

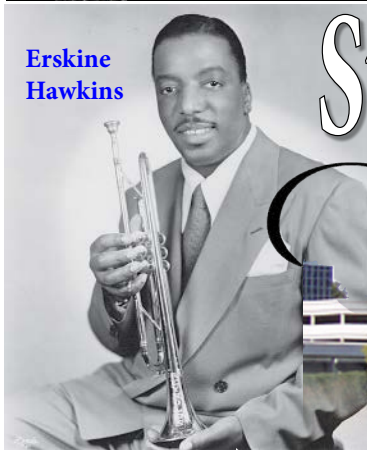


POSITIVE-INSPIRATIONAL-EDUCATIONAL

When Black Alabama Helped America Swing - p. 8

FREE

Erskind
Hawkins



Staying Connected - p. 4



Friday
August 21, 2026
Vol. 12, No. 51
ValleyWeeklyllc.com

The Valley Weekly

SALUTE!
Rosetta James Foundation
ELDER OF THE WEEK



Dr. Razi Hassan

"Time you enjoy wasting, was not wasted." — John Lennon

Drake, HCS Announce Accelerated Studies Program

Mae Jemison High School, Drake State Community & Technical College, and Huntsville City Schools (HCS) recently announced the launch of the Mae Jemison Accelerated Studies Program (JASP), an initiative

designed to increase student access to college-level coursework and strengthen pathways to higher education and career success in North Alabama.

Building upon the longstanding partnership between Mae

Jemison High School and Drake State, the program will bring Drake State instructors directly to the Mae Jemison campus, allowing selected students to participate in advanced dual-enrollment and college-level courses

without the need to travel to Drake State.

"Drake State is committed to creating pathways that connect students to meaningful careers and educational opportunities," said Dr. Patricia Sims, Drake State president.

Through JASP, students will have greater access to rigorous academic opportunities in a familiar learning environment while benefiting from direct engagement with Drake State faculty and resources.

AAMU Welcomes Class of 2030



The wait is finally over! On August 14, Alabama A&M University came alive as students and families arrived on campus for Move-In Day, officially kicking off a new chapter for the incoming Class of 2030.

From packed cars and moving boxes to excited families and eager students, the energy across campus was impossible to miss. The halls of the Knight Living and Learning Complex and Hugine Complex were filled with students settling into their new homes, meeting new roommates, and beginning what will become some of their most memorable years as Bulldogs.

For many freshmen, Move-In Day is more than simply unpacking a room. It is the moment when college starts to feel real.

- Adyson Saunders

World's Best Para-Cyclists Return to Huntsville

For the first time since 2014, the UCI Para-cycling Road World Championships return to the United States, September 4-7, 2026, in Huntsville, Ala. Roughly 600 of the

world's top para-athletes will take part in the event. Just two years out from the LA28 Paralympic Games, the event doubles as a home-soil chance for

America's best to test themselves against the world's best and a chance to lock in key results in the Paralympic qualifying process.

To learn more

about the athletes who will represent the United States at Paracycling Road Worlds: <https://usacycling.org/article/usa-cycling-announces-team->

for-2026-uci-para-cycling-road-world-championships-in-huntsville.

Also contact Angela Palermo at apalermo@usacycling.org.

Parkway to Get 'Signalized' Intersection

Huntsville will soon move forward with changes to the access road intersection below the Memorial Parkway overpass between Drake Avenue and Airport Road.

Colloquially known as "Useless Overpass," the access road below the overpass will become a full signalized intersection. The changes will not affect Memorial Parkway traffic traveling on the mainline,



however, there will be lane closures for those using the service road near this area.

The City entered a construction contract with Rogers Group for the intersection improvements, to include a new signalized intersection with turn lanes for safe access to new de-

velopments around Joe Davis Stadium from all directions.

The new intersection will differ from other underpasses, and motorists should follow all traffic control devices during construction and when completed. The city anticipates work to begin early next year, once materials have been secured, and completed within 90 days.

