department, and approved a second 45-day extension of the reauthorization of Section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA), which allows warrantless surveillance of non-Americans abroad. The House also passed its version of the 5-year Farm Bill, which removed language shielding international drug giant Bayer/Monsanto from liability for its weedkiller Roundup, but did not allow year-round sales of ethanol-blended (E15) gas sought by Midwestern lawmakers. The bill now heads to the Senate.

**2. EXECUTIVE BRANCH.** The President announced that he would raise U.S. tariffs on

European cars and trucks to 25% this week, claiming the European Union has failed to comply with the U.S.-EU trade deal. In related news, the Pentagon announced on Friday that it would withdraw 5,000 U.S. troops from Germany (out of 36,000 stationed there), days after German Chancellor Friedrich Merz said that Iran was humiliating the U.S. at the negotiating table. Last Thursday, the President signed an executive order establishing a new website, TrumpIRA.gov, for the 56 million U.S. workers who don't currently have access to a 401(k) or another workplace plan — where they may next year research, compare, receive, and enroll in private-sector IRA accounts and, for single filers who make less than \$20,500 and joint filers under \$41,000, collect a \$1,000 matching contribution from the federal government. Last Friday, Arizona, California, and Nevada transmitted a memo to the Interior Department outlining an agreement among the 3 states to reduce water consumption from the

Colorado River by 3.2 million acre-ft through 2028. Last Tuesday, Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and Vice President JD Vance hosted a meeting at the White House with executives from oil giant Chevron and commodity trading firms Trafigura, Vitol, and Mercuria to discuss ways to tamp down surging energy prices. Next week, the President is scheduled to visit Beijing on May 14-15 for a rescheduled summit with Chinese President Xi Jinping.

**3. SUPREME COURT.** On Saturday, the makers of the abortion drug mifepristone, Danco and GenBioPro, filed emergency appeals with the U.S. Supreme Court after Friday's ruling by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 5th Circuit in New Orleans that halted nationwide access to mifepristone via telehealth prescriptions by mail, requiring women to obtain the drug in person at a clinic. Abortion opponents, alarmed that abortions have increased since the 2022 Supreme Court ruling overturning *Roe v. Wade*, brought suit in Louisiana to curtail the practice of obtaining mifepristone through telehealth, which can be used to circumvent state abortion bans and reportedly accounts for 1 in 4 abortions in the U.S. Last Wednesday, the winning party in *Louisiana v. Callais*, which struck down 1 of Louisiana's 2 majority-minority House districts, asked the Court to by-

pass its normal 32-day waiting period and send a copy of its opinion and order to the lower court immediately — making the decision final and streamlining the process for Louisiana to draw a new map that may eliminate both of the state's majority-minority House districts, currently held by Democratic Reps. Fields and Carter (on Thursday, Louisiana Gov. Landry postponed the state's primary elections for Congress, which had been scheduled for May 16). In related news, the GOP governors of Alabama and Tennessee announced special legislative sessions this week to draw new congressional maps per the *Callais* ruling.

**4. MARCH INFLATION REPORT.** Last Thursday, the Commerce Department announced that the Personal Consumption Expenditures (PCE) index, which reflects changes in the prices of

goods and services purchased by consumers in the U.S., rose 0.7% from February to March, marking a 2-year high of 3.5%. The core PCE index, the Federal Reserve's preferred inflation gauge that excludes energy and food costs, rose 0.3% for the month, pushing the 12-month core inflation rate to 3.2%. The Commerce Department also announced that Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew at a 2% seasonally adjusted annualized pace in the first quarter, up from 0.5% in the fourth quarter of 2025 but lower than the 2.2% rate that had been predicted.

**5. EDUCATION.** The Department of Education is engaged in negotiated rulemaking through its "Accreditation, Innovation, and Modernization" committee, with a final consensus vote expected at the conclusion of the second session, beginning

May 18. The draft regulations under consideration would affect several areas of significant consequence for higher education institutions, including credit transfer policies, program-level student outcome standards, cost/benefit analysis requirements, and faculty oversight expectations. Critics note that several provisions appear to exceed ED's authority under the Higher Education Act, and the absence of regional accreditors at the negotiating table marks a sharp departure from past practice. Institutions should closely monitor the forthcoming updated draft, as ED retains broad unilateral authority to advance its preferred positions if negotiators fail to reach consensus.

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