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FREE



PRESTON: "The Main Event" - p. 4

Friday
December 13, 2024
Vol. 11, No. 15
ValleyWeeklyllc.com

GLORIA B: "Closet Cleaning" - p. 5

The Valley Weekly

SALUTE!
Rosetta James Foundation
ELDER OF THE WEEK



Atty. Julian Butler

"The rich are only defeated when running for their lives." - C.L.R. James



HPAC 2025-27 Officers: Pictured (l-r) are members of the leadership team for the Huntsville Progressive Alumni Chapter: Allen Malone, president; Mario Williams, vice president; Dr. Dorothy Ann Downing, chaplain; Felicia Brown, secretary; Marvin Williams, treasurer; and Veva Phipps, financial secretary. Not shown: Dr. Deloris Smothers, parliamentarian.

HPAC Installs Slate of Officers for 2025-27

The Huntsville Progressive Alumni Chapter (HPAC) of the Alabama A&M University Alumni Association, Inc., held an installation ceremony for its new officers on Monday, December 2, at the Hidden Creek Clubhouse.

Outgoing President Atty. Michael Walker welcomed and presented a comprehensive report of activities to a group of nearly 50 attendees.

Following an invocation by Dr. Theodis Acklin, The Honorable Judge

Sybil Cleveland-Pennywell installed the 2025-27 slate of officers. The group included Dr. Dorothy Ann Downing, parliamentarian; Marvin Williams, treasurer; Veva Phipps, financial secretary; Felicia Brown, secretary;

Mario Williams, vice president; and Allen Malone, president.

Chapter members pledged to offer their support of the officers, while President Malone promised "to continue the growth of the chapter."

Drake State, Huntsville Businesses Partner to Train New Manufacturing Workforce

by Daniel Owen

Starting in June 2025, Drake State Community & Technical College will offer a new program directly addressing the urgent need for highly skilled manufacturing technicians. The two-year, Advanced Manufacturing Technician (AMT) program is an employer-driven initiative that provides hands-on experience alongside formal classroom education.



Blue Origin, Kohler, Mazda Toyota Manufacturing, Plasma Processes, Runergy and Toyota Alabama.

"At Drake State, we are committed to providing innova-

tive educational opportunities that meet the needs of our students and the workforce," said Dr. Patricia Sims, Drake State president.

AMT students will gain experience

in modern, advanced manufacturing environments and develop an in-demand technical skillset. The program includes courses in electricity, robotics, etc.

A signing day ceremony on Friday, December 6, solidified the partnership between Drake State and the newly established Huntsville Tech Federation Advanced Manufacturing Education (FAME) chapter. Manufacturers sponsoring students in the program include: Bruder,

The Valley Weekly

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Valley Weekly Washington One Minute

by Ron Hamm



Here are the top issues and events in Washington for this week:

1. CONGRESS. The House and Senate are in session this week. Members and their spouses attended the annual Congressional Christmas Ball at the White House Monday night, hosted by the President and First Lady. After the final race was called last week, the 119th Congress will be 220 Rs to 215 Ds (a pickup of 2 for the Democrats over the current 118th Congress that started with 222 Rs to 213 Ds), not counting the November 13 resignation of Rep. Matt Gaetz, who has announced he will not return to Congress in January. The House is expected this week to vote on the annual \$883.7 billion Defense Authorization bill, which, *inter alia*, contains language requiring women be automatically registered to the Selective Service, and the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA), reauthorizing programs at the Army Corps of

Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation. Senator-elect Andy Kim (D-NJ) was sworn in Monday 3 weeks early following the resignation yesterday of interim Sen. George Helmy.

2. EXECUTIVE BRANCH. On Sunday, President Biden announced that U.S. forces had made 75 strikes against Islamic State camps and operatives in Syria, following last Sunday's stunning fall of the Assad regime at the hands of Syrian rebels. Last Saturday, First Lady Jill Biden was in Paris to attend the grand reopening ceremony for the reconstructed Notre Dame cathedral – capping a six-day, four-country trip to Italy, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar. Also attending the Paris event were Donald Trump, Elon Musk, and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy (The Washington Post reported that Trump and Zelenskyy met for 30 minutes at the French presidential palace). In related news

on Saturday, the Biden Administration announced it was sending \$1 billion in munitions to Ukraine.