- huntsvilleal.gov

The Valley Weekly

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The Valley Weekly			
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	2.5x2.5		\$75
Classified	1 col.x1 inch		\$100/Flat Fee

Celebrating Excellence: AAMU Athletic Hall of Fame Class of 2026

There are moments when a community has the opportunity to do more than simply attend an event. We have the opportunity to show up, celebrate excellence, and demonstrate our support for those who have helped build our institutions that continue to shape generations.

On Friday, September 18, 2026, at 6:30 p.m., Alabama A&M University will celebrate the 26th Anniversary of its Athletic Hall of Fame with the induction of nine outstanding individuals whose achievements have contributed to the proud tradition of Bulldog athletics.

The ceremony will be held at the Ernest Knight Center on the campus of Alabama A&M University, and I encourage our entire community—not only AAMU alumni—to come out and support this important occasion.

The AAMU Athletic Hall of Fame Class of 2026 includes:

Nedra Taylor Brown – Volleyball Coach
Alexandria Brazelton Boyd – Volleyball

Tania Carlton Evans – Swimming
Lorie Reid Fuller – Swimming
Princess Dixon-Mitchell – Volleyball
LaDarius Tabb – Basketball
Ryan Shea – Track and Field
Terrance Vanlier – Basketball
Barry Wagner – Football

What a wonderful representation of athletic excellence across generations and across sports! Athletics at our Historically Black Colleges and Universities have always been about more than



wins and losses. They have provided opportunities for young people to receive an education, develop discipline, discover leadership, build lifelong relationships, and represent their uni-

versities and communities with pride.

For generations, Alabama A&M athletics has given us memorable games, outstanding coaches, exceptional student-athletes and, perhaps most importantly, men and women who carried the lessons they learned in competition into their careers, families and communities.

As an Alabama A&M University alumna, I understand personally that the AAMU experience extends far beyond



exceptional athletes who have carried the Bulldog name throughout the nation and the world.

Tickets may be purchased through aamusports.com. Those needing assistance may contact the AAMU Ticket Office at 256-372-7255. The celebration will continue on Saturday, September 19, when the Class of 2026 will be recognized on the field during halftime of the Alabama A&M vs. Bowie State football game.

I encourage alumni, friends, businesses, civic organizations, Greek-

letter organizations, churches and supporters throughout the Tennessee Valley to attend the induction ceremony, purchase a table, invite friends and help us fill the Ernest Knight Center.

Congratulations to the Alabama A&M University Athletic Hall of Fame Class of 2026. Their names are now permanently joined with the proud history of Bulldog athletics—and that is certainly a legacy worth celebrating.

Until next week ...
Dorothy

AUGUST 21 - LORETTA DEVINE - Loretta Devine is an American actress and singer, best known for her roles as Marla Hendricks in the Fox drama series *Boston Public*, and for her recurring role as Adele Webber on the medical drama *Grey's Anatomy*, for which she won a Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Guest Actress in a Drama Series in 2011. She had a role in the series *Everybody Hates Chris* as Rochelle's mother. In film, Devine appeared in *Waiting to Exhale*, *The Preacher's Wife*, *Hoodlum*, *I Am Sam*, *Urban Legend*, *What Women Want*, *Kingdom Come*, *Crash*, *Woman Thou Art Loosed*, *For Colored Girls*, *This Christmas*, *First Sunday*, *Beverly Hills Chihuahua* and *Jumping the Broom*. She also played Cynthia Carmichael on the NBC sitcom *The Carmichael Show*.

- BlackCelebrityBirthdays.org



Spiritual Game Plan

Valley Weekly
PRESTON BROWN'S

Today's Spiritual Game Plan: "Staying Connected"

John 15:5 says, "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."

Today, we live in a society of extreme technology. People are constantly talking on their cell phones, texting, playing games, and never looking up to acknowledge other people. Not only are we addicted to our cell phones, but it seems that we have to be entertained at all times.

