



Friday

July 4, 2025

Vol. 11, No. 44

ValleyWeeklyllc.com

SALUTE!

Rosetta James Foundation
ELDER OF THE WEEK



Mrs. Carolyn Rice Florence

"He who starts behind in the great race of life must forever remain behind or run faster than the man in front." - Benjamin E. Mays



Scene from the Third Annual Love of Music Gala: *Second Chance Deliverance and Restoration Ministries, Inc., held its Third Annual Love of Music Awards Gala 2025 on the Ernest L. Knight Reception Center on the campus of Alabama A&M University to celebrate exceptional contributions to the music profession. Seated (l-r) are: Ms. Arthurine Shackelford, Min. Paula Rooks, Ms. Demetrice White, Evangelist Elaine Tibbs-Rice, Ms. Kannyetta Ammons. Standing (l-r) are: Mr. Thomas Holman, Sr., Dr. John Humphrey, Mr. Roy E. Williams, Jr., Mr. Ryan Patrick Parker and Mr. Cleveland T. Wilson. For more event photos and details about the Gala, please continue on to Page 9.*



LearningQUEST to Host Rally Day

LearningQUEST will hold Rally Day on Tuesday, July 8, at the Jaycees Building, 2180 Airport Road, Huntsville, Ala., from 10:30 a.m.-1 p.m.

LearningQUEST courses will start the next term of activities in July. The public is invited to come to Rally Day to Explore all the Opportunities that LearningQUEST has to offer.

Participants may

pick up a catalog, view the displays and talk to instructors to learn about the courses, trips and special programs, join LearningQUEST, register for courses, enjoy some refreshments, pose for beach pictures, and chat with new and old friends.

The catalog is posted, and LearningQUEST encourages people to look through it. Starting July 1, on-line registration can be done at: www.LQUEST.org.

LearningQUEST is a 501c3 volunteer-led organization for adults of all ages, dedicated to building a learning community through educational and enrichment opportunities.

For additional information, call (256) 529-8695 or email LearningQUEST@LQUEST.org.

Outdoor Market Scheduled for July 12



Lowe Mill ARTS & Entertainment, located at 2211 Seminole Drive SW, Huntsville, Ala., will host its Outdoor Market on Saturday, July 12.

Come soak up some sunshine with

us every Saturday, 11 a.m.-4 p.m., through October 25.

Vendors from all over the area will present their finest products, whether made-by-hand, second-hand or made by the earth.

Lowe Mill ARTS & Entertainment will host this event throughout the grounds providing patrons, pickers, and art lovers with an open air shopping experience (weather permitting).

So bring your friends, family, kids, neighbors, and even pets (on a leash) to Outdoor Markets for some guaranteed Saturday fun!

Visit our Facebook Events page for more details!

'The Bold Market' to Celebrate Huntsville's Black Businesses

The public is invited to attend The BOLD Market, a dynamic community celebration hosted by BOLD Huntsville and Huntsville Black-owned businesses. The event is dedicated to uplifting and empowering

Black-owned businesses in Huntsville and beyond during Black Business Month!

The activity will be held at the iconic Orion Amphitheater on Saturday, August 10, from 2-6 p.m. This high-



energy outdoor event will feature a curated marketplace

of Black entrepreneurs, creators, and service providers across industries—from fashion and food to wellness, technology, and more. Attendees will enjoy live entertainment, networking opportunities, and a

vibrant atmosphere of connection and celebration.

Whether you're a business owner, aspiring entrepreneur, or supporter of Black excellence, this is a can't-miss event to connect, grow, and celebrate.

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. Although scheduled to be in recess this week for the July 4 holiday, Senate Majority Leader Thune (R-SD) is keeping the Senate in session until it approves the GOP Reconciliation/Tax Cut Bill, which is the GOP's main legislative agenda item for 2025. The Senate's final version of the bill was released late Friday night, and Senate Minority Leader Schumer (D-NY) exercised his right to demand that the clerk read all 940 pages of the bill, which took 16 hours from 11 p.m. Saturday night until 3 p.m. Sunday. Then the Senate proceeded with 20 hours of debate that ended at 1:14 a.m. The Senate reconvened Monday at 9 a.m. to start the "vote-a-rama" with a vote on final passage expected by early Tuesday. The House planned to reconvene on Tuesday to approve the Senate version of the bill on

Wednesday, so that it could be sent to the President by his deadline of July 4.