Politico reported last week that President Biden is weighing whether to issue preemptive pardons to current and former public officials who are thought to be targets for revenge by the new administration, including former Rep. Liz Cheney (R-WY), former NIH official Anthony Fauci, former Joint Chiefs Chair Mark Milley, and Senator-elect Adam Schiff (D-CA).

Last Tuesday, the Trump-Vance transition team belatedly signed an agreement with the Department of Justice allowing the transition team to submit names for background checks and security clearances, which it had delayed signing for weeks, preventing the FBI from conducting background checks on any of the new Cabinet nominees or processing security clearances for transition officials.

Last Friday, the Biden Administration issued an order requiring a new testing regime to detect bird flu (officially H5N1) in raw milk, affecting dairy farms, bulk milk transporters, bulk milk

transfer stations, and dairy processing facilities. The order will also require private laboratories and state veterinarians to report positive results to USDA that come from tests done on raw milk samples. The first round of testing under the new order is scheduled to begin next week. To date, 718 herds in 15 states have tested positive for bird flu and 58 human cases have been recorded.

3. SUPREME COURT. On Tuesday, the Supreme Court will hear arguments in a Utah case as to the scope of environmental review required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), involving an environmental review by the Surface Transportation Board of a new rail line (Seven County Infrastructure Coalition v. Eagle County, Colorado).

4. TIKTOK BAN UPHELD. On last Friday, a 3-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia

Circuit unanimously sided with the Justice Department in declining to review a petition from TikTok and ByteDance, its Chinese parent company, seeking to overturn an April 2024 law that requires TikTok to sever ties with ByteDance before Jan. 19, 2025, or lose access to app stores and web-hosting services in the U.S. TikTok, which claims 170 million U.S. users, reportedly now plans to appeal to the Supreme Court.

In other tech news, on Friday the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau announced it had placed Google (specifically, Google Pay) under federal supervision, due to complaints about erroneous transactions (Google filed an immediate lawsuit to block the order).

5. JOBS REPORT. Last Thursday, the Labor Department announced that the U.S. economy added 227,000 jobs in November (a sharp increase from October), while the unemployment rate

ticked up to 4.2%, from 4.1% in October. Average hourly earnings rose a higher-than-expected 0.4% over the month. The Federal Reserve's Federal Open Market Committee meets on Dec. 17-18 and is expected to cut the federal funds rate again by 25 basis points.

6. HIGHER EDUCATION. On Tuesday, HCG attended the American Council on Education's (ACE) comprehensive post-election analysis briefing. The discussion explored the implications of Linda McMahon's nomination as Secretary of Education, shifts in congressional leadership, the Trump administration's stance on Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), and the regulatory landscape for a range of issues.

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*"If you possess enough courage to speak out what you are,
you will find you are not alone."*

- Richard Wright

The Valley Weekly

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The Valley Weekly, LLC

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www.valleyweeklyllc.com

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Items for consideration for publication in The Valley Weekly should be submitted at least **TWO** weeks in advance to above address or by e-mail to info@valleyweeklyllc.com. Items published do not necessarily reflect the views of The Valley Weekly, LLC.

Submissions to TVW do not necessarily reflect the beliefs of the editorial staff, and TVW is not responsible for the authenticity of submissions.



The Valley Weekly

Ad Rates Single Issue

Back Cover	10x10-inches	\$1,500
Full Page	10x10 inches	\$1,200
3/4 Page	7.5x10 inches	\$900
Half Page	Horizontal	
	5x10 inches	\$600
Fourth Page	Vertical	
	10x5 inches	\$600
Eighth Page	5x5 inches	\$300
	2.5x5 inches	\$150
Sixteenth Page	2.5x2.5	\$75
	Classified 1 col.1 inch	\$100/Flat Fee

In Loving Memory of Bill

I once thought I was grown when I graduated from Alabama A&M University in May of 1979, ready to take on the world as I headed to The Ohio State University for graduate school. As the youngest of 13 children, I was used to a full house, but even then, I hadn't truly experienced the depth of independence or loss.

In December of 1981, I married Bill, moving from my apartment in Columbus into our first home together. It was the beginning of a life filled with love, partnership, and shared dreams. For 42 years, we were inseparable—many would say that when you saw me, you saw him too.

