

# Remembering Small Businesses, p. 8

FREE



## To the Principal's Office, p. 6

Friday  
December 3, 2021  
Vol. 8, No. 13  
ValleyWeeklyllc.com



SALUTE!  
Rosetta James Foundation  
ELDER OF THE WEEK



Dr. Cynthia Smith

"Is there something we have forgotten? Some precious thing we have lost, wandering in strange lands?" - Arna Bontemps

### Hundreds of FedEx Packages Found in Woods

Nearly 400 FedEx packages were found in a ravine in woods near Birmingham, Ala., according to a CBS news affiliate last week. Deputies were sent to guard the scene until

FedEx workers could arrive to pick up the packages, Sheriff Mark Moon said.

FedEx sent multiple trucks and drivers from across the South to load up the packages, Moon said.

### Commission's Monthly Meeting Set

The monthly meeting of the Huntsville Historic Preservation Commission will be held on Monday, December 13.

This two-hour 4:30 p.m. meeting will be

broadcast live on HSV TV and may be viewed on Comcast channels 1088/16 and WOW 42, or online at [HsvTV.gov](http://HsvTV.gov).

### Animal Adoption Fees Waived

Huntsville Animal Services (HAS) waived adoption fees on most adult dogs to help them find loving, caring homes.

Additionally, adult cats can be adopted for \$10, though some are also free to a good home. Kittens and puppies are \$50.

Lowered adoption fees as well as no-fee adoptions help reduce shelter populations. For those who can't adopt right now, HAS offers a sleeper foster program for the holidays.



"We have some amazing animals that would make great companions during the holiday season and beyond," said Dr. Karen Sheppard, director of HAS. "If you can take a dog to foster for a night or two, that's still better than being in a kennel."

### NEW: Drake Manufacturing Bootcamps

Drake State Community & Technical College originally launched its Welding Bootcamp to help individuals spark a great career or personal hobby, but now the college will gift new career technical skills to more people this holiday season.

The college offers three additional bootcamps at a low cost - Artistic Design Welding, Machine Tool, and Oil Change Safety Inspection. Learn a new skill in under eight hours with a certified Drake State instructor.

"You can develop a gift this Christmas season by learning how to change your engine oil or by welding a beautiful sculpture for your loved one," said Apprenticeships and Career Placement Coordinator Davian Talley. "Not only

are these skills in demand, but also an enjoyable activity for you and your friends. You'll start with safety because it is the most important element in all the bootcamps."

For people who are thinking about enrolling, this is a great pathway toward the certification needed in today's advanced manufacturing workforce.

"These January bootcamps are also beneficial to industry leaders because they're leaning on us to recruit new workers and upskill current employees," said Talley. "They're allowing us to host bootcamps at their businesses."

To register or learn more visit <https://www.drakestate.edu/workforce-development/bootcampregistration> or call (256) 551-5227.

### AAMU to Offer Additional Support for Its STEM Students

The College of Engineering, Technology & Physical Sciences (CETPS) at Alabama A&M University has received significant support in its ongoing quest to assist minority STEM majors.

AAMU received an S-STEM grant of \$1.5 million from the National Science Foundation (NSF) for the period 2021-2027.

"This project will enhance the retention, suc-



cess, and graduation of Minority Students in STEM," said Dr. Showkat Chowdhury, principal investigator (PI) and project director of the grant. He further added that plans are underway to provide scholarships and various academic support to talented minority stu-

dents with demonstrated financial need. The project will broaden the undergraduate Student Research Experience in STEM to enhance student learning experience and value, he stated.

The AAMU project team consists of: Dr.

Showkat Chowdhury (PI & Project Director), Mechanical Engineering; Dr. Xiang Zhao (Co-PI), Computer Science; Prof. Tamara Chowdhury (Co-PI), Construction Management; Dr. Rhonda Moore-Jackson (Co-PI), Director of Distance Education & Instructional Technology; and Dr. Zhengtao Deng (Co-PI), Dean of CETPS.

The Valley Weekly

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE!