2. GOP RECONCILIATION/TAX CUT BILL. Last week saw an extraordinary amount of legislative activity on the GOP Reconciliation/Tax Cut bill as the Senate parliamentarian ruled which items in the bill were deemed non-budgetary and, therefore, subject to the Byrd Rule – meaning they needed to be stripped from the bill or subject to a 60-vote point of order. After ruling many key pay-fors in the bill as subject to the Byrd Rule, including Medicaid and SNAP cuts, the GOP leadership (and staff) worked furiously to rewrite the items and resubmit them to the parliamentarian.

This process kept the GOP leadership from releasing the revised text of the bill until late Friday night. At 11 p.m. on Saturday night, after intense lobbying by the President to convince a handful of Republican

holdouts to vote "yea," the Senate voted 51-49 to proceed to the bill – with GOP Sens. Paul (KY) and Tillis (NC) joining all Democrats voting "nay." An analysis of the revised Senate bill by the Congressional Budget Office shows that the bill would add over \$3.9 trillion to the national debt, which is \$1 trillion more than the House version of the bill, and includes \$4.45 trillion of tax cuts and \$300 billion of spending increases, partially offset by \$1.5 trillion of spending cuts ...

3. SUPREME COURT. The Supreme Court ended its 2024-25 term on Friday with a flurry of major decisions, including:

In Kennedy v. Braidwood, the justices ruled against a Christian-owned business and individuals who objected to being forced to offer medications intended to prevent the spread of HIV among at-risk populations;

In Free Speech Coalition v. Paxton, the justices upheld a Texas law that requires users to verify their age to access porn sites;

In Mahmoud v. Taylor, the justices sided with a group of Maryland parents seeking to withdraw their children from public school lessons featuring LGBTQ+-

themed storybooks; and

In Trump v. Casa, the justices sided with the Trump Administration to scale back nationwide orders from lower courts that have blocked the administration's ban on automatic citizenship for the U.S.-born children of undocumented immigrants and foreign visitors (although the justices did not address the constitutionality of the president's ban).


In a surprise order on Friday, the court announced it was punting on whether Louisiana violated the Constitution when it enacted a congressional map last year that created a second majority-Black district and will hear new arguments in the case sometime during the court's 2025-26 term – likely in the fall.

4. HIGHER EDUCATION. The Senate parlia-

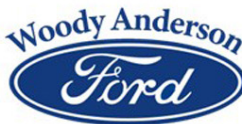
mentarian has approved a revised version of workforce Pell provisions in the budget reconciliation bill after initially finding the original provisions non-compliant with reconciliation rules. The key change removes eligibility for non-accredited providers, addressing concerns previously raised by the American Association of Community Colleges. Separately, significant modifications were made to loan repayment provisions after the parliamentarian ruled they could only apply to new borrowers after July 2026, not current borrowers, which would have significantly reduced expected budget savings.

5. HUD RELOCATION. The Trump administration announced on Wednesday that the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) will be the first major federal agency to relocate its headquarters outside of D.C., part of a larger plan to restructure the federal government's real estate footprint. The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) will relocate its headquarters to the National Science Foundation (NSF) building in Alexandria, Virginia. According to General Services Administration (GSA) Commissioner Michael Peters, the relocation will save taxpayers over \$500 million in deferred maintenance costs and \$56 million in annual operating and maintenance expenses.

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Why We Must Defend Public Education: From the Classroom to the Quad

There’s something deeply troubling happening in this country — and it’s coming for our public schools, our universities, and the very idea of education itself. From efforts to ban books and restrict what can be taught in K–12 classrooms, to attempts to defund and discredit America’s finest public colleges and universities, we are watching a quiet campaign to dismantle one of the foundations of a free, civilized society: public education.

Let me say this clearly — this is not just about curriculum. It’s not about budget cuts. It’s not about test scores. It’s about power. And it’s about control. Because when you attack education, you attack the people’s ability to think for themselves. You attack the right to ask hard questions, to seek truth, to challenge authority. And when you silence that, you don’t just weaken schools — you weaken democracy.

I grew up hearing that education is the great equalizer. That it’s how we could lift ourselves up. That it’s how we opened doors — not just for yourself, but for our children and grandchildren. This belief has been the bedrock for generations of American families — especially families like mine. We couldn’t pull ourselves up by our own bootstraps because sometimes the boots didn’t have straps!