But it wasn't until last year on this day, December 4, 2023, when Bill passed away instantly, that I realized I hadn't fully grown up. For the first time, I faced life without him by my side. I had never lived alone, and few things in my life were done without him. His absence has been profound, not just for me but for our family and the many who loved him.

For those who asked for an obituary last December, I apologize for the delay. Life came at me fast, and my adult children and I have been navigating this new reality. If you knew Bill, you likely know the essence of the man he was. For those who didn't, I hope this serves as a glimpse into the extraordinary life he lived. His obituary follows below:

William Lloyd Huston, Sr.

October 16, 1956 – December 4, 2023

Born in Toledo, Ohio, to Dr. Richard Allen Huston, Sr., and Mrs. Thelma Williams Huston, William Lloyd Huston, Sr., was the second of two sons in a family deeply rooted in education. His father was a teacher, principal, and superintendent, while his mother was an elementary school teacher. His older brother, Richard Allen Huston, Jr., is a United States Army veteran and retired middle school teacher.

An award-winning athlete, William excelled in wrestling, track and field, and football during his middle and high school years. He graduated from Warren Western Reserve High School in Warren, Ohio, and was recruited to play football at the University of Toledo, his parents' alma mater. His father, a member of the University of Toledo's 1959 Athletic Hall of Fame, undoubtedly inspired his dedication to excellence. William earned a degree in Math Education from the University of Toledo in 1979.

In December 1981, he married Dorothy Jean Williams, with whom he shared a life of love and purpose. Together, they raised three children: William Lloyd Huston, Jr. (Tu Vy Nguyen) of Fremont, CA; James Allen Huston of San Francisco, CA; and Mary Katharine Huston Payne (Darian Michael Payne) of Huntsville, AL. He was a proud grandfather to Josiah Thunder Huston and Jonathan Storm Atunbi Huston of Fremont, CA.

William's career in education began in 1979 as a math teacher and wrestling coach at Finland Middle School in Grove City, Ohio. Over the years, he taught math and history at various schools, including Prairie Norton Elementary (Columbus, OH), Middle Tennessee State University Campus School (Murfreesboro, TN), Burt School (Clarksville, TN), and Ed White Middle School (Huntsville, AL). His leadership roles included Assistant Principal at James Oliver Johnson High School and Principal of Challenger Elementary School in Huntsville, AL, where he retired from Huntsville City Schools.

In higher education, William served as Director of Student Activities at Volunteer State Community College in Gallatin, TN, and as a math and photography teacher for the Ohio Wesleyan University Upward Bound Program. He earned his Master of Science in Educational Leadership from Ohio State University in 1984, specializing in K-12 Administration. He also attended flight school at Ohio State University and became a Federal Aviation Administration-certified pilot.

William was an active member of his community and church. He served as a deacon at The Fellowship of Faith Church and was affiliated with several organizations, including the Delta Theta Lambda Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., the 100 Black Men of America (Greater Huntsville Chapter), and The Rosetta James Foundation.

A man of many talents and passions, William enjoyed mentoring youth, flying airplanes, playing the guitar, photography, and hunting. His life was a testament to dedication, leadership, and love for his family, faith, and community.

He leaves behind a legacy of service, inspiration, and excellence that will continue to shine through the lives of all those he touched. Until next week, happy holidays to you and yours.

Dorothy

DECEMBER 13 - RUSTY CUNDIEFF - George Arthur "Rusty" Cundieff is an American film and television director, actor, and writer known for his work on *Fear of a Black Hat* (1993), *Tales from the Hood* (1995), and *Chappelle's Show* (2003–2006). He studied journalism at Loyola University in New Orleans and the philosophy of religion at the University of Southern California. After graduating from USC in 1982, Cundieff performed stand-up comedy in Los Angeles while looking for opportunities to act. His first major role was a year-long run as Theo Carver on *Days of Our Lives* in 1985. In 1988, he played Big Brother Chucky in Spike Lee's *School Daze*. Cundieff was inspired by his experience working with Lee on the film to pursue writing and directing in addition to acting.

- BlackCelebrityBirthdays.org



THE VALLEY WEEKLY
**VALLEY
DEATHS**



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Funeral service for **BABY RILEY ORANGE CUFFEE** (b. 2024) will be announced at a later date.

Funeral service for **BABY BOY LAIDEN FULLOVE** (b. 2024) was Sunday, December 8, at Serenity Funeral Home Chapel.