Washington in One Minute, Page 2  
Preston Brown's Champion Game Plan, Page 3  
Valley Deaths, Page 3  
Valley Events, Page 3  
tim allston: Perspectives, Page 5  
Rev. Michael Rice: Called 2 Preach, Page 6  
"Jahni" Moore's PowerShots, Page 7  
Spotlight on Our Elders, Page 7

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# Washington in One Minute



Here are the happenings in Washington, D.C., this week:

1. **ON THE FLOOR.** The House and Senate are back in session this week. The Senate resumed consideration of the \$777.9 billion FY2022 Defense Authorization bill and conducted a cloture vote Monday on the managers' amendment, thereby limiting further debate to germane amendments (if cloture is adopted). The House has 25 bills on its floor calendar this week, including a vote to extend the stopgap continuing resolution to keep the federal government open

when the current resolution expires on Dec. 3 (which the Senate will also have to pass).

2. **THE WHITE HOUSE.** President Biden updated the American people on the new Omicron variant of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, and the steps the Administration is taking. On Tuesday, the President traveled to Rosemount, MN (part of the Minneapolis-Saint Paul metro area) to continue his national tour touting the enactment of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, from which Minnesota reportedly will receive

at least \$7 billion.

3. **ABORTION CASE.** On Wednesday, the Supreme Court heard arguments in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* on whether a 2018 Mississippi law may ban abortions after the first 15 weeks of pregnancy, i.e., before the viability of the fetus. The justices on Nov.

4. **POWELL STAYS AT FED.** Last Monday, President Biden nominated Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell to another 4-year term, a decision that was a return to tradition in which the central bank's top official is reappointed regardless of partisan identity — a norm bucked by former President Trump, who appointed Mr. Powell instead of renominating Former Chair Janet Yellen.

5. **OMICRON VARIANT.** President Biden met at the White House with his Chief Medical Advisor, Dr. Anthony

Fauci, and other health officials to discuss the new Omicron variant of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. On Friday, the Biden Administration banned entry into the U.S. for non-citizens from South Africa, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, and Mozambique starting Monday in response to the rapid spread in South Africa of the Omicron variant.

The White House cited preliminary evidence suggesting the Omicron variant (with its more than 30 mutations in the spike protein) may pose an increased risk of reinfection.

The Associated Press also reported last week that the

Biden Administration will require essential, nonresident travelers crossing U.S. land borders, such as truck drivers and government and emergency response officials, to be fully vaccinated beginning on Jan. 22, 2022.

Ron Hamm

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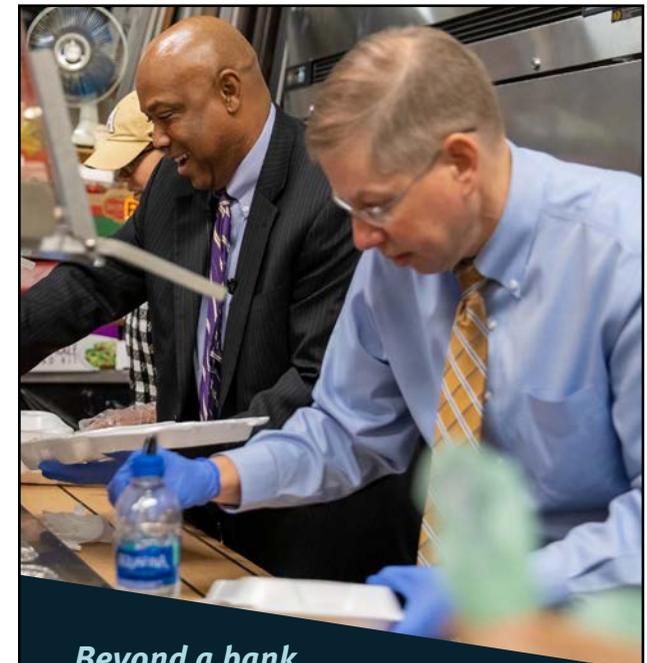
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## Public Notice: Huntsville Area Metropolitan Planning Organization Meetings

The **Citizens Advisory Committee** of the **Huntsville Area Metropolitan Planning Organization** will meet Monday, November 29, 2021, at 5:00 p.m. The **Metropolitan Planning Organization Policy Board** meets on Wednesday, December 1, 2021 at 4:00 pm. ALL meetings will be held on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of COH City Hall unless otherwise noted on the Huntsville-Area MPO website at [www.huntsvillempo.org](http://www.huntsvillempo.org). To review items on the agenda for this meeting visit: <http://www.huntsvillempo.org/plans-and-reports/> For all other information on these meetings visit: <http://www.huntsvillempo.org/about/meetings-and-agendas/>



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## This Sunday's Lectionary

(Track 2)

