



POSITIVE-INSPIRATIONAL-EDUCATIONAL

WHY BLACK “DOLLARS” MATTER - p. 10

FREE

Patent Office Links HBCUs - p. 11

Friday
July 24, 2026
Vol. 12, No. 47
ValleyWeeklyllc.com

The Drive-In Laser Light Show
Friday & Saturday/July 24-25
Joe Davis Stadium
5 p.m.

SALUTE!
Rosetta James Foundation
ELDER OF THE WEEK



Mr. William Davis

“The only true wisdom is in knowing you know nothing.” — Socrates

CAFY Event July 25

The annual Community Awareness For Youth (CAFY) event will be held Saturday, July 25, at Calhoun Community College - Huntsville Campus, 102 Wynn Drive in Huntsville, Ala., from 9 a.m.-12

noon. The activity is being held in collaboration with the Refuge Church & OneGenAway Food Distribution.

CAFY will feature free backpacks and school supplies, student and fam-

ily resources, music and entertainment, drive-thru groceries, and fun, food and interactive activities.

Other sponsors include Huntsville City Schools, the Office of Multicultural Affairs and FIRSTStudent.

Backpack Giveaway Sites Set

With budget constraints being the biggest challenge for back-to-school shopping, Huntsville-Decatur (Florence)-area Verizon Wireless stores will be giving

away hundreds of FREE backpacks on Sunday, July 26 at 1 p.m. Verizon authorized retailer, Round Room, LLC, is hosting its 14th annual “School Rocks

Backpack Giveaway” event.

Store locations include 5856 Highway 53, Suite B, in Harvest, Ala., and 14739 Highway 231/431 N in Hazel Green, Ala.

Smart Start Back to School/Haircuts

BASF teams will sponsor free back to school supplies and

haircuts at HeadzUp Barbershop at 2205 University Drive, Sat-

urday, August 1, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Call (256) 412-7973 for more.



HPAC HONORS LEADERSHIP: Alabama A&M University's Huntsville Progressive Alumni Chapter presented its 21st Annual Leadership Awards Gala at The Jackson Center on Saturday, July 11. Among the honorees and award categories are: (Seated, l-r): **Erica 'Fox' Washington**, *Community/Civic*; **Dr. Andrain Yeldell Jones**, *Alumna of the Year*; **Sandra S. Stubbs**, *William Hooper Councill Alumna of the Year*; **Kathy Jones**, *Government Relations*; and **Dawn C. Stanley**, *Government/Industry*; (Standing, l-r): **Minister Cedric Taylor**, *Small Business*; **Dr. John Vickers, Jr.**, *Education*; **Rev. Dr. Oscar Montgomery**, *Outstanding Service*; **Freeman Holifield**, *Outstanding Alumnus of the Year*; and **Wes Kelley**, CEO, *Huntsville Utilities, Corporate*. (Photo by J. Saintjones)

New Affordable Senior Community Opens Doors

Last Thursday, July 16, nonprofit Neighborhood Concepts, Inc., celebrated the grand opening of Grove at Indian Creek, a new 48-unit afford-

able senior housing community at 7199 New Life Circle NW, Huntsville.

Funding for the development was made possible through a public-

private partnership that included Low-Income Housing Tax Credits allocated by the Alabama Housing Finance Authority, tax credit equity provided by

Raymond James Affordable Housing Investments, construction financing from ServisFirst Bank, permanent financing from United Bank and Alabama Multi-

family Loan Consortium, and HOME Investment Partnerships Program funding from the City of Huntsville.

Call (256) 534-0075 for more details.

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 session this week. For its final week before adjourning for a 5-week recess, the House has packed its floor schedule, including votes on (1) a temporary stopgap spending measure to keep the government open through Dec. 4, 2026, when the new fiscal year starts on Oct. 1; (2) a budget resolution to set the stage for Reconciliation bill #3, with \$60 billion for the Pentagon, \$12 billion for payments to farmers, and \$10 billion to create a grant program for states to enforce the SAVE America Act proof-of-citizenship voting requirements;

(3) the \$1.15 trillion FY27 Defense Authorization bill; and (4) a ban on stock trading by Members of Congress and their families — now paired with the SAVE America Act. Last week, the Senate failed to bring up the Defense Authorization bill on a 50-46 vote (60 votes needed), with Senate Democrats united in opposing the bill to voice their concern about the resumption of hostilities against Iran and the President's failure to ask Congress to authorize the war, which started on Feb. 28. The Senate is currently scheduled to be in session through Aug. 7. This week, it is expected to take up a Russia sanctions bill that would impose tariffs on Russian goods and provide \$8 billion in military loans to

Ukraine, and it will also vote to confirm Jay Clayton as Director of National Intelligence.