Funeral service for **MR. NORTHLESS BROOKS** (b. 1951) was Saturday, December 7, at Serenity Funeral Home Chapel.

Funeral service for **MS. LOUISE WOODS** (b. 1943) was Friday, December 6, at Progressive Union Missionary Baptist Church, 1919 Brandontown Road NW, Huntsville, Ala.

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Funeral service for **MRS. MARY MORRIS LESLIE** (b. 1952) was Saturday, December 7, at True Holiness Church with Pastor Greg McGlathery and Bishop G. Calvin Boone officiating.

Funeral service for **MS. DESIREE HAMMONDS** (b. 1944) was Saturday, December 7, at Deliverance Outreach Worship Center with Apostle Aaron Jones officiating.

Funeral service for **MR. ANTHONY LAVERN LANIER** (b. 1961) was Sunday, December 1, at the Nelms Memorial Funeral Home Chapel.

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Funeral service for **MR. ERROL DEWAYNE JONES** (b. 1967) will be 12 noon, Saturday, December 14, at the Royal Chapel of Memories with Elder Robert Heath, Jr. officiating.



Funeral service for **DR. OLA GOODE SANDERS** (b. 1952) was Friday, December 6, at the Phillips CME Church, 2185 Winchester Road NW, with Reverend Dr. Gregory Scott officiating.

Valley Weekly
**Spiritual
Game Plan**
PRESTON BROWN'S



Today's Spiritual Game Plan:
"The Main Event"

Luke 2:10 says, "But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.'"

We will never enjoy the season of Christmas until we enjoy the reason for Christmas. In other words, until we understand the real meaning of Christmas, it will only be about parties, Christmas trees, and making sure we get everything on our shopping lists. There is nothing wrong with these things if we keep them as side attractions and not the main event. We need to know that Jesus is the reason for the season and there is no substitute. So often when the season of Christmas gets here, we become distracted by so many other things that we miss the message.

Jesus did not come to entertain us. He came to be the Savior of the entire world. He didn't come to be politically correct. He came for the message of hope. He also came to be the Lord of our lives.

I believe we often miss the main event of Christmas because we make our God too small.

We reduce Him down to sleigh bells and jingle bells and Santa Claus coming to town. It's the most wonderful time of the year, but not for the reason that most people think. There is no way that any of us could be saved without God sending us His one and only son. This act of love will always be the real meaning of Christmas.

May God grant you spiritual success in finding the real meaning of Christmas.



Question: What does the real meaning of Christmas mean to you?

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:
"A Marriage That Works"

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BUT WE CAN MAKE IT EASIER"**



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A New Generation Of Service

What's Next, "Coach Prime": Deion Sanders 2.0?"

"Well done, thou good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, now I'll make you rulers over many..." - Matthew 25:21

In 2023, many scoffed when Sports Illustrated's coveted Sportsperson of the Year Award and magazine cover honored the University of Colorado's first-year football "Coach Prime" Deion Sanders, who had just posted only a four wins and eight losses record.

"A flash in the pan... Undeserving... A small-time showboat unfit for the challenges of coaching major college football" were some of the insults hurled at the Pro Football Hall of Famer, corporate spokesman, and media darling.

But the magazine's 2023 foresight is already bearing 2024 fruit for Sanders' 9-3 team the Buffaloes, the school, and its Boulder, Colorado community.

According to [Deion Sanders is a savior or showman? How Coach Prime turned Colorado Football into a \\$340 million spectacle](#) | his two-year University of Colorado "transcript" shows:

- U of C's 20% increase in applications for the 2024 class, with 68,000 prospective students applying - and a 50% increase in applications from Black students;
- an estimated \$340 million in media exposure; and
- In 2023 alone, Colorado's six home games brought in a record-setting \$113.2 million to Boulder, revitalizing the local economy through hotel stays, restaurant meals, apparel purchases, etc.

A "Prime" HBCU Alumni Maker

Supporters of historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) note that Sanders, the former Florida State standout, identifies himself as an HBCU alumnus, [Deion Sanders says he isn't a Seminole, he's an HBCU graduate](#). And also an HBCU alumni maker. A Talladega College 2000 graduate in business administration, Sanders also coached Jackson State to 2021 and 2022 conference championships, while recruiting and transferring with him 2024 Heisman Trophy prospect (and 4.0 gpa student) Travis Hunter. Should Hunter win this top college football award, he will become the first such winner who attended an HBCU.