But somewhere along the way, some folks got uncomfortable with what education was teaching. Today, they don’t want our children to learn the full story of America — the good and the ugly. They don’t want them to read books that challenge old ideas, or to hear voices that come from outside the mainstream. And they certainly don’t want to talk about race, equity, or justice — even though these are the very conversations that have helped move this country closer to its ideals.

And let’s talk about our colleges — especially our historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs). These institutions have been beacons of excellence and opportunity since a time when no one else would accept us. When doors were closed, HBCUs flung them open — producing some of the world’s most gifted Black doctors, lawyers, teachers, engineers, and leaders. HBCUs are a national treasure, and yet they continue to be underfunded, overlooked, and now, increasingly targeted.

This is not just an attack on policy — it’s an attack on our future. When we weaken the minds of the next generation and we take away their ability to think critically and speak freely, then we’re not just rewriting textbooks — we will be rewriting the rules of our democracy.

Here’s what I know: Education is not a threat. Free thought is not dangerous. Diversity of ideas is not divisive — it’s what makes us strong. Public education — from kindergarten classrooms to research universities — is how we keep our promise to every American child, no matter their ZIP code or their background. It’s how we keep this nation growing, questioning, evolving.

And so, we cannot sit quietly while they try to tear down Harvard University, HBCUs, and other colleges and universities in America. To the parents and teachers, the students and neighbors: We are not powerless. We have voices and we have votes. Show up to support our local public schools. Defend our libraries. Invest in our HBCUs. Push back against those who would rather our children memorize than understand.

The IQ of our leaders should not stifle our kids. They deserve better than fear and censorship. They deserve truth. They deserve knowledge. They deserve the tools to make this country better than we found it.

That is the America I believe in. And that’s the America we have to fight for — now more than ever. Until next week ...

Dorothy

JULY 4 - BILL WITHERS - William Harrison Withers Jr. was an American singer-songwriter and musician who performed and recorded from 1970 until 1985. He recorded several major hits, including “Lean on Me”, “Ain’t No Sunshine”, “Use Me”, “Just the Two of Us”, “Lovely Day”, and “Grandma’s Hands”. Withers won three Grammy Awards and was nominated for four more. His life was the subject of the 2009 documentary film Still Bill. He was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2015. Withers married actress Denise Nicholas in 1973, during her stint on the sitcom Room 222. The couple divorced in 1974. In 1976, Withers married Marcia Johnson, and they had two children, Todd and Kori. Marcia eventually assumed the direct management of his Beverly Hills-based publishing companies, in which his children also became involved as they became adults.

- BlackCelebrityBirthdays.org



A NOTE FROM THE ...



The Valley Weekly

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ONLINE NEWS ASSOCIATION

The Valley Weekly
Ad Rates Single Issue

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3/4 Page	7.5x10 inches	\$900
Half Page	Horizontal 5x10 inches	\$600
	Vertical 10x5 inches	\$600
Fourth Page	5x5 inches	\$300
Eighth Page	2.5x5 inches	\$150
Sixteenth Page	2.5x2.5	\$75
Classified	1 col.x1 inch	\$100/Flat Fee

Spiritual Game Plan

PRESTON BROWN'S



Today's Spiritual Game Plan: "Staying Committed"

Matthew 4:1 says, "Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil."

Jesus overcame the devil's temptations because He was committed to completing the task that God had called Him to do. His mind was set and there were no options.

Today, I believe that we need to be committed to our spiritual, emotional, and social development. There should be no giving up, no backing down, no changing your mind, no wavering back and forth, no options. We give ourselves too many options that create too many distractions that make us change our minds from what God has called us to do. When we read this scripture, we can see that Jesus was committed. No matter how hard the devil tried to get Jesus to change his mind and follow him, Jesus stayed committed.

To commit means to bind or obligate oneself to a promise or a course of action. When we

are committed, we are dedicated and loyal to a cause, activity, or job wholeheartedly. Let us all learn how to be committed and stay committed.