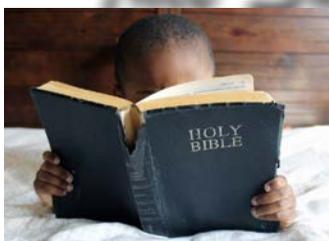
Sunday, December 5, 2021

Malachi 3:1-4

Luke 1:68-79

Philippians 1:3-11

Luke 3:1-6



THE VALLEY WEEKLY

# VALLEY DEATHS



## NELMS MEMORIAL FUNERAL HOME

2501 Carmichael Avenue NW - Huntsville, AL 35816 - (256) 539-8189

*Graveside service for MR. BOBBY L. REEDUS (b. 1963) was held Sunday, November 28, at Valhalla Memory Gardens with Dr. Dedric A. Cowser officiating.*

*Memorial service for MR. JOHNNY FLOYD JIMMISON (b. 1958) was held Saturday, November 20, at Nelms Memorial Funeral Home Chapel.*

*Graveside service for MS. JOSEPHINE ANN WILSON (b. 1949) was held Friday, November 19, at Valley View Memory Gardens with the Reverend Dawn Harmon officiating.*

## ROYAL FUNERAL HOME

4315 Oakwood Avenue - Huntsville, AL 35810 - (256) 534-8481

*Funeral service for MRS. HELEN RUTH LOCKHART KELLEY (b. 1932) was held Tuesday, November 30, at the Indian Creek Primitive Baptist Association Tabernacle (6378 Pulaski Pike NW, Huntsville, Ala.) with Rev. Dr. Jermaine Turner officiating.*

*Funeral service for MR. ANDERSON POTTS II (b. 1946) was held Sunday, November 28, at the Round Island Creek Mission Center (13829 Lucas Ferry Road, Athens, Ala.) with Dr. Floyd Rodgers officiating.*

*Funeral service for MR. R. T. HALE (b. 1929) was held Saturday, November 27, at the Blue Spring Road Church of Christ (2150 Blue Spring Road, NW, Huntsville, Ala.) with Dr. Floyd Rodgers officiating.*

*Graveside service for MR. CARLOS D. MAJOR (b. 1980) was held Saturday, November 27, in the Pleasant Grove Baptist Church Cemetery in Boykin, Ala., with Reverend Ashford Jackson officiating.*

## SERENITY FUNERAL HOME

2505 University Drive NW - Huntsville, AL 35816 - (256) 539-9693

*Funeral service for MR. JERRY LOUIS ALLEN (b. 1951) will be held Tuesday, December 7, at Serenity Funeral Home (2505 University Drive NW, Huntsville, Ala.) at 1 p.m. Masks required.*

### December 2- January 1

Galaxy of Lights Driving Nights  
Huntsville Botanical Garden  
5:30-9 p.m.

### December 7

Huntsville Christmas Parade  
Downtown  
127 Washington St. NE  
Huntsville, Ala.  
6 p.m.

### December 10

Miracle at MidCity  
MidCity  
Huntsville, Ala.  
12 noon

Fall Commencement  
Alabama A&M University  
Louis Crews Stadium  
1 p.m.

Holiday Magic  
Burritt on the Mountain  
5 p.m.

Friday Flurries  
Bridge Street Town Center  
6 p.m.

Skating at the Park DJ Night  
300 Church Street  
7 p.m.

The Nutcracker  
Mark C. Smith Concert Hall  
Von Braun Center  
7:30 p.m.

### December 8

We Ain't Done Wild'N Yet Tour  
Jay "Big JJ" Lewis and Mope Williams  
Stand Up Live  
Huntsville, Ala.  
7 p.m.

### December 11

Retirement Banquet  
AAMU President Andrew Hugine, Jr.



Featuring Comedian Rickey Smiley  
T.M. Elmore Building  
7 p.m.

Nights of Santa  
EarlyWorks Children's Museum  
5 p.m.

### December 13-23

### December 16

"Fresh Wreaths: What to Grow and How to Make Them" (In-person Class)  
Huntsville Botanical Garden  
Huntsville, Ala.  
9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

### December 16-19

The Living Christmas Tree  
First Baptist Church of Huntsville  
600 Governors Drive SW  
Huntsville, Ala.  
7:30 p.m. (and Other

THE VALLEY WEEKLY

# CHAMPION GAME PLAN

PRESTON BROWN

## Facts over Feelings

Judges 16:15 says, Then she said to him, "How can you say I love you, when you won't confide in me?"