Your Own "Prime Effect"?

Deion Sanders has created his own Prime Effect: a rare two-way pro athlete who won two Super Bowl rings and played in a World Series, for example.

And you and I can now create a similar "Prime Effect" successful track: persevering against many odds; successfully mentoring youngsters, and deciding to return and earn a college degree after already achieving stardom and wealth.

Let's start in our homes, and then at the workplace, and finally out into our respective communities.

It doesn't require money, media exposure, or corporate endorsements - just integrity, perseverance, and a willingness to push beyond your business as usual.



Tim Allston

Leadership Player-Coach & Four-time
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Millennial Moment

by Gloria B. Caldwell

Closet Cleaning ...

You have a closet full of clothes that are too small, too big, outdated, or you don't wear them, or just out of season.

You need to purge that thing. There is no room for anything new. It's jam-packed! You need to get in there and figure out what stays. Give away the things you don't wear, but are in good condition, and throw away damaged items and things that aren't reusable.

I know, I know: sometimes it's hard to let go of the memories. The dialogue you give yourself, "My grandparent or parent bought me this",

I understand. Keep an item or two, but not a house full of things. They are good



memories, but they aren't housed in the clothing. You still have those memories when those items are gone, especially if you're not wearing them. The memories are housed in your mind, remember that!

So, what's the

point? As Jonathan McReynolds says: "Make Room". Make room for the new. You don't have room to receive anything or hang anything anywhere when you don't release the old.

Old habits, old relationships, pain, disappointments, rejection, jobs, and mediocrity. How are you asking to be blessed and you don't have the room to receive the blessings?

Clear out that closet of foolishness. Make room for the new things. You can't operate effectively with clutter. Try it. You won't regret it!

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The Valley Weekly

VALLEY EVENTS

HAPPENINGS, ACTIVITIES & MORE!

Thru January 5

Skating in the Park
Big Spring Park
Downtown Huntsville

Cullman, Ala.

5-9 p.m.

December 13

Friday the 13th Ghost
Hunt at the Historic
Lowry House
Tickets: \$49.99
Huntsville, Ala.

December 14

Rocket City's Candy
Cane Lane Holiday
Market

3405 Triana Boulevard
SW
Huntsville, Ala.
9 a.m.-3 p.m.

"Make Your Own Holi-
day Table Garlands"

Huntsville Botanical
Garden

\$70-\$120; 4747 Bob
Wallace Avenue

Huntsville, Ala.

9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Pictures with the Grinch

December 13-14

6th Annual Christmas at
the Grotto

Adults - \$10

Seniors - \$8

Military/Veterans/1st

Responders - \$7

Teens (13-17) - \$8

Children (5-12) - \$7

Children under 4 - free

Wagon rides on Dec

13,14 - \$5

Kids' rides on Dec 13,

14 - \$3

1600 St. Bernard Drive SE

A New Leash on Life
1300 Slaughter Road
Madison, Ala.
12-3 p.m. (1-3 p.m.,
Sun.)

6th Annual Rocket City
Trombone Christmas
Stovehouse
Huntsville, Ala.
2 p.m.

The Raven Masquerade:
A Royal Fairy Court
Masquerade Ball
3110 Hwy. 31 S
Decatur, Ala.
5-10 p.m.

Madison City Christmas
Parade
100 Hughes Road
Madison, Ala.
7 p.m.

December 15

Huntsville Museum of
Art Store Member Ap-
preciation Sale
20% Off

Huntsville Anime Fest
Embassy Suites
Huntsville, Ala.
9 a.m.-4 p.m.

R&B Christmas Brunch
Prohibition Rooftop Bar
& Grill
Tickets: \$7-15

Community Foundation, Nonprofits Attract Contributions

The Commu-
nity Foundation
of Greater Hunts-
ville's Corporate
Giving Network
recently joined with
local nonprofits
to celebrate Giv-
ingTuesday. With
grant announce-
ments totaling more
than \$2.6 million,

the event showcased
both the business
community and the
nonprofit ecosystem
of the Huntsville
metropolitan area.

The Corporate
Giving Network is a
professional group
of business associ-
ates who engage in
corporate philan-

thropy, corporate
social responsibility,
and community in-
vestment. The Foun-
dation supports
the network with
strategies and best
practices for engag-
ing in corporate
philanthropy.