2. EXECUTIVE BRANCH.

On Friday, the President will make remarks at the rescheduled White House Correspondents' Association Dinner at DC's Waldorf Astoria Hotel. Last Friday, a 3-judge panel for the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals handed the administration a win by allowing the U.S. Postal Service to halt delivery of mail-in and absentee ballots in states that don't provide eligible voter lists to the federal government (note: the President's mail-in ballot executive order remains blocked in nearly two dozen states in a separate case by a federal judge in Boston). Last Thursday, the President threatened to revoke ABC and NBC's licenses after the networks failed to broadcast his prime-time address in which he claimed widespread election fraud (of the major networks, only Fox covered the speech live in its entirety). Last Friday, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration posted a recall notice on its website from Taylor Farms removing

all iceberg lettuce sourced from central Mexico from the U.S. market distributed to 27 states, because it has the potential to be contaminated with *Cyclospora*.

3. SUPREME COURT. The Supreme Court has ended its 2025-26 term and will reconvene for the 2026-27 term on Monday, October 5.

4. EDUCATION On July 15, the House Education and Workforce Committee approved the "Less Bureaucracy, Better Education" package on a party-line vote, a 10-bill effort to codify President Trump's plan to dismantle the Department of Education and shift its duties to agencies including Labor, Treasury, Interior, HHS, and State. Education Secretary Linda McMahon praised the vote as a major step toward right-sizing the federal role in education. ED has already signed 14 interagency agreements moving functions and staff to

other departments, though formally closing the agency still requires congressional action. The committee rejected amendments that would have restored terminated CCAMP-IS grants and shielded other specific programs, and notably left special education and civil rights functions out of the markup. The bills now head toward further votes as the administration continues its push to unwind the department administratively ahead of any formal closure.

5. INFLATION REPORT.

Last Tuesday, the Labor Department reported that inflation, as measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI), eased to 3.5% in June, down from 4.2% in May. The drop was largely due to lower gas prices; however, according to AAA, the average price for a gallon of regular gas in the U.S. has risen to \$4.0030 as of 7-20-26.

6. LATEST POLLING

NEWS. With 61 days to go be-

fore early voting for the Mid-Term Elections begins, a new Washington Post/IPSOS poll found that among the most motivated voters, Democrats lead Republicans 53% to 45% (among all registered voters, it was 48%-45% in favor of Ds). With Democrats needing only a net gain of 3 seats to take control of the House of Representatives, the Cook Political Report forecasts 18 toss-up races that are too close to call (14 Rs and 4 Ds). In the Senate, where Democrats need to gain 4 seats to take control, Cook lists 4 toss-ups: AK (R), ME (R), MI (D), and OH (R). It also has the current GOP-controlled North Carolina seat in the "leans Democratic" column.

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Tips for World Drowning Prevention Day

World Drowning Prevention Day is Saturday, July 25, and Pool Scouts of Huntsville (Ron Hicks) can offer key safety tips on: 1) the specific neon colors that save children's lives; 2) how physical pass-off

items help ensure an adult has dedicated eyes on the pool; 3) how to quickly test if your backyard gates, self-latching mechanisms and isolation fencing actually meet local safety codes; and 4) how modern

backyard door alarms and sub-surface wave sensors act as a critical backup if a perimeter is breached.

Reach pool safety expert Ron Hicks via K. Ostojic at kostojic@hellomainland.com.

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The Valley Weekly
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	2.5x5 inches	\$150
Sixteenth Page		
	2.5x2.5	\$75
Classified	1 col.x1 inch	\$100/Flat Fee

Coming Home: Finding the Place That Finds You

Every now and then, an experience reminds us that art does more than decorate walls. It tells our stories.

That was my experience as I walked through “Coming Home,” the Huntsville Museum of Art’s newest exhibition featuring the work of Huntsville-connected artists LeXander Bryant, Jahni Moore, and Toyin Ojih Odutola. The exhibit was exceptionally well attended, and judging from the conversations throughout the galleries, it deeply resonated with visitors from every walk of life.

The exhibition asks a simple question with no simple answer: What does it mean to come home?

For me, that question immediately became personal. I was born in Monroeville, the youngest of thirteen children. My older brothers and sisters were born on the plantation where my parents lived and worked as sharecroppers. Although I was not born there, that community was my first home. It was where I learned faith from my parents, resilience from hard work, and the importance of family, even when life offered few material possessions. At sixteen years old, I left home to attend Alabama A&M University. Like so many young people, I thought I was simply leaving one place to begin another chapter. I did not realize then that “home” would become something much larger than an address. Alabama A&M became home. Huntsville became home.