We live in a society where people are afraid of being bored. But we have to realize and understand that this is another trick by the enemy to distract us from being in fellowship with God and with other people. You see, the more we isolate ourselves from people, the less accountable we are for our actions.

On the other hand, the more we connect with God, the more we will want to connect with other people. You see, God desires us to be in fellowship with Him. He also wants us to have balance in our lives.

So, don't allow the longing to be entertained keep you from wanting to be in the presence of God. Let's start giving Him the time that He deserves, and remember

to stay connected to the only power source that we need, which is Jesus Christ, Our Lord and Savior.

Prayer: Dear God, help us to be aware of the distractions that keep us from being connected with you.

Question: What distractions are keeping you from being in fellowship

with God?

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 Game Plan for 2026-27"



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Funeral service for **MR. GERALD WALLACE GARDNER** (b. 1965) is incomplete and will be announced at a later date.

Funeral service for **MRS. ARLEAN BINFORD MEADOWS** (b. 1931) was Saturday, August 15, at Nelms Memorial Funeral Home Chapel.

Funeral service for **MR. CLARENCE PRUITT** (b. 1949) was Saturday, August 15, at Nelms Memorial Funeral Home Chapel.

Funeral service for **MR. CHARLIE L. SMITH** (b. 1945) was Saturday, August 8, at Nelms Memorial Funeral Home Chapel.

Funeral service for **MRS. WILLIE NELL CARODINE** (b. 1932) was Saturday, August 8, at First Missionary Baptist Church, 3509 Blule Spring Road NW, Huntsville, Ala.

Funeral service for **MR. HARVEY FOOTE IV** (b. 1973) was Saturday, August 8, at St. Rebecca P. B. Church, 330 Grimwood Road, Hazel Green, Ala.

Funeral service for **MR. CLETUS O. NWALOEZIE** (b. 1956) was Thursday, August 6, at Nelms Memorial Funeral Home Chapel.

Funeral service for **MR. GLENN BINFORD** (b. 1965) was Saturday, August 1, at Lakewood Church of Christ, 2813 Mastin Lake Road NE, Huntsville, Ala.

Celebration of Life for **MS. REBECCA ANN "TINA" JAMERSON** (b. 1940) was Wednesday, July 29, at Nelms Memorial Funeral Home Chapel.

Funeral service for **MRS. HATTIE S. JORDAN** (b. 1925) was Saturday, July 25, at Nelms Memorial Funeral Home Chapel.

Funeral service for **MRS. LUCILLE JORDAN** (b. 1953) was Saturday, July 25, at Nelms Memorial Funeral Home with Pastor Phil Ford officiating.

Public viewings for **MS. MILDRED A. SCRUGGS** (b. 1942) were held Wednesday, July 22, and Thursday, July 23.

Joe Biden's Stage 4 Cancer: Cure or Management?

Last week, former First Lady Jill Biden provided an update on former President Joe Biden's battle with metastatic prostate cancer.

In doing so, she used the word "cure" several times before explaining that because the cancer has spread to his bones, he will live with it for the rest of his life.

That Distinction caught my Attention, . . .

There is an important difference between being cured and being managed.

Many chronic conditions—including diabetes, hypertension, addiction, and metastatic cancer—may never completely disappear. Yet they can often be successfully managed, allowing people to live productive and meaningful lives.

That same distinction has shaped my own leadership journey.

For years I have publicly described myself as a recovering ego-holic. Notice the word recovering. I have never claimed to be cured.

Years ago, I read a passage in *Winning the Cancer Battle* by Bob Phillips and Louis Smith. They observed that many people view themselves as victims of cancer, when, in reality, lifestyle and daily choices often play a significant role in its development and prevention.



The Exchange of Words

As I read those words, I replaced "cancer" with "ego-holism," "disease" with "addiction", and "diet" with "what we choose to consume".

The lesson was unmistakable.