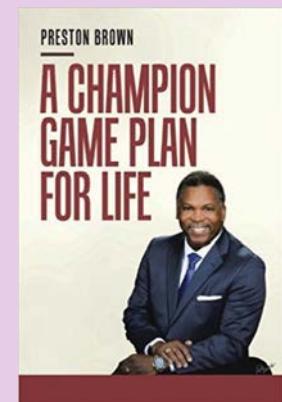
You know, sometimes we can get into a relationship, and it is hard to separate facts over feelings. In other words, someone may say that they love you, but the fact of the matter is their actions say otherwise.

Just like we find in the story of Samson and Delilah. Now, Samson had strong feelings for Delilah. However, the fact of the matter was Delilah only wanted Samson for what she could get out of him, which was the secret to his great strength, so she could sell that information to the Philistines. So,

making the distinction between facts and how we feel is very important when it comes to choosing the right person for your life.

Now, I bring this up to say that, according to statistics, December is the most popular month for an engagement. So, make sure you have all the facts before you make your decision. Don't be like Samson and allow your feelings to get in the way of your making the right choice for your future.

Stay encouraged, my brothers and sisters, and make sure you purchase a copy of my book, "A Champion Game Plan for Life," on amazon.com.



THE VALLEY WEEKLY  
**ALL FOR  
 THE FAMILY**

### "A TRUE FRIEND"

Thanksgiving was a joyful time for many families. However, those who do not live near their family, and have few if any close friends, holidays can be a lonely, depressing time. I was conversing with my neighbor recently. Her husband has been hospitalized. She sadly acknowledged that she didn't have any close family nor friends, and just wanted someone with whom she can vent. That reminded me of the important role friends can play in our lives.

The following "friendship" quotes reveal traits of a true friend.

In Genesis 2:18, God said "It's not good for man to be alone." So, He made woman to be man's companion.

King Solomon acknowledged that "friends come and go, but, a true friend sticks by you like family." Proverbs 17:17 reminds us that a friend loveth at all times."

"A true friend knows all about you, including your flaws, and still loves you unconditionally."

"A true friend is someone who understands your past, believes in your future and accepts you just the way you are."

### ~Think It Over~

It is believed that people come into our lives for a reason, for a season or for a lifetime. During the holiday season, we can all use a close, true friend who increases our sense of self-worth and purpose, boosts happiness, decreases stress, and helps us cope ef-



Dr. Margaret J. Kelly

fectively with life's changes. Are you a close, true friend to someone?

### Sources

Believe that something nice is going to happen, Artisan Collection by Lane. Stoddard, Alexandra. Grace Notes, Avon Books, 2018.

Hill, Cherrie. He Whispers Your Name, Christian Art Publisher, 2016.

## Keeping Neighborhood Streets Safe

Speed cushions, more commonly known as "speed bumps," are just one of the mechanisms the City uses to calm traffic in residential areas. They are effective in deterring drivers who speed or use residential streets as a cut-through between major arterials.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)

claims traffic-calming measures like speed cushions can reduce vehicle crashes and create an equitable balance between vehicles and pedestrians. After all, no one wants to walk or bike on dangerous road.

Other benefits include



improved air and noise levels because slower vehicles make less noise and emit fewer pollutants. Finally,

traffic calming measures can reduce crime because speed cushions prevent a criminal from making a fast getaway.

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*Dreams don't  
 work unless  
 you do."*

- John C. Maxwell

## United Way, ELM Foundation Form Partnership

The ELM Foundation and United Way announced on November 30 a new level of collaborative partnership aimed at impacting the community's quality of life.

The celebration between these two foundational Madison County nonprofits comes at a time when the need for leadership, efficiency, and cooperation in this sector has never been greater.

Missy Hanks, facilitator for the Leadership Social Services program, and new executive director of the ELM Foundation states: "The challenges faced by our community, and the courage and

heart our nonprofit sector has provided during recent months, demands that we take Leadership Social Services to a new level. United Way and the ELM Foundation understand we can do that better together."

Cathy Miller, community impact director at United Way adds: "One of the best

investments our community can make is to assure that the quality of this program continues to grow and exceed expectations. Just as we need professional development in the corporate and for-profit business sector to feed innovation and improvement, that is essential for our nonprofit businesses as well.