The people I met here challenged me to dream beyond anything I had imagined. They encouraged my education, opened professional doors, nurtured lifelong friendships, and allowed me to build a life centered on service. This community gave me opportunities that changed not only my future but the future of my children and grandchildren. That is why “Coming Home” spoke to me.

The exhibition does not present home as a single place frozen in time. Instead, it reveals home as something constantly shaped by memory, experience, imagination, and relationships. Through painting, photography, and mixed media, the artists invite us to consider that home is both where we come from and where we continue becoming. For many people in our diverse community, that truth feels familiar.

Some came to Huntsville because of military service. Others arrived because of NASA, Redstone Arsenal, higher education, technology, healthcare, or business opportunities. Many came seeking opportunity. Some came seeking refuge. Others returned after years away to care for family or reconnect with their roots. Each story is different. Yet each represents someone searching for a place where they belong.

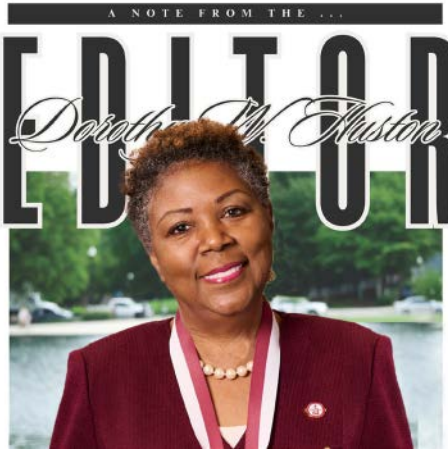
As I viewed the artwork, I was reminded that diversity is not simply about celebrating different races, cultures, or backgrounds. Diversity is also about honoring the different journeys that bring us together. We all carry memories. We all experience loss, change, hope, and renewal. Those experiences become part of who we are. This appears throughout the exhibition as a symbol of that shared humanity. It represents longing and belonging, displacement and renewal, departure and return. In many ways, it represents all of us.

One of the greatest strengths of Huntsville is that it continues to welcome people from across the nation and around the world. We are building one of America’s most innovative cities, not because everyone comes from the same place, but because people with different stories, experiences, talents, and perspectives choose to build a future together. That is what makes a community. That is what makes a home.

As I left the museum, I realized that perhaps home is not simply where we begin. It is where we are accepted. It is where we grow. It is where we discover purpose. It is where we find people who believe in us, challenge us, and love us enough to help us become our best selves.

Sometimes we are born there. Sometimes we spend a lifetime finding it. And sometimes, if we are fortunate, we discover that home has been quietly welcoming us all along.

Until next week ...



Dorothy

JULY 24 - RICK FOX - “Ulrich Alexander Fox” is a Canadian-Bahamian retired basketball player, actor, businessman, and esports franchise owner. He played in the National Basketball Association (NBA) for the Boston Celtics and Los Angeles Lakers, and played college basketball for the North Carolina Tar Heels. Fox is currently a partner at Vision Venture Partners, spearheading the private equity firm’s move into professional sports and providing strategic guidance, creative direction and business development support to each of VVP’s portfolio companies. He is also the owner of the esports franchise Echo Fox.

- BlackCelebrityBirthdays.org



Spiritual Game Plan

PRESTON BROWN'S



Today's Spiritual Game Plan:

"Stand for Righteousness"

Matthew 5:11-12 says, "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. It goes on to say 'Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven.'"

We live in a time when current events motivate us to be committed to causes. Black Lives Matter was motivated by the disproportionate number of black people killed by law enforcement.

Many people became committed to that cause. The "Me Too" movement addressed sexual harassment and assault of so many women. This also caused people to commit to a cause.

In Jesus's time, there was one motivation for commitment to a cause and that was life or death. Many Christians at the time were committed to Jesus and were willing to die for

Him. Are we willing to stand for the things in life that really matter and can make a difference? Are we willing to stand for the things that Jesus represents, like love, peace, joy, and humility?

Whenever we stand for things that matter, we will always have opposition. However, whenever we commit to a cause that is long overdue, and stand firm on what we believe, our reward will be great. The reward comes when lives are changed and people have a voice to say, "Not anymore." Remember, if we don't stand for something, we will fall for anything.

May God grant you spiritual success in realizing the things that



really matter and then standing for the truth because it is the right thing to do.

Question: What cause have you needed to commit to but failed to do so?

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 in It for Me?"

Nelms Memorial Funeral Home

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



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Funeral services for **MS. MILDRED A. SCRUGGS** (b. 1942) and **MR. ROBERT TOWNSEND** (b. 1933) are incomplete and will be announced at a later date.