The same can be



said when we enter into a relationship with someone; we need to stay committed. When we get the jobs that we had been hoping for, we need to stay committed. When we decide to make changes in our lives to better ourselves,

we need to stay committed, and our commitment needs to be influenced by God. When our commitment is influenced by God,

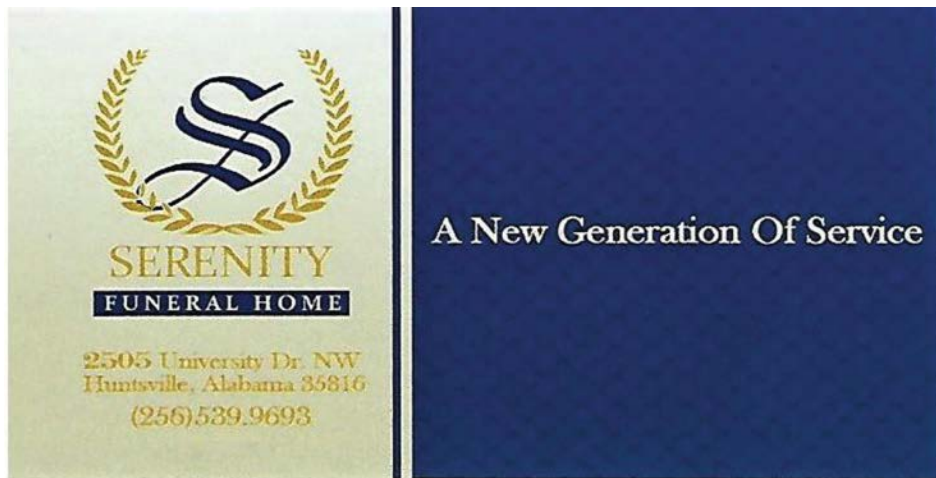
we will have a better chance at staying committed.

May God give you spiritual success in staying committed to what He has called you to do.

Question: *How do you stay committed to something or someone?*

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:
"Having a Solid Foundation"



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THE VALLEY WEEKLY VALLEY DEATHS



SERENITY FUNERAL HOME

2505 University Drive NW - Huntsville, AL 35816
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Funeral services for **MS. LINDA ALLEN** (b. 1947) and **MS. CAROLYN HESTER** will be announced at a later date.

Funeral service for **MR. MAURICE COLLIER** (b. 1959) was held Saturday, June 21 at House of Hope and Restoration, 2525 Aspen Avenue, Huntsville, Ala., with Pastor Jarman Leatherwood officiating.

NELMS MEMORIAL FUNERAL HOME

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

Funeral service for **MS. MARIE CAMPBELL** (b. 1939) will be announced later.

Funeral service for **MISS EDWINA SMITH** (b. 1952) was Saturday, June 28, at St. Mark Baptist Church, 6475 Moores Mill Road, Huntsville, Ala.

Funeral service for **MRS. BILLIE JERRY EVANS FINLEY** (b. 1936) was Thursday, June 26, at Nelms Memorial Funeral Home Chapel with Rev. Stephen R. Davis officiating.

Funeral service for **MR. KELLY LAVAR RASHAD BROOKS** (b. 1986) was Saturday, June 21, at Hurricane Missionary Baptist Church with Pastor Gary Battles officiating.

ROYAL FUNERAL HOME

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

Funeral services for **MRS. DEBRA LACY JONES** (b. 1964) and **MR. TYREE PETTIS III** (b. 1978) will be announced at a later date.

Funeral service for **MS. SHANQUILTA LAMIKA MASSEY** (b. 1977) was Saturday, June 28, at the Springhill Church, 1605 Zierdt Road, Madison, Ala., with Pastor Roderick Stallworth officiating.

Funeral service for **MR. TYRONE CORNELIUS ELLISON** (b. 1974) was Saturday, June 28, at the Macedonia Primitive Baptist Church, 13376 Dupree Worthey Road, Harvest, Ala., with Elder Kourtney Wesley officiating.

Earplugs for the Ego?

“Very early in the morning ... he went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.” - Mark 1:35

The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Leader

Recovering ego-holics—whether battling inflated egos (boastfulness, poor listening) or deflated egos (self-loathing, impostor syndrome)—quickly learn that transformation is a solitary ascent. The crowd at the base camp of the mountain will shout, “It’s too steep!” But history proves that silence at the summit births the loudest impact.

Plugging Into the 24/7/366 Resource

Jesus modeled this solitude in Mark 1:35. In three short years He trained a ragtag team of disciples that helped spark a faith now numbering 2.3 billion people—roughly one in three on earth. No booster budget. No PR firm. Just deep alignment with His Father’s agenda.