The grants to 189
nonprofits support

the Community
Foundation's quality
of life framework:
arts and culture, ba-
sic needs, economic
opportunity, educa-
tion, environment,
health and wellness,
neighborhoods and
community, and
recreation.

PowerShot

"True faith is not
confined to walls or
structures; it burns as
an enduring flame
in the heart, guiding
and sustaining us
wherever we are."

J. T. Moore



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*"It is true that no one can harm the person who wears armor.
But no one can help him either."*

- Kristin Hunter

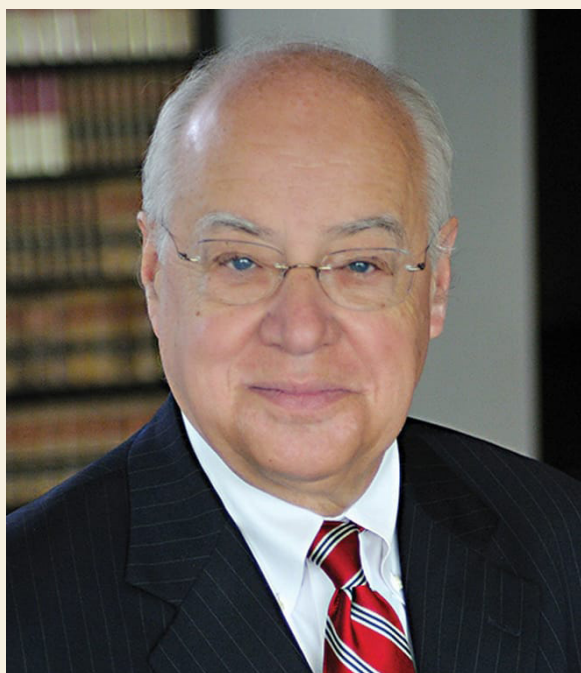


Rosetta James Foundation "Spotlight on Our Elders" ... Featuring

Atty. Julian Butler

Atty. Julian Butler is a shareholder in Dentons Sirote's Huntsville, Ala., office, representing clients in civil litigation matters. One of Julian's focus areas is local government law, having served as the Madison County Attorney for 35 years, where he has contributed to phenomenal growth in the local community and improved the quality of people's lives.

The Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Education Foundation awarded Julian the Martin Luther King, Jr., Unity Award "for Outstanding Service in the Area of Human Relations" in 2018, and the Huntsville-Madison County Bar Association honored him with the Community Service Award—twice. Active in both the state and local level of the Democratic party, the Jefferson County Progressive Democratic Council, which was the first African-American political action group in Alabama, gave him



the Certificate of Merit in 1971 for "exceptional and extraordinary service in the field of civil rights and political advancement of the community."

Julian has been prolific in the community throughout his lifetime, reinforcing his core belief that lawyers ought to give back. He has served as the Chairman of the Alabama State Bar's Environmental Law Section; on the board of the Alabama Humanities Foundation, the University

of Alabama's Library Leadership Board, Board of Trustees of the Alabama Department of Archives and History; Vice-President, Alabama of the Eleventh Circuit Historical Society, and the State and Local Legal Center in Washington, D.C.; and was the president of The Arts Council and the National Association of County Civil Attorneys.

"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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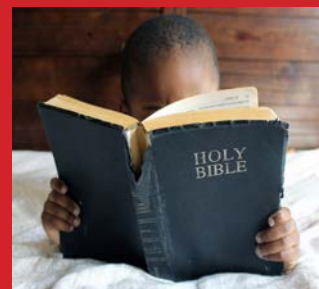
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This Sunday's Lectionary

Sunday, December 15, 2024

Third Sunday
of
Advent



(Track 2, Year C)

First Lesson:
Zephaniah 3:14-20
Canticle 9
Second Lesson:
Philippians 4:4-7
GOSPEL:
Luke 3:7-18



Come Discover
the Magic on
the Mountain!

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AAMU Alum, Former MMW Member Lending Hand to Campus Transformations

Jeremy Jowers, an alumnus and former member of the Marching Maroon & White Band, is currently a superintendent at Garber Construction Company heading several major projects at Alabama A&M. Jowers is deeply involved in ongoing improvements across the campus.

"We started a full remodel of the exterior and HVAC replacement at Patton Hall this fall, and it should be complete by 2026," Jowers said. "The interior remodel of Patton begins in February. On a day-to-day basis, I manage my own smaller jobs and assist with big jobs like Patton Hall and Stephenson Hall."