Funeral service for **MRS. MARY MCDONALD** (b. 1952) was Sunday, July 19, at Hopewell Missionary Baptist Church, 292 Cemetery Road, New Market, Ala.

Funeral service for **MR. REGINALD LAVELL RANDOLPH** (b. 1976) was Friday, July 17, at Pine Grove Missionary Baptist Church with Rev. Lance Kelly officiating and Pastor Dr. C. Jermaine Turner as eulogist.

Funeral service for **MS. TAMARA RECHELLE ANDERSON** (b. 1977) was Thursday, July 16, at Macedonia Primitive Baptist Church in Harvest, Ala., with Pastor Jackie Wilson officiating and Pastor Emeritus Annias Green as eulogist.

Funeral service for **MS. JEANETTE SANDERS** (b. 1952) was Friday, July 10, at Nelms Memorial Funeral Home with Pastor Larry Davidson, Jr. officiating.

Celebration of Life for **MRS. PAULETTE MCCUTCHEN** (b. 1946) was Sunday, July 5, at Nelms Memorial Funeral Home Chapel with Rev. Lorenzo Moore officiating.

Graveside service for **MR. HUBERT LANSDEN** (b. 1945) was Monday, June 29, at the Chattanooga National Cemetery.

Celebration of Life service for **MR. MICHAEL HOLMES** (b. 1957) was Saturday, June 27, at Chelsea Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America with Rev. Terence Haley officiating.

Funeral service for **MRS. GLADYS ANTOINETTE GILBERT CRAREY** (b. 1952) was Friday, June 26, at Oakwood University Seventh-Day Adventist Church with Pastor Debleaire Snell officiating and Dr. Toussaint Williams eulogist.

Funeral service for **MRS. LILLIAN (bka "Li") GARNER HAMPTON** (b. 1943) was Friday, June 26, at St. Rebecca Primitive Baptist Church.

Funeral service for **MR. JOHN DUNIGAN** (b. 1960) was Saturday, June 20, at Progressive Union Baptist Church with Rev. Jasper Bacon officiating.

When God Doesn't Remove the Obstacle: Good Things vs. God Things

Leadership often teaches us to eliminate obstacles.

The Bible sometimes teaches something different.

For years I've encouraged leaders to L.Y.E.—Love Your Enemies. Not because opposition is enjoyable, but because our opposition often becomes one of our greatest teachers.

The way we respond to critics, competitors, disappointments, and resistance frequently determines whether we grow or merely react.

Recently, however, I discovered another layer to that lesson.

Judges 2:21–23 initially puzzled me. After Joshua's remarkable military leadership, Scripture says that God chose not to drive out all the remaining Canaanite nations. My first thought was that Joshua had simply left the job unfinished.

Our Obstacles Become TruthTellers

Then I read the Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 2, p. 321:

It explained that God intentionally left some of those nations in the land because "Obstacles are necessary to the development of character."

Israel had been given enough territory to settle, but the remaining opposition would become God's classroom. As the people learned obedience, faith, and dependence upon Him, they would receive strength to overcome what remained.

That changed the way I read the passage in three ways. Sometimes:

1. God removes our obstacles;
2. He removes us from them. And
3. He leaves them exactly where they are—not to defeat us, but to develop us.

Our obstacles become truth-tellers.

They expose our impatience, pride, fear, insecurity, self-reliance, or lack of faith. They reveal where our character still needs strengthening.

In that sense, our greatest frustrations may also become our greatest instructors.

As someone who openly describes himself as a "recovering ego-holic," I've learned that growth rarely comes through comfort. Character is usually forged where resistance is greatest.

Perhaps that's why James wrote to "count it all joy" (ch. 1, v. 2) when trials come—not because trials are pleasant, but because they produce perseverance and maturity.

Maybe it's time to expand my old leadership acronym.

Yes, leaders should L.Y.E.—**Love Your Enemies**.

But perhaps we should also learn to love our obstacles.

Because the obstacle God refuses to remove today may be the very instrument He is using to shape the leader He wants us to become tomorrow.

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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Millennial Moment

by Gloria B. Caldwell

TREES OF LIFE: The Rooted Tree ...

You look stable. I'll give you that.

From the outside, you're holding it together. Showing up. Functioning. Nobody would look at you and see a problem. But I'm not looking at your outside. I'm looking at your root system.

I watched the tall trees in my yard during the storm last week. Impressive from a distance. Thirty feet high, full branches, commanding presence. But when that wind hit — the top was moving. Leaves flying. The whole tree pivoting under pressure. What saved it wasn't its height. It wasn't its appearance. It was what was happening underground where nobody could see.



Roots.

So let me ask you directly — what is really going on at the root of it all?

Because stability and foundation are not the same thing. You can look stable and have nothing holding you. You can perform composure

so long you forget it's a performance. You can be tall and hollow at the same time.