Case Study #1: Indra Nooyi, PepsiCo

When shareholders resisted her pivot toward healthier products, PepsiCo CEO Indra Nooyi stood firm—“Performance with Purpose” over short-term sugar spikes. Today, “better-for-you” items anchor PepsiCo’s revenue mix and industry copycats follow her once-lonely trail.



Case Study #2: Nelson Mandela

Asked by Tony Robbins how he endured 27 years in prison, Nelson Mandela replied, “What pain? I was preparing to be president of my country.” He turned the bitter lemon of unjust captivity into national reconciliation, or better lemonade—and finally into the lemon meringue pie of a democratically-elected South Africa, shared with friend and former foe alike.

Case Study #3: Mark Manson on Validation

Best-selling author Mark Manson warns that “bad values are generally reliant on external events.” Any value propped up by likes, retweets, or board votes will collapse under real-world pressure. The ego-holism recovering (EHR) journey replaces applause-driven values with conviction-driven ones.

The Forbes Coaches Council article, [Unshakable: How Iconic Leaders Forge Their Own Path](#) reminds us that iconic leaders “trust their internal compass over popular applause.” That sounds noble—until the applause stops and the boos begin.

Recovering ego-holics face two traps: inflation (“I’m the GOAT!”) and deflation (“I’m not enough”). Jesus escaped both by rising “a great while before day” for divine marching orders, then refusing to claim credit for Himself.

Lesson: Pack spiritual earplugs. Block the noise. Listen to the still, small voice that calls you to trade ego-holism for servant leadership.

Reflection: Which outside voice do you need to mute this week so you can finally hear God’s? #EgoHolismRecovering

Tim Allston

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Website: www.timallston.com



Their Decision Doesn’t Alter Your Destiny!



Their decision doesn’t alter YOUR destiny ...

Whew.

I heard this in a sermon from T.D. Jakes. God maps out your destiny. Your willingness to pull greatness out of you to get there is your choice.

You can alter, derail, and delay getting there, but the ultimate decisions are up to you, and destiny is up to God. So one’s point of view of you is just that. It doesn’t alter anything.

Stop wasting time being upset, pressured,

and hurt about someone’s opinion of you.

What does that matter? We chase our tails, trying to get someone to understand where we are coming from and dying inside, trying to overshadow our hearts and intentions. Some people do not care to hear or understand it. You have to shift and move on. You have plenty to keep you busy. Remember, you have a destiny.

Wherever and whatever that is, if they aren’t willing to stop and under-

stand or consider you, they likely aren’t a part of it.

God makes no mistakes about who He puts in your life ... and who He removes from your life. Stop forcing what isn’t allocated to that time and what has no merit to you getting to your destiny. Their decisions will not alter YOUR destiny. Keep pushing.

Don’t worry about them, what they are saying, what they have, what they are doing. Keep pressing.

Make today amazing! You have the control over your life to do so.

God loves you, and so do I. He has given you a gift; open it.



It’s our birthday,
but we’re
celebrating
you.



This year, as Bryant Bank marks our 20th birthday, it’s our customers who deserve the accolades. For two decades, you’ve trusted us, believed in us and relied on us to help you meet your financial goals. Without you, there would be no us. So thank you to everyone who has been, and continues to be, a valued part of our family.

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Valley Weekly
**VALLEY
 EVENTS**
 HAPPENINGS, ACTIVITIES & MORE!

Thru July 25
 Summer 2025 Natue Rangers
 Camps

Burritt on the Mountain
 3101 Burritt Drive
 Huntsville, Ala.
 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

July 11
 Concert
 Will Downing
 Mars Music Hall
 Von Braun Center
 Huntsville, Ala.
 8 p.m.

July 13
 Justin Whitehead
 Comedian
 Huntsville Levity Live
 2012 Memorial Parkway SW

Huntsville, Ala.
 (256) 261-3374

Mother Earth Troll
 Garden
 Huntsville Botani-
 cal Garden
 4747 Bob Wallace
 Avenue
 Huntsville, Ala.

(Times May Vary)

July 14
 Dare to Explore: Frontiers of
 Space
 U.S. Space & Rocket Center
 One Tranquility Base
 Huntsville, Ala.

July 15
 Paw Patrol: Adveture Play
 EarlyWorks Children's Mu-
 seum
 404 Madison Street
 Huntsville, Ala.