**ROSA PARKS DAY**  
 HUNTSVILLE-MADISON COUNTY  
**COMMEMORATION**  
 SERVICES

*Wednesday*  
**DECEMBER 1, 2021**

PARKING & PUBLIC TRANSIT STATION  
 500 CHURCH STREET, HSV, AL

PRESS CONFERENCE  
 9:30 A.M.

**FREE BUS RIDES**

*Sunday*  
**DECEMBER 5, 2021**  
 VIRTUAL PROGRAM  
 4:00 P.M.

Featuring  
 ATTORNEY, FRED GRAY

**f** ROSA PARKS COMMITTEE

### NAAACC Meetings

The North Alabama African American Chamber of Commerce (Huntsville) meets monthly on the 3rd Tuesday at 12 noon.

The meeting location varies. Call (256) 564-7574.



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## My 1st Anniversary Remembrance: The Gospel According to my Positive COVID-19 Results

*"If my people which are called by my name shall humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sins, and will heal their land."*

- 2 Chronicles 7:14

In responding to King Solomon's temple dedication prayer, God offered the Israelites national healing once they humbled themselves.

While I continue to grieve and pray for families, friends and coworkers impacted negatively by COVID-19, I know that God permitted C-19 in me to rescue me. From myself.

Here, God used COVID to shut me down, made me re-prioritize and remember him as my #1 marketer!

### What's COVID-19 teaching you - directly or indirectly?

**Remember: your healing is in your revealing.**

"Be still and know that I am God" Psalm 46:10

Here, as David was running from danger, he was warned to stop his running to know that God's hand was always guiding and guarding him, but first he needed to un-busy himself.

### Why Me (with COVID-19), Lord? - Lord: Why Not You, tim?

The Black Friday-New Year's Day period marks businesses' most profitable period; 40% of annual sales come during this five-week shopping time. This would be even more crucial during that COVID-19 economic downturn.

But on December 2, 2020, when I tested C-19 positive, my marketing/promotional ratrace shut down, due to my 10-14 day mandated isolation.

But why me? Why now, Lord? Since March, I've worn (facemasks), washed (hands 20 seconds) and watched (social distancing, six feet and more).

For his glory and my person, God permitted C-19's mild symptoms to slow me down and show me a better lifestyle; the one-day chills and 14-day lethargy . . .

I was primed and anxious to promote my new book; rush to launch book #2; and seek to put out a 2021 devotional based, based upon my 2019-2020 The Valley Weekly columns.

[DISCLAIMER: This is to in no way diminish and downplay the pain and hurt of the families, friends, neighbors and coworkers of the 48.1 million infected and 777,000 American deaths, . . .]

And God said, Whoa, slow, no - then Go!

We often impose unrealistic, stress-filled, and "man-ufactured" deadlines on ourselves.

Instead, God forced me to remember to "Seek ye first, . . ." I began in self-isolation to begin an early-morning regimen strengthened by Bible study/meditation/prayer, then proceed to corporate family prayer with our daughter before she'd commence her virtual HS classroom.

My lethargy reminded me to resume eight hours of nightly sleep, to "be still and know that I am God" and not only in the early morning hours.

I still ache daily for the millions of fellow Americans, pained by the deaths, illnesses and economic hardships, . . . and hope I never need that C-19 reminder again.



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*"There's always something to remind you that everything ain't never gonna be alright!"*

*- J. California Cooper*

*"Education has but one honorable purpose, one alone, everything else is a waste of time... that is to train the student to be a proper handler of power."*

*- John Henrik Clarke*

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## COVID-19 Assistance

### UNITED WAY COVID-19

Assistance Fund

Donate:

[www.uwmadison-county.org](http://www.uwmadison-county.org)

Get Assistance: Call 211

### SMALL BUSINESSES

[disastercustomerservice@sba.gov](mailto:disastercustomerservice@sba.gov)

sba.gov

(800) 659-2955

### COVID-19-RELATED UNEMPLOYMENT

Alabama Department of Labor

(866) 234-5382

[labor.alabama.gov](http://labor.alabama.gov)

### MADISON COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

(256) 539-3711

### LATEST COVID-19 INFORMATION

Alabama Department of Public Health

[www.alabamapublichealth.gov](http://www.alabamapublichealth.gov)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
[cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov)

### TAKEOUT/ DELIVERY RESTAURANTS

<https://hsvchamber.org/restaurant-deliveries-take-out-food-service-providers/>

THE VALLEY WEEKLY

# CALLED 2 PREACH

REV. MICHAEL RICE

## Send Them to the Principal's Office

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

Although it was my policy to handle all my disciplinary problems with students when I was a teacher, there were a few times when the situation called for me to *send them to the principal's office*.



pixabay.com

hold in my classroom.