Real roots don't just hold you up on good days. They hold you down when the wind decides to test everything you're made of. They go deep — into something bigger than your own strength, your own discipline, your own will. Because your will has a limit. The storm doesn't.

God is not impressed by your height. He's invested in your depth.

Next week — even the most rooted trees have weak spots. The storm will find yours. The question is whether you find it first.

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The Valley Weekly

VALLEY EVENTS

HAPPENINGS, ACTIVITIES & MORE!

July 22

Concert
Creed
The Orion Amphitheater
Huntsville, Ala. - | 7 p.m.

July 24

Lucky 7-11 MC/SC King of
The Hill 50th Anniversary
502 Quarter Mountain Road
Harvest, Ala. | 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

July 25

Guided Paddle Lighthouse
Sunset Paddle
blackkidsadventures@gmail.
com | 5:30-7:30 p.m.

July 26

Sundays on the Greenway
Elgies Greenway | [MORE](#)
4-5 p.m.

July 31

Concert
Lord Huron
The Orion Amphitheater
Huntsville, Ala. | 8 p.m.

August 1

Huntsville Food Fest
The Royal at Stovehouse
All-You-Can-Eat Small Plates
3414 Governors Drive SW

Huntsville, Ala.
Huntsvillefoodfest.com
(Free Parking) | 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

Mindful Wellness Walk
1300 Meridian Street
Huntsville, Ala. | 11 a.m.

August 3

"Throw Your Rope Across the
Fence"
Career Mentoring and Net-
working Ministry Meeting
First Missionary Baptist
Church
3509 Blue Spring Road NW
Huntsville, Ala. | 1-3 p.m.

August 6

Concert
Tape B & Levity
The Orion Amphitheater
Huntsville, Ala. | 7 p.m.

August 7

First Fridays Summer Edition
AC Hotel Huntsville Down-
town
435 Williams Avenue SW
Huntsville, Ala. | 6-9 p.m.

August 7-9

Desi Bank
Comedian
Huntsville Levity Live
2012 Memorial Parkway SW
Huntsville, Ala.
(256) 261-3374

August 9

Sundays on the Greenway
Tennessee Valley River Green-
way | 4-5 p.m.

August 15

Huntsville Tea Fest
Annabella at Cedar Glen
www.huntsvilleteafestival.vom
Huntsville, Ala. | 2-9 p.m.

August 17

"Throw Your Rope Across the
Fence"
Career Mentoring and Net-

working Ministry Meeting
First Missionary Baptist
Church
3509 Blue Spring Road NW
Huntsville, Ala. | 1-3 p.m.

August 18

Concert
Goo Goo Dolls
The Orion Amphitheater
Huntsville, Ala. | 7:30 p.m.

August 22

Concert
Parker McCollum
The Orion Amphitheater
Huntsville, Ala. | 7:30 p.m.

September 4-5

Shuler King
Comedian
Huntsville Levity Live
2012 Memorial Parkway SW

Huntsville, Ala.
(256) 261-3374

September 7

Labor Day

September 10

Bundle Dye Workshop
1818 Farms
(https://1818farms.com)
24889 Lauderdale Street
Mooreville, Ala.
9:30-11:30 a.m.

September 11

A Day of Dyeing and Eco-
Printing at 1818 Farms
(\$140)
1818 Farms
(https://1818farms.com)
24889 Lauderdale Street
Mooreville, Ala. | 6-8 p.m.