Jowers, hailing from Prichard, Alabama, came to Alabama A&M on a band scholarship. "I played the mellophone, which is the marching band version of the French horn," he explained. "I marched for four years and was part of the Symphonic Band from

2019 to 2023."

With a degree in construction management, Jowers will start on his master of engineering next spring at the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

Securing his current role shortly after graduation, Jowers has been with

Garber Construction for 10 months. He credits an internship with JESCO, Inc. for hands-on experience that equipped him for his career.

"I also earned my OSHA 30 certification, which teaches us how to prevent workplace injuries, while interning," he added.

The highlight of his job, he says, is meeting new people in the construction field and applying the skills he learned at Alabama A&M. Jowers work on campus includes the completion of Bulldog Cafe in the Welcome Center this summer and upcoming

upgrades at Louis Crews Stadium.

"It feels great," Jowers said. "I'm managing a job at Morrison Fine Arts Building, and it feels like a dream because I came here to be part of the band five years ago. Now I'm managing a job in the same building where I spent most of my time perfecting my craft."

When asked about lessons that shaped his professional journey, Jowers emphasized time management – a skill honed both in band and construction classes.

"I thank Mr. Carlton

Wright for giving me the opportunity to march in his band," said Jowers. "The band and his leadership helped shape me into the engineer and man I am today. The long nights and early mornings were worth it. Also, the Construction Management Department, especially Dr. Mahbub Hasan, one of the main reasons I'm a successful construction manager. His many words of wisdom are truly appreciated. I truly appreciate the time and effort he invested in helping me grow both academically and personally."

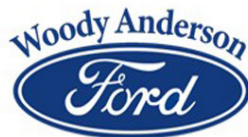


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Notes of a Native Son: A Call to Action

by afroblastik [John 'Jahni' Moore]

A month or so ago, I left a couple of pairs of shoes outside my studio. They were still in good condition but I knew I didn't really need them anymore. I've cultivated the habit of passing along items I don't use much—things I think might benefit someone else more—whether it's clothing, shoes, or other belongings that could have a more useful life. I refer to it as blessing someone else with it. So, I marked the shoes "Free to You" and set them out for anyone who might need them.

The next day there was a note on my door. It was short, but it carried with it a weight of gratitude and recognition that gripped my heart. It was a reminder of the deeper impact we can have on others, often

in ways we don't even anticipate. And I must mention, it was beautifully written.

Truly, I was moved by the thank you the shoes. That they were needed, and that the person who received them was grateful. But what hit me even harder was the second part: the recognition of and gratitude for my art. I have no idea where they may have seen my work - on the news, in a magazine, or a local mural. Either way, it had touched them. In the midst of what appears to be a struggle—of living without a home—this person could still see the value of what I create. In their own way they were affirming that my work matters, that it reaches beyond just an audience of people who walk through my

studio doors, gather in suits and dresses in hallowed halls, and touches unexpected lives in unexpected ways. In that moment, I was reminded of the unique power of art. We often talk about art as something that reflects society or speaks to our times, but I also know art has the ability to transform us, to bridge divides and transcend barriers. To speak to the human condition, in whatever form it may take.

For this person, my art practice is not a distant or abstract concept. It wasn't just something I put on a canvas or created in my studio. My art was seen, appreciated, and connected to an act of kindness—a simple gesture of sharing something as basic as shoes. They had, in turn, extended a gesture of kindness back, not just in thanking me, but in acknowledging the value of what I do as an artist. This experience has made me think a lot about how we can all inten-



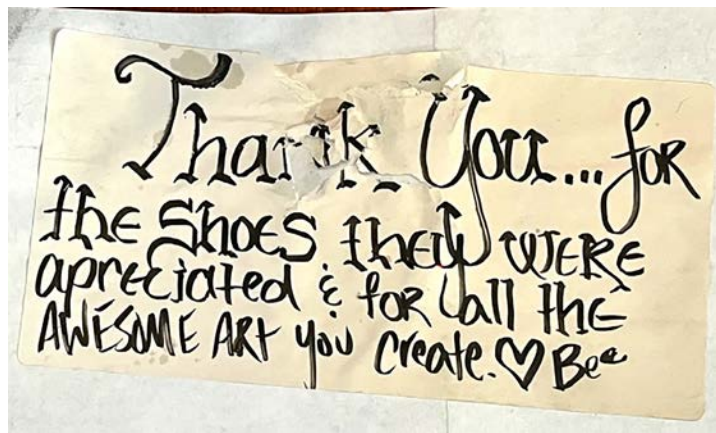
tionally contribute to the world, in big and small ways. Whether it's through a work of art, a service rendered, a loaf or bread baked or bought, a pair of shoes, or a kind word, we all have the power to make a difference. And sometimes, it's the smallest gestures that have the most profound impact.