Most of us do not simply stumble into unhealthy leadership. We gradually feed it through pride, insecurity, poor influences, constant self-promotion, and an unwillingness to listen.

The encouraging news is that participants can make different choices.

They can recover.

The most dangerous leader is not the one who admits, "I still have work to do." The most dangerous leader is the one who believes there is no more work left to do.

Healthy leadership is not about reaching a point where our egos are cured. It is about managing them every day—with humility, accountability, and a willingness to keep growing.



Leadership Lesson: Recovering is not a destination, but a daily discipline.

Tim Allston

Leadership Player-Coach and Four-time Amazon Best-Selling Author, "Leading from the Middle"
Contact: (256) 212-0949 - <https://bit.ly/4aB9Lwm>
Email Address: leadingfromthemiddle.tim@gmail.com
Website: www.timallston.com

Millennial Moment

by Gloria B. Caldwell

The Reveal ...

Have you ever been to a gender reveal? Or watched HGTV cover a home remodel with fabric or paper, keeping you from seeing it before the big reveal?

The anticipation of what's to come — a remodel, a gender, anything unknown — has us curious and excited. We wait with anticipation to discover what it is, how it looks, what it will be.

But let me ask you this: how often do you go to God and ask Him to show you who He purposed you to be? The ultimate Creator. The Ruler. He's given you open communication with Him. Yet we



assignment only we can carry.

We spend hours surfing, searching up the latest trends, ogling someone's shape, someone's home — when we could be saying, "God, reveal *me* to me! Show me what You have for me to do! Who have You created me to be?"

mosey through life, guessing at it, moving in no direction, just operating — most of the time reacting to what someone else designed or created. Few of us ask God what we were made to do or be. We'll research everything else to death — a car, a vacation, a stranger's life — but not the one

Stop wasting time. Stop living beneath your means of production, settling for less than what you were built for. There is a plan, a purpose, just for you. Ask God to reveal it! Get excited about that!

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!

August 19

August Coffeehouse Concert - \$20

Jim Parker | Ricky Ray
Lowe Mill Studio 1038
6:30 p.m.**August 21**

"Exceptionality"

Eight Years with United Women of Color
Keynote: Jasmine Deloach
The Atrium at Redstone Federal Credit Union
220 Wynn Drive NW
Huntsville, Ala.
11 a.m.-1 p.m.
www.unitedwoc.org**August 22**Back to School Parade
Line-up: ASFL | 7 a.m.
Parade: 8 a.m.Celebrating Education:
Day Parade & Festival
The festival will include a backpack giveaway, dance team performances, inflatables, vendors, games, and more!

Mae C. Jemison High School | 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

"Jazz & Joy"

Featuring: Waikikita Magee, Dr. Reginald Jackson, Yissa Voice Academy, Raul Mejia, Ayycee Crutcher and Chris Deputy (Bring a Chair)
4015 Triana Blvd. SW
Huntsville, Ala.
6-8 p.m.
(256) 513-9344

Concert

Parker McCollum
The Orion Amphitheater
Huntsville, Ala. | 7:30 p.m.**August 27**35+ Speed Dating Event
The Note Jazz Lounge
www.speeddatinghsv.com
6:30 p.m.**August 28**Concert on the Dock
Lowe Mill Arts & Entertainment \$10 Parking | 6-9 p.m.**August 29**

Community Awareness Day

Sponsor: Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Rho Eta Lambda Education Foundation
St. Luke Christian Church
1800 Sparkman Drive NW
Huntsville, Ala.
9 a.m.-12 noon

"Syleena Johnson"

R&B on the Lawn
Bob Harrison Center
Huntsville, Ala.**September 4**"A Night with Johnny Gill"
AAMU Event Center
Alabama A&M University-
Doors Open at 6 p.m.
aamusports.com | \$80
(256) 372-7255Concert on the Dock
Lowe Mill Arts & Entertainment \$10 Parking | 6-9 p.m.