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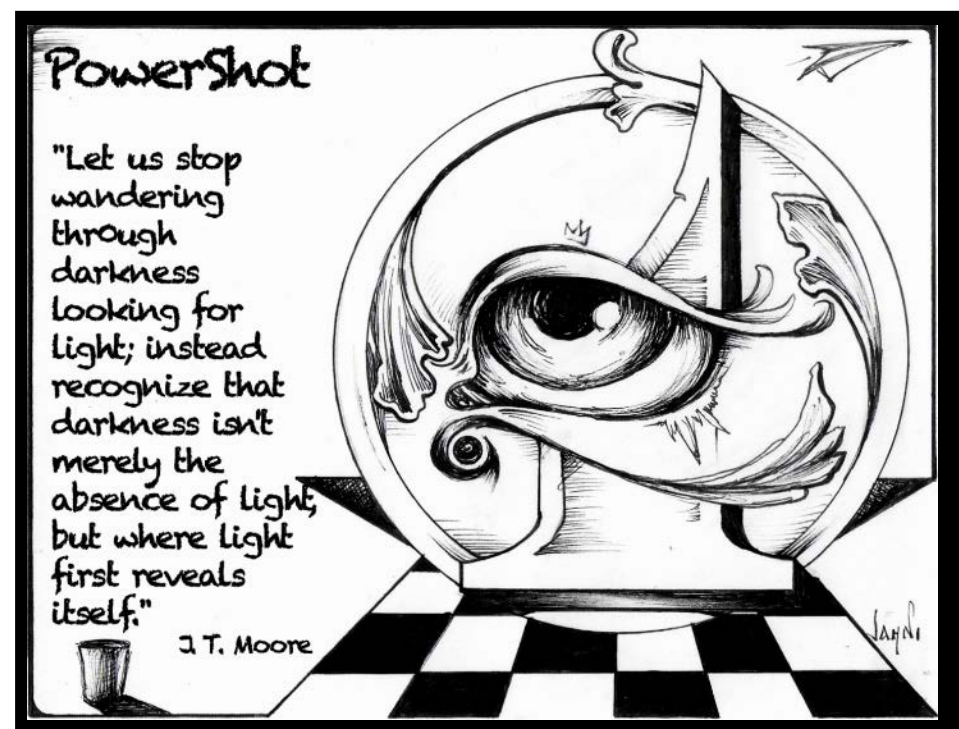
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Rosetta James Foundation "Spotlight on Our Elders" ... Featuring

Mr. William Davis

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

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

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

When Councill closed, Davis began a journey of

several schools, still acquiring commendations from such notables as Congressman Bob Jones and former U.S. President Richard Nixon. While at Bob Jones High School, the band was involved in many historic events, including writing the school hymn and even playing for former First Lady Rosalyn Carter and former Senator Walter Mondale. After leaving Bob Jones High School, Davis was given the opportunity to start from scratch a band program at Liberty Middle School.

In a very short period of time, the enrollment in band exploded in numbers to over 300 students. This was the largest middle school band in the state of Alabama. He also started the first middle school jazz band in Madison County and within two years began receiving superior ratings in concert and jazz competitions.

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



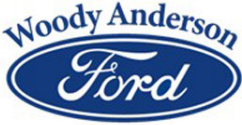
other special occasions. Additionally, as a member of Fellowship Presbyterian Church in Huntsville, Ala., Davis has served as an Elder and Deacon, and currently sings in the Chancel Choir, Unity Choir and Men's Chorus. He has also conducted workshops for the Presbyterian Women Alabama/Mississippi Conference.

Moreover, Davis has volunteered for the church's Food Distribution Program and the Community Crop Drop, a mission project based on local farmers' vegetables that require sorting and bagging at various preparation sites. Davis and his wife Brenda were honored by RiahRose Home for Children and Pregnant Teens on Grandparents Day on September 11, 2016. He is a volunteer with the Neighborhood Community Watch Program and is a member of the Golden Charmers—an older adult group whose members volunteer their support for programs in the church and community.

"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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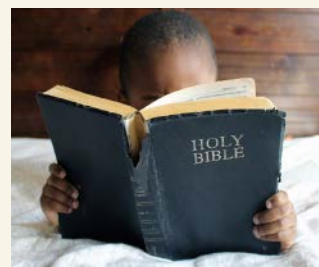
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This Sunday's Lectionary

Sunday, July 26, 2026

Ninth Sunday
after Pentecost



(Track 2, Year A)

First Lesson:

1 Kings 3:5-12

Psalms 119:129-136

Second Lesson:

Romans 8:26-39

GOSPEL:

Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52



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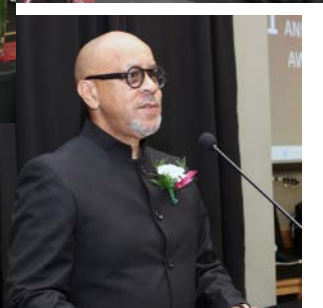
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21st Annual Leadership Awards Gala
 AAMU - Huntsville Progressive Alumni Chapter
 Friday, July 11, 2026 | The Jackson Center | *Photos by Jerome Saintjones*



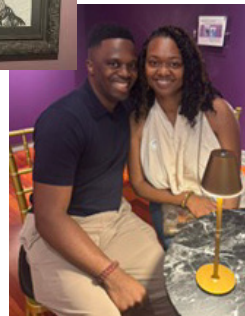
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Huntsville Museum of Art

“Coming Home” Exhibition | July 4, 2026 - January 3, 2027
Thursday, July 9, 2026



AUNT IRMA MAKES IT PLAIN ... The Value of the Black Dollar

People love to argue about whether the Black dollar matters. Businesses settled that debate decades ago.

If Black consumers were economically insignificant, Madison Avenue wouldn't have spent generations studying them. Corporations wouldn't have hired Black marketing firms, sponsored Black radio stations, advertised in Black newspapers, sought endorsements from Black athletes and entertainers, or invested billions trying to earn Black brand loyalty.