We live in a world where it can often feel overwhelming to think about how we can truly make impact. But it takes every stroke to

make the masterpiece. If you have things you no longer need or use consistently, consider blessing someone else with it. It could be something as basic as shoes, clothes, food, or even a bit of your time. And, for creatives, it's a reminder that what we create has value far beyond the walls of our studios, labs, workshops, or galleries. Our work can touch lives in ways we may never fully understand. Creativity is a powerful tool for connection,

and sometimes, it's the unspoken messages that resonate the most. Let's remember that what we give—whether it's material goods or the fruits of our creativity—can make someone's day, or even extend a life, reminding them they matter, lifting their spirits when they least expect it. So, the next time you come across something that could be useful to someone else, or you feel compelled to share a piece of your heart through your art, go for it. Bless someone with it. In the blessing you are blessed. You never know what impact your act of kindness might have, or how it might be received by someone who needs it most.

Thank you to the person who left that note. You reminded me of why I do what I do. And to everyone reading this: take a moment today to pass along something you can part with. It may be of much more value to someone else. You just might touch a life in ways you never imagined. Bless someone. I dare you...



MCRP Dedicates Historic Marker for Lynching Victim

District No. 17 Masonic Center, 5905 Higdon Road NE, Huntsville, Alabama

Saturday, December 7, 2024 (Photos by J. Saintjones)

The Madison County Remembrance Project (MCRP), in partnership with the Equal Justice Initiative (EJI), on Saturday, December 7, 2024, dedicated a historical marker for Robert Mosley, who was lynched in Madison County on March 21, 1890.

The event was held at 5905 Higdon Road NE in Huntsville, Ala., the site of the current District No. 17 Masonic Center, and it honored Mosley's memory and affirmed the community's commitment to justice and reconciliation. Among the speakers was the Equal Justice Initiative's (EJI) Senior Project Manager Jennifer Harris. Music was provided by singer/songwriter Victoria Jones.

EJI has documented 10 racial terror lynching victims in Madison County from 1878 to 1915. Victims were often accused of minor or fabricated offenses and were killed by mobs with little to no legal consequences.

Mr. Mosley was lynched after it had been reported that he committed a crime. He was pursued by a mob of more than 500 townspeople, and when they caught him, rather than having a trial by jury, they lynched him near the scene of his alleged crime and buried him in the same location. His family was forced to move on without closure, being denied access to his body and unable to bury him according to their desires. No one was held accountable.

- Excerpts from David Person, MCRP



David Person, MCRP



Jennifer Harris, EJI



Angela Curry, MCRP



Victoria Jones



Amy Jackson, MCRP



Person (r) and Tammy Cooney



Dist. 17 Prince Hall Mason Erick Wade



William Hampton



Artist John 'Jahni' Moore



Rev. Michael Goldsmith



League of Women Voters of Alabama Issue Call to Action

Urging President Biden to Publish the Equal Rights Amendment

SIGN THE PETITION

Did you know that the Equal Rights Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, prohibiting discrimination on the basis of gender, has been ratified by the required three-fourths (38) states?

Virginia became the 38th state to ratify in 2020. The ERA will go into effect as soon as the National Archivist publishes and certifies the amendment.

This could happen immediately upon President Biden's instruction.

President Trump during his first term instructed the Archivist NOT to publish. It can be assumed that he will repeat that order when he again assumes office.



TIME IS SHORT!
What Can We Do?

TAKE ACTION NOW!

- Visit BidenPublishTheERA.org and learn more about the issues
- Sign the **Petition**
- **Call President Biden** (page includes script)
- Post on **Social Media** (Content ideas)
- Write a **Letter**
- Talk to *Everyone* You Know! Engage Your Community to Spread the Word and Contact both President Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris!

Rationale for Publishing