July 16
 Feature Exhibition: Justice for
 the Johnsons
 Harrison Brothers Hardware

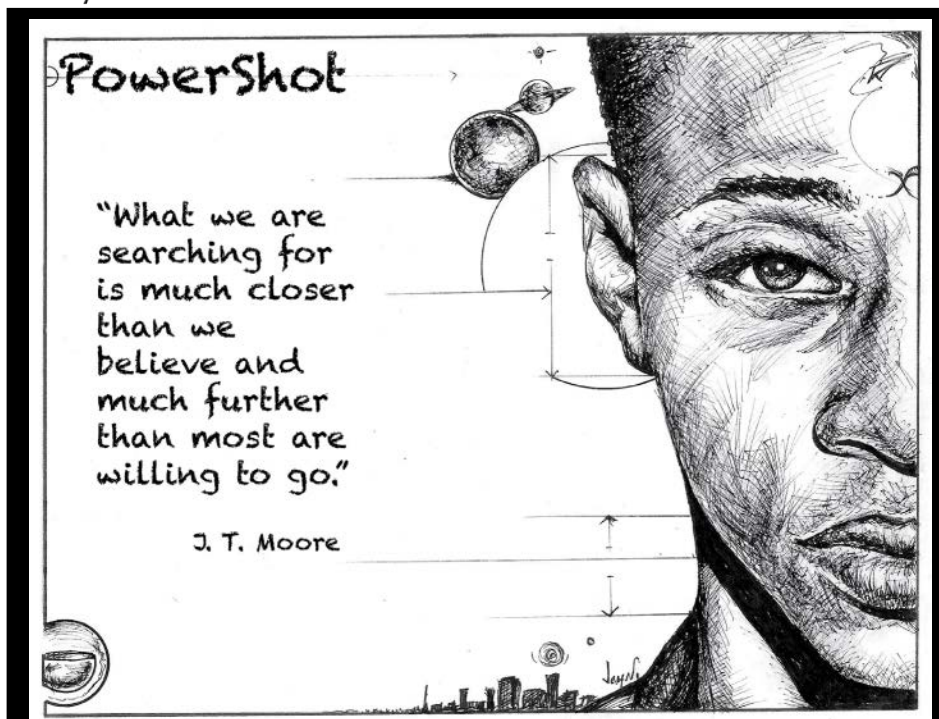
124 South Side Square
 Huntsville, Ala.
 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

July 18-20
 Bruce Bruce
 Comedian
 Huntsville Levity Live
 2012 Memorial Parkway SW
 Huntsville, Ala.
 (256) 261-3374

July 21
 Concerts in the Park
 Big Spring International Park
 200 Church Street
 Huntsville, Ala. (Free)
 Monday Evenings

July 27
 "Weird Al" Yankovic: Bigger &
 Weirder 2025 Tour
 The Orion

July 28
 Concerts in the Park
 Big Spring International Park
 200 Church Street
 Huntsville, Ala. (Free)
 Monday Evenings



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*"There are years that ask questions
 and years that answer."*

- Zora Neale Hurston



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

Mrs. Carolyn Rice Florence

As "Miss Kamama" (the Cherokee word for "butterfly"), Carolyn Rice Florence has shared her message of social etiquette for over 50 years with all age groups. As a self-made businesswoman and community volunteer, she has championed the art of social graces.

Florence's quest to transform average people into models of respectful behavior began in the 1960s with her class, "Fascinating Womanhood," which taught females the finer points of being women. Wanting to expand her knowledge base, Florence used a mix of college and specialty courses to broaden her own education. Florence studied clothing textile and merchandising at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Mich.; and family and consumer sciences and public relations at Faith Grant College in Birmingham, Ala. She was mentored by Maxine Powell, a Motown talent agent and American Etiquette instructor, and Letitia Baldrige, Jacqueline Kennedy's social secretary. She received certifications from the National Children's Etiquette Society and Huntsville's Neil Bryant Modeling and Charm School and Tiffany's Academy of Personal Development. She also trained and worked as a make-up artist

for Fashion Fair Cosmetics.

As Florence's personal training evolved, so did her message. Along with a focus on manners, her trainings grew to include image consulting, dining skills, character education, and international business protocol. She packaged all of these specialty areas into her company, Elegant Behavior, founded in 1999 under the motto "Preparing for the King's Table."