"Courtney Little"

Huntsville R&B Concert Series
Huntsville Botanical Garden
4747 Bob Wallace Avenue SW
Huntsville, Ala.
6-9 p.m.**September 4-6**Shuler King
Comedian
Huntsville Levity Live
2012 Memorial Parkway

SW

Huntsville, Ala.
(256) 261-3374**September 6**Caribbean Day at the Park
John Hunt Park
2151 Jaycee Way
Huntsville, Ala.
11 a.m.-6 p.m.
www.CANAonline.com
(256) 606-6878**September 7**

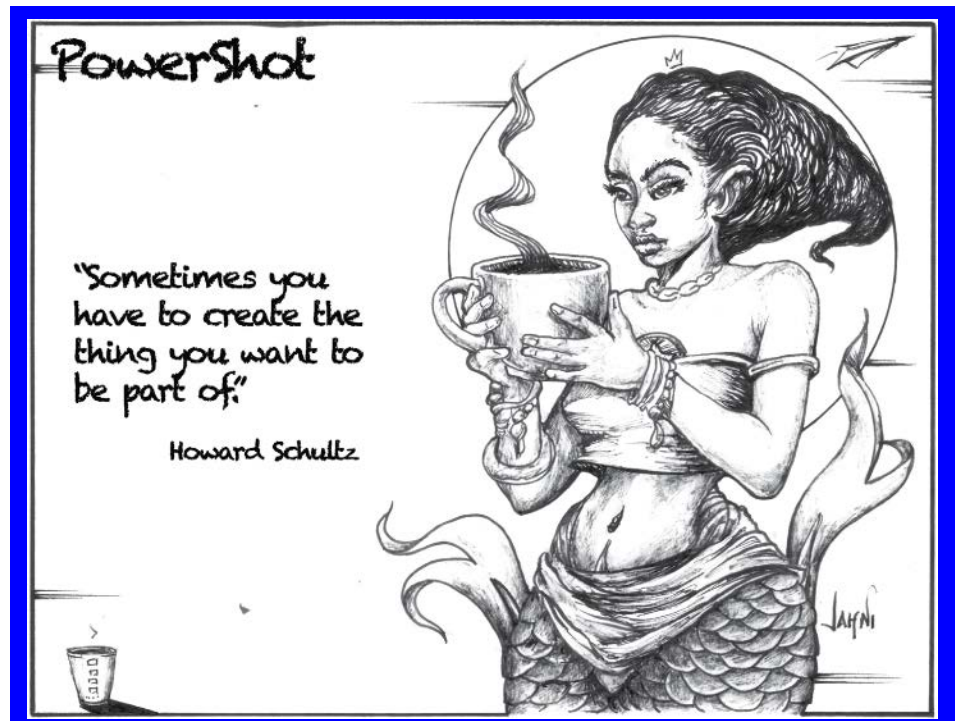
Labor Day

September 10Bundle Dye Workshop
1818 Farms
(https://1818farms.com)24889 Lauderdale Street
Mooreville, Ala.
9:30-11:30 a.m.

"The Temptations"

Mark C. Smith Concert
Hall | Von Braun Center
Huntsville, Ala.
7 p.m.**September 11**Legacy Series: Hybrid Party
"Jeans and Jerseys"
AAMU Alumni Association
Huntsville Marriott
U.S. Space and Rocket Center
2-10 p.m. \$50A Day of Dyeing and Eco-Printing at 1818 Farms (\$140)
1818 Farms
(https://1818farms.com)
24889 Lauderdale Street
Mooreville, Ala. | 6-8 p.m.Concert on the Dock
Lowe Mill Arts & Entertainment \$10 Parking | 6-9 p.m.