The story isn't that Black Americans merely bought fried chicken and soft drinks. The story is that, despite centuries of exclusion from wealth-building opportunities, Black families became one of the nation's most influential consumer markets.

Their purchasing power has helped sustain retailers, automobile dealers, banks, telecommunications companies, insurance companies, apparel manufacturers, cosmetic companies, grocery chains, and countless local businesses.

Yet there is an irony that deserves honest discussion.



Black communities have often generated substantial consumer spending while owning a comparatively small share of the businesses, commercial real estate, supply chains, and financial institutions through which that spending flowed. In many cases, entrepreneurs from other communities recognized economic opportunities in Black neighborhoods, established successful businesses there, accumulated capital, and later expanded into broader markets.

Black entrepreneurs certainly achieved remarkable success as well, but they frequently faced greater obstacles in obtaining credit, securing favorable supplier relationships, purchasing commercial property, or expanding beyond segregated markets.

That doesn't diminish the hard work of anyone who built a successful enterprise. Success requires vision, sacrifice, and persistence. But history also reminds us that opportunity has not always been

distributed evenly.

The Black dollar has long been valuable to American enterprise. The deeper question is not whether it has been spent.

It has. The more important question is how much of that spending has historically returned to Black ownership, investment, and generational wealth.

A dollar can build prosperity for a community—or merely pass



through it. History suggests that understanding the difference may be one of the most important economic lessons of all.

Every community ought

to ask itself the same question: When the cash register rings, whose grandchildren benefit? Spending creates today's economy. Ownership creates tomorrow's inheritance.

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USPTO Forms Partnership with A&M and Select Southeastern HBCUs

America's Innovation Agency, the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO), in furtherance of its statutory obligations under the 2022 UAIA, today announces the selection of Georgia and Alabama innovation ecosystem partnerships in response to its recent RFC to further the agency's Community Engagement Office expansion to include the Southeast region. The selection of Georgia and Alabama will focus particularly on Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs).

Beginning with the Mountain West region announcements of Montana and Utah Community Engagement Offices, the USPTO reimaged its university partnership footprint to build an agile model of meeting innovators where they are and more importantly, driving commercialization, manufacturing and marketplace adoption.

The Southeast Community Engagement Office expansion will include regionally specialized innovation ecosystem partnerships anchored in Georgia and Alabama, reflecting distinct regional strengths spanning commercialization, entrepreneurship, branding, aerospace, advanced manufacturing, engineering, and strategic technologies.

As robust engines of invention and innovation, HBCUs receive more than \$810 million of federal research and development funding according to the National Science Foundation's National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics (NSF-NCSES). Indeed, innovation at HBCUs is vast, cutting across a wide spectrum of science and technologies including medicine, engineering, aerospace, advanced manufacturing, defense technologies, and the physical sciences.

Across America, university research and breakthroughs

fuel our nation's leadership not only in innovation but also in commercialization, manufacturing, and technology. The innovation ecosystem partnership announced today help connect HBCUs and Minority-Serving Institutions directly to the engines of entrepreneurship, advanced manufacturing, strategic technologies, and economic growth. The partnerships announced today provide robust hubs where researchers, innovators and funders can help translate research into real-world impact and in turn drive the next generation of American ingenuity and stronger infrastructure to ensure American innovation is developed, commercialized, and scaled in the United States.

The Georgia and Alabama innovation ecosystem partnerships will carry out the strategic direction of the USPTO's Office of Public Engagement and ensure the USPTO's initiatives and programs are tailored to each community's unique ecosystem of industries and stakeholders.

The ecosystem partnerships will work closely with intellectual property practitioners and services, startups, commercialization initiatives, and job-growth accelerators. They will also collaborate with local STEM organizations on outreach and educational programming.

Georgia

In Georgia, the USPTO will work with universities in the **Atlanta University Center Consortium** (AUCC – Clark Atlanta University, **Morehouse College**, **Morehouse School of Medicine**, **Spelman College**) and the Center for Black Entrepreneurship (CBE - founded by Spelman, Morehouse, Black Economic Alliance Foundation, and Bank of America) which has a national reach with its

experiential Launch Incubator for Traction (LIFT) program. USPTO will work with the AUC-GRANTED Initiative which has a collaborative approach to expand the research support and service capacity including technology transfer.

The Georgia ecosystem partnership will emphasize commercialization, entrepreneurship, branding, startup ecosystems, and innovation acceleration.