Through Elegant Behavior, Florence has conducted seminars for churches, elementary and high schools, trade schools, and colleges. She has presented at workshops conducted by Ebony and Essence magazines; offered training to several groups at Oakwood University and Alabama A&M University; and provided workshops for community groups including Huntsville's Boys and Girls Club of America; New Futures, Inc.; and HOPE Place.

A Christian who believes in service, Florence makes time to volunteer throughout Huntsville and Northern Alabama. She has been honored for her work with the United Negro College Fund (UNCF); North Alabama's Food Bank; W.C. Handy Head Start Program; Huntsville City Public Schools' Indian Education Program; and the SAVSS program at Oakwood University Church.



The pinnacle of recognition for volunteer service came through Huntsville's Retired Senior Volunteer Program. For logging 1,000 volunteer hours each year over a span of 28 years, Florence received presidential lapel pins and certificates from Presidents George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and Barack Obama, as an Alabama honoree.

Florence has held professional memberships in several organizations, including the National Association of Christian Women Entrepreneurs (NACWE) and the Association of Image Consultants International (AICI).

Florence shares her life with Emmett Florence, her husband of 57 years, two adult children and two grandchildren, a large extended family, Oakwood University Church members, and a host of citizens who have been transformed under her tutelage.

"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.



Huntsville Shares Plans for Big Spring Park Growth

Big Spring Park, long considered a cultural and civic hub of Huntsville, will soon offer even more opportunities for recreation, relaxation and community gatherings. City leaders unveiled the final designs for a transformative expansion of Big Spring Park East to the Huntsville Planning Commission for its approval on June 24. The project reimagines the former City Hall site at 308 Fountain Circle as a dynamic public greenspace, adding approximately 2.4 acres to the heart of downtown's most cherished park.

Chad Bostick with Bostick Landscape Architects and Frank Nola of Nola VanPeursem presented the plan, which finalizes the expansion design. Mayor Tommy Battle called it a major step forward and said the design paves the way for park im-



provements that honor the natural beauty and unique topography of the site.

A key feature of the design includes a lower terrace that links Big Spring Park East and West, providing an urban overlook of the park's signature ponds. Terraced walks and walls will create seamless movement across the sloped landscape. Public art and shaded seating will line the plazas, offering a balance of form and function.

"This plan packs in a lot of desirable public elements,

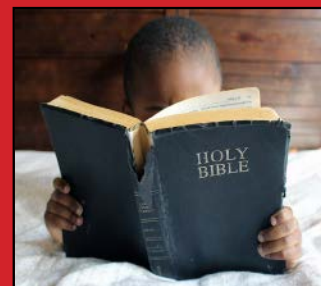
but what excites me most is the bigger picture," said Bostick. "We're creating beautiful gardens, plazas and a public pavilion with a green roof, but as significant is the connectivity. This plan ties Big Spring Park east and west together and creates pedestrian and ADA access to Fountain Circle."

Next: The City plans to bid the park expansion project in July. Construction is expected to be complete by the end 2026.

- huntsvilleal.gov

This Sunday's Lectionary

Sunday, July 6, 2025
Fourth Sunday
after Pentecost



(Track 2, Year C)

First Lesson:

2 Kings 5:1-14

Psalm 30

Second Lesson:

Galatians 6:1-16

GOSPEL:

Luke 10:1-11, 16-20

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AAMU Takes Southern Band Culture to “the Last Frontier”

Alabama A&M University Director of Bands Carlton Wright has performed all over the country – but never quite like this. This June, Wright traveled more than 3,500 miles from The Hill to Anchorage, Alaska, to help lead the inaugural Umoja HBCU Summer Band Camp, a historic three-day experience designed to introduce young students to the rich legacy of Historically Black College and University (HBCU) band culture.

The camp was hosted by Umoja Coworking & Incubator and its founder, Jasmin Smith. Umoja Coworking & Incubator is a community-centered space in Anchorage’s Mountain View neighborhood. Founded in 2020, Umoja empowers under-represented entrepreneurs and fosters cultural and economic collaboration. The Swahili word “umoja” means unity – and that theme was echoed throughout the camp’s mission: to show students that music and culture can open doors.



Held June 11–13 at Dr. Etheldra Davis Fairview Elementary School, the camp welcomed students from grades 6 through 10 and offered fundamentals in musicianship, marching techniques, and the vibrant traditions that define HBCU bands. The program culminated with a spirited student performance during the City-wide Juneteenth Celebration on June 14.