"Keia Johnson"

Huntsville R&B Concert Series
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Rosetta James Foundation "Spotlight on Our Elders" ... Featuring

Dr. Razi Hassan

Dr. Razi (Bobby Blockum) Hassan is a native of Birmingham, Ala., where he was educated in the public school system before pursuing his postsecondary education in chemistry and mathematics at Knoxville College (Tenn.). He studied physical chemistry at Princeton University before eventually settling at New York University, where he earned the Ph.D. degree in theoretical chemistry.

Hassan devoted some 25 years as community organizer with the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), registering African-American voters in Arkansas and Mississippi in the mid-1960s. During those eventful years, he also helped to organize a credit union and school for dropouts in Trenton, N.J. At the onset of the 1970s, Hassan organized food co-ops, a community literacy program and another school for high school dropouts as part of this service at the Harlem Mosque in

New York.

Moreover, from 1990-97, he was counselor, GED instructor and Imam (minister) at Limestone Correctional Facility in Alabama. Hassan concurrently directed a tutorial center for mathematics and chemistry in Huntsville, Ala., from 1993-98. The educator has been affiliated with Alabama A&M University for nearly 25 years, primarily as an associate professor of chemistry at Alabama A&M University and director of the chemistry and mathematics tutorial center.

In 2004, Hassan led a team of AAMU students on a NASA-sponsored rocket launch competition in Manchester, Tenn. However, the goal at that time was two miles (more than 10,000 feet). A Proteus rocket, fondly named "Butch" after the school mascot, reached 1.8 miles, falling short of rival UAH, which achieved 1.9 miles. However, the UAH rocket was not successfully retrieved. This led toward an overall win by the AAMU team.

Additionally, Hassan has managed numerous



government programs with aggregate budgets exceeding \$12 million in his capacity as a project director or co-director, coordinator, budget manager or principal investigator.

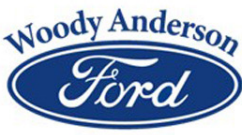
His numerous affiliations include American Chemical Society; an advocate for the homeless through the First Stop organization; National Conference For Community Justice (NCCJ), Board Member; Interfaith Mission Service (IMS); leader of a local mosque; Assistant Imam, W.D. Muhammad Muslim Center; advisor, Muslim Students Association of Alabama A&M University; and advisor, Future Physicians Society.



"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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THERE ARE MANY COLUMNISTS, BUT ...

They're Not Like Tim!

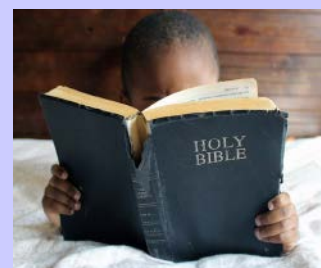


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This Sunday's Lectionary

Sunday, August 23, 2026
Thirteenth Sunday
after Pentecost



(Track 2, Year A)

First Lesson:

Isaiah 51:1-6

Psalm 138

Second Lesson:

Romans 12:1-8

GOSPEL:

Matthew 16:13-20

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

1. CONGRESS. The House and Senate continue their 5-week summer recess this week, and will not return to session until August 31 (House) and September 14 (Senate). On Saturday, former NIH official Dr. Anthony Fauci declined a

request from Sen. Ron Johnson (R-WI) to appear before the Senate's Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations to answer questions about COVID vaccines (2 weeks ago, Republicans on the Senate's Homeland Security Committee voted to hold Fauci in criminal contempt for declining to answer questions at a July 29 hearing).

2. EXECUTIVE BRANCH. On Sunday, citing his good relationship with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and South Korea's decision not to back the U.S. in the Iran War, the President announced that he would roll back joint military exercises with South Korea. On Saturday, the President approved an emergency declaration for the flooding in Indiana. This weekend, the President will attend the Freedom 250 Grand Prix, an IndyCar street race held on a 1.66-mile loop around the National Mall in DC.

3. SUPREME COURT. The Court has adjourned and will begin its 2026-27 term on Monday, October 5. Last Friday, the White House filed an emergency petition

with the Court, asking the justices to allow construction of the new White House ballroom to continue while a challenge to the project proceeds in the lower courts. The request came one week after a federal appeals court in Washington upheld a federal district court ruling that temporarily blocked construction.