Although I did not have the authority to deal with certain kinds of issues, I did have the authority to send them to the principal's office.

The Apostle Paul informs us in 2 Corinthians that as believers, we have issues that are above our ability to handle but we do have the authority to prevent strongholds from setting up in our lives by casting down what he called, *every high thing that exalts itself and bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.*

When the enemy of our souls sends those thoughts, we have the authority to *send them to the principal's office.*

Those were the times when the offence was above my pay grade, and I did not have the *authority* to deal with them appropriately.

One of the reasons that

I had to deal with those kinds of issues quickly was to set an example for the other students. They learned that they would experience the same fate if they chose to disobey

and sink into the abyss of the kind of behavior that would warrant being sent to the principal's office.

Had I just let it go, the spirit of disobedience would have set up a *strong-*

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*“Everything can be explained to the people,  
on the single condition  
that you want them to understand.”*

- Frantz Fanon

# JERRY DAMSON

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DECEMBER 3 - CAROLJOAN SUTTON - Carol Joan Sutton was an American actress of theater, film and television, best known for her appearances in the films *Steel Magnolias*, *Monster's Ball*, and *Ray*. Her acting debut came in the 1974 television show *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman*.

- BlackCelebrityBirthdays.com





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

## Dr. Cynthia Smith

Dr. Cynthia M. Smith, a native of Brundidge (Pike County), Alabama, joined the Huntsville community in 1977. She retired from Alabama A&M University (AAMU) September 1, 2020, after 43 years of dedicated service. In her final positions as professor and chair of the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS), she was involved in teaching, research, advisement and the ongoing leadership responsibilities of the FCS unit. Prior to assuming this position in August of 2004, Dr. Smith served as coordinator of the Apparel, Merchandising and Design Area (AMD) within the Department.

Throughout her tenure, she was and continues to be, an active professional, and currently serves on the Executive Board of three professional organizations: the National Coalition for Black Development in Family and Consumer Sciences (NCBDFCS), Alpha Kappa Mu National Honor Society (AKM), and the Alabama Affiliate of FCS (ALAFCS). In the past, she has served on a number of committees of the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (AAFCS), including the prestigious Council for Accreditation, the Nominating Committee, and chair of the Council for Certification during its early years.

Dr. Smith has served on the Executive Board

of the Alabama Affiliate of AAFCS for most of her professional career, and is a Past President (2007) of the group. She is a former chair of the 1890 CAFCS, and holds the distinction of being the second president of the National Coalition for Black Development in Family and Consumer Sciences (NCBDFCS). Dr. Smith is the immediate past national president of Alpha Kappa Mu National Honor Society, and continues to serve the organization as the Regional Director for Region IV – Alabama.

For her leadership and service within the profession, Dr. Smith has received numerous awards and recognitions, including the 2014 Distinguished Service Award of the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences, the highest award given to a member by the organization; and named an AAFCS Legend in 2016. Other national awards of note have included the Legacy Award, Outstanding Service Award, and Distinguished Service Award from the NCBDFCS.

She received her bachelor's and master's degrees from Tuskegee University, and her doctorate from The Ohio State University. She is a 2012 graduate of the Food Systems Leadership Institute, Cohort #6; and the ESCOP/ACOP Leadership Training Program. As a professional in Family and Consumer