“This was my first time in Alaska,” said Wright. “It’s a beautiful state and very

brehtaking. The mountains, the North Pacific Ocean and the endless summer days are something to behold. Seeing daylight the entire time takes getting used, especially when the sun still is shining at midnight.”

Wright joined a hand-picked team of band directors brought together by Curtis “Dolla Watson” McCullough, an influencer known for his passion for music and mentorship. Fellow instructors included Dr. Kedrick Taylor, Director of Bands at Southern

University, and Dr. William Earvin of Conn Selmer, a global musical instrument company. Together, they created an immersive environment where music met mentorship.

“We taught the basics – fundamentals of music, breathing techniques, marching drills – and also shared what makes HBCU bands so unique,” said Wright. “I gave a presentation on the Marching Maroon and White Band and talked about the pride and discipline it takes to be part of something bigger than yourself.”

Wright says at first, the young participants didn’t quite know what to make of their new instructors. “They were a little shy and didn’t know what to expect,” said Wright. “Once we started to work with them,

they enjoyed the music and really took ownership in the program. But by the end of day one, we had really broken the ice – especially after playing basketball with them. That changed everything.”

For Wright, who’s entering his 13th year as Director of Bands at Alabama A&M, the camp was as much about inspiration as instruction.

“I thoroughly enjoyed the fellowship and collaboration with my colleagues,” he said. “Rarely do we band directors get to work together in this way, because we are normally in competition at games and other events. It was so refreshing and fulfilling to connect with these students and watch them light up through music. This kind of outreach builds a bridge between communities – and maybe even future Alaskan Bulldogs. On

that note, according to Jasmin Smith, fifteen students and chaperones from the camp are planning to attend our Homecoming Game this year!”

Anchorage City Schools promoted the camp across social media, and registration quickly filled. Organizers hope this year’s success will be the beginning of a new tradition, connecting young musicians in Alaska with HBCUs across the country.

And if AAMU’s band director has anything to say about it, he’ll be back.

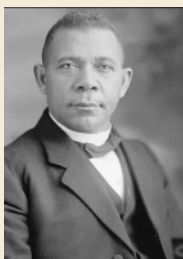
“I’d love to return,” said Wright. “This was a powerful experience – not just for the students, but for all of us.”

(Photo L-R) Curtis “Dolla Watson” McCullough, Dr. Kedrick Taylor, Dr. William Earvin, Carlton Wright, Erica Davidson

ON THIS DAY

On July 4th, 1881, Booker T. Washington founded the Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute in Alabama, now known as Tuskegee University. Additionally, Frederick Douglass delivered his powerful speech “What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?” in 1852, challenging the meaning of the holiday for Black Americans.

- wikipedia.org



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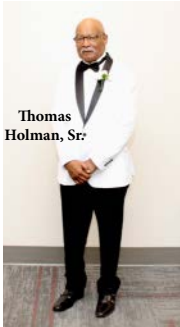
Scenes from the Third Annual Love of Music Gala

Saturday, June 28, 2025
Ernest L. Knight Reception Center
Organizers: Minister Leo & Mrs. Donna B. Robinson
(Photos by J. Saintjones)



Under the dynamic leadership of Minister Leo and Mrs. Donna B. Robinson, Second Chance Deliverance and Restoration Ministries, Inc., held the Third Annual Love of Music Awards Gala 2025 in the Ernest L. Knight Reception Center on the historic campus of Alabama A&M University. The affair was formed to honor exceptional contributions to the music profession.

The honorees included (alphabetically): Kannyetta Ammons, singer and Best Female Vocalist nominee for the Kingdom Image Award; Thomas Holman, Sr., founder of The Gospel Imperials singing group; Dr. John Humphrey, director of music, Union Hill Cumberland Presbyterian Church of America; Ryan Patrick Parker, actor and American gospel singer; Evangelist Elaine Tibbs-Rice, recording artist/professional singer, Antioch Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America; Minister Paula Rooks, minister of music/musician, St. Elizabeth Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America; Arthurine Shackleford, professional singer and recording artist, First Missionary Baptist Church; Demetrice White, singer and minister of music, North Courtland Primitive Baptist Church; Roy E. Williams, Jr., pianist and singer, Hopewell Missionary Baptist Church; and Cleveland T. Wilson, choice director, First Church Inspirational Choir, First SDA Church.





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