4. INFLATION REPORT. Last Wednesday, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that the consumer price index (CPI) increased by 0.1% in July, bringing the annual inflation rate to 3.4%, down 0.1% from June. This is still well above the Federal Reserve's targeted 2% inflation rate.

5. 2028 PRESIDENTIAL

PRIMARIES. The Democratic National Committee last Saturday approved a revamped primary calendar for the next presidential election, awarding South Carolina the No. 1 spot on January 22, followed by Nevada on February 1, New Hampshire on February 8, New Mexico on February 15, Michigan on February 22 and Virginia on February 29.

6. HIGHER EDUCATION. The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) and the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) issued a joint statement noting that community colleges and regional public universities already reflect many of the reforms U.S. Education Secretary Linda

McMahon called for in her August 3 "National Call to Action." AACC and AASCU, whose member institutions enroll 68% of U.S. public and nonprofit college students, said open-access admissions, affordability, and workforce alignment have long defined their missions. They argued that McMahon's concerns target institutions with very different profiles from their own. ED will hold a webinar on August 19 to address stakeholder questions about the Call to Action.

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AUNT IRMA MAKES IT PLAIN ...

When Black Alabama Helped America Swing!

Now, children, before Motown made Detroit famous and Memphis put its stamp on soul, Alabama had already sent enough Black musicians north to keep half the country dancing.

Between 1945 and 1955, the great Big Band Era was beginning to give way to rhythm and blues and eventually rock 'n' roll. But tucked inside that national story is something Alabama ought to brag about a little more: Black Alabamians were all over the music.

Start with Birmingham's **Erskine Hawkins**, the trumpet-playing "Twentieth-Century Gabriel." His orchestra remained remarkably successful even as many big bands folded after World War II. Hawkins and a cadre of Birmingham musicians had risen from the famous 'Bama State Collegians at what is now Alabama State University. His orchestra's hits



included "Tippin' In," which became a major success in the U.S. in 1945.

And, of course, there was "Tuxedo Junction," named for Birmingham's Black entertainment district. Imagine that: while segregation told Black Alabamians where they could and could not go, a song named for a Black Birmingham neighborhood was being heard across America.

Then there was **Lucky Millinder**, born in Anniston. Lucky didn't need to play an instrument to run one of the hottest outfits around. His orchestra straddled swing,



jump blues and the emerging rhythm-and-blues sound, recording into the 1950s. His bands became a training ground for musicians who would help shape what came next.

Down in Mobile, Alabama gave jazz **"Cootie" Williams**, one of the great trumpet voices of the century. After years with Duke Ellington and Benny Goodman, Williams led his own orchestra during the 1940s and later returned to Ellington in 1952. His growling, plunger-muted trumpet became instantly recognizable.



And Alabama's influence didn't stop there. **Lionel Hampton**, though born in Kentucky, spent important

childhood years in Birmingham before becoming one of America's great bandleaders and the undisputed "King of the Vibraphone." His orchestra remained enormously popular during our 1945-55 window and helped launch or nurture major talents.

Even **Sun Ra** belongs in this conversation. Born Herman Blount in Birmingham, he came through the city's remarkable Black musical culture before leaving Alabama in 1946. By the mid-1950s he was forming the mid-1950s he was forming the Arkestra and carrying lessons learned in the big-band tradition into something altogether



new.

And *that's* Aunt Irma's point. When people talk about Alabama history, they usually start marching us toward Montgomery or Birmingham with a protest sign. Important history, certainly. But Black Alabama was making history before somebody turned on the television cameras.

From Birmingham to Anniston to Mobile, Alabama musicians helped America swing—and when America stopped swinging, some of those same musicians helped teach it a brand-new beat.

Aunt Irma says sometimes history doesn't march. Sometimes it *dances*.

- TVW Staff