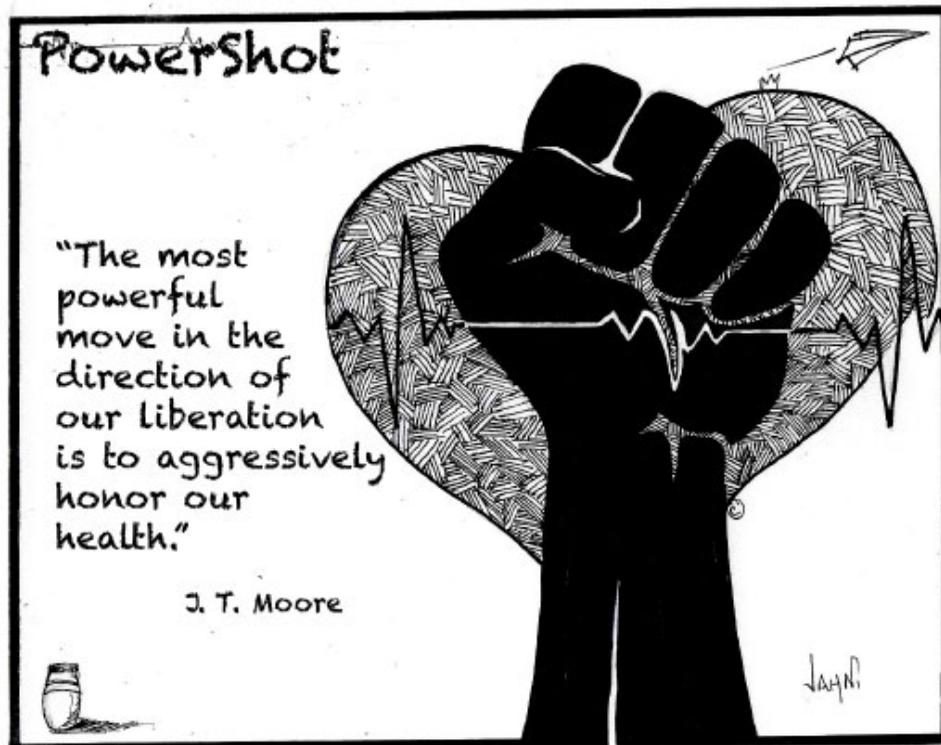


Sciences, Dr. Smith's bio is featured in the book, African American Contributions to the Human Sciences.

Dr. Smith is a member of several community groups. She is a 50-year (Golden) soror of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., as well as a life member. Within her chapter, Epsilon Gamma Omega, she has held several positions of leadership and currently serves as the Rituals Chairman. She serves on the board of the Ivy Center Foundation, a 501(c)3 charitable organization. Dr. Smith is also an Alumna member of the Greater Huntsville Chapter of The Links Incorporated, and formerly served as the Rituals Chair, and chair of the Arts Facet.

She is a member of the Union Hill P.B. Church of Huntsville, where she currently serves as First Vice President of the Oscar L. Montgomery, Sr. Personal Growth Center, a 501(c)3 organization; and is the chair of the Wedding Committee.

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



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*"I don't believe that life is supposed to make you feel good, or to make you feel miserable, either. Life is just supposed to make you feel."*

- Gloria Naylor



# Great Ways to Support Our Small Businesses This Holiday Season

(BPT) - It's no secret small businesses have been largely impacted by the pandemic. New York Congresswoman Nydia M. Velázquez acknowledged the pandemic has "sparked a once-in-a-lifetime crisis for American small businesses."

Black business ownership was especially hit hard with a decline of more than 40%, the largest drop across any racial demographic, according to a report by the House Small Business Committee.

With government aid struggling to meet the demand, companies and nonprofit organizations launched relief programs and crowd-sourced campaigns to provide valuable

support.

A recent example of two institutional forces rallying together is the newly announced partnership between Prudential Financial and the New Jersey Devils for a first-of-its-kind Buy Black program where Prudential will donate its premier logo space on the Devils' helmet to a Black-owned, New Jersey-based business.

This history-making move provides the business with unprecedented exposure during select games starting in December.

The collaboration offers valuable business and marketing opportunities and increases visibility for Black entrepreneurs, helping them grow and thrive



in the communities.

For businesses that faced financial hardships and challenges since the pandemic, this holiday season is important to reenergize sales.

Every purchase can help

revitalize a once thriving entrepreneurial community - one step at a time. During the season of giving, there are several ways for local consumers to support the small business community, including:

\* Shop small: Get to know the businesses in your neighborhood. Find and support local small businesses this holiday season.

\* Share on social: Share de-

tails of the business on personal social channels and identify creative avenues to expand the spotlight, such as posting about the business on professional networks to encourage others to make an informed purchase.

\* Write a review: Providing positive feedback on a purchase or service experience with a business-of-choice encourages others to follow the lead.

These small efforts can help small business owners begin the journey of recovery from the pandemic crisis to thrive again. It takes every member of the community to come together and provide support.

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