"Clark Atlanta University is honored to be selected for this USPTO innovation ecosystem partnership, which recognizes the critical role HBCUs play in America's innovation leadership—from research and invention to commercialization and economic impact," said Clark Atlanta University President George T. French, Jr., Ph.D. Dr. French continued, "For too long, HBCU innovators have faced barriers in accessing resources to protect intellectual property and scale breakthrough ideas into viable enterprises. This partnership directly addresses that gap by connecting our researchers, students, and faculty to the full spectrum of support—from patent protection to startup acceleration to manufacturing pathways," French adds. "This is about ensuring HBCU-driven innovation translates into ventures, jobs, and wealth creation while strengthening America's competitive edge globally."

Dr. Mark Lee, SVP for Academic Affairs and Provost at Spelman College said, "Spelman has a long-standing legacy of fostering academic excellence and empowering Black women to lead and innovate on a global scale. This partnership with the USPTO provides our students and the broader Atlanta University Center community with vital resources to protect their intellectual property, cultivate their entrepreneurial talents, and turn groundbreaking ideas into real-world impact.

Our focus remains entirely on equipping the next generation of innovators with the tools they need to thrive and build lasting legacies."

Kendrick Brown, PhD, Provost and Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs offered, "At Morehouse, we prepare men not only to lead in their fields but to own what they create. The USPTO's investment in the Atlanta University Center Consortium reflects a shared commitment to ensuring that HBCU students, researchers, and entrepreneurs have direct access to the intellectual property systems that protect innovation and generate economic opportunity. This partnership strengthens our capacity to connect academic excellence to real-world commercialization, and we are proud to be part of it."

Dr. Grant Warner, the Executive Director of the CBE who has dedicated his career to implementing new opportunities for Black entrepreneurs, particularly at HBCUs said, "It is an honor to be selected as a site for a USPTO Community Engagement Office engagement partnership. It will allow us to take our programming to the next level with respect to both innovation and branding."

Alabama

In Alabama, the USPTO will work with **Alabama A&M University** and the broader Huntsville-area innovation ecosystem, including stakeholders connected to aerospace, advanced manufacturing, defense technologies, space commercialization, and STEM workforce development. Huntsville serves as one of the nation's leading strategic technology corridors with substantial federal research, engineering, and commercialization activity connected to NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center, Redstone Arsenal, and the region's advanced

manufacturing and aerospace sectors.

"Alabama A&M University has a long-standing commitment to building partnerships that advance innovation, research, and economic opportunity. Establishing a U.S. Patent and Trademark Office presence on campus will provide students, faculty, and small businesses with greater access to intellectual property resources and expertise. Such access also serves to drive economic growth in this region and transform research into real-world solutions," stated AAMU President Dr. Daniel K. Wims.

The Alabama ecosystem partnership will emphasize strategic technologies, aerospace, advanced manufacturing, engineering, and commercialization connected to federal and national-security-adjacent innovation ecosystems.

"A USPTO presence at AAAMU creates new opportunities for our students, faculty, and businesses. It also more effectively moves innovative products and services from offices and laboratories to the marketplace," said Dr. Majed El-Dweik, Vice President of Research and Economic Development.

These offices will collaborate with existing Southeast-based USPTO program participants like the USPTO Patent Pro Bono Program which provides free patent legal assistance. Georgia PATENTS (Georgia) and Gulf South Invents are the local program participants. The USPTO also imagines that the agency's existing HBCU-based Law School Clinics in the Southeast at **North Carolina Central University** School of Law and the **Southern University** Law Center will be able to support and enable these innovation ecosystems.

The purposes of these ecosystem partnerships, as stated in the UAIA of 2022, include:

To partner with local community organizations, institutions of higher education, research institutions, and businesses to create tailored community-based programs that provide education regarding the patent system and promote the career benefits of innovation and entrepreneurship; and To educate prospective inventors, including individual inventors, small businesses, veterans, low-income populations, students, rural populations, and any geographic group of innovators that the Director may determine to be underrepresented in patent filings, about all public and private resources available to potential patent applicants, including the patent pro bono program. The decision on the Georgia and Alabama ecosystem partnerships was based on the following criteria:

Robust research activity and graduate-level programs of study in areas which lead to innovations, IP, and IP-intensive companies/industries; Availability and concentration of existing commercialization and business development resources (Innovation Ecosystem); and Ability to support all innovators, as set forth in UAIA, Sec. 104(b)(3).

The announcement furthers the USPTO's plan to develop and advance specialized engagement partners as engines of opportunity, growth and global competitiveness. With specialized nodes of university research excellence as active partners, the USPTO is building a nationwide infrastructure comprising nodes of American ingenuity with start-up, university, incubator, manufacturing, advance technology and innovation-ecosystem communities as its lifeblood. America's Innovation Agency congratulates and welcomes its new partners.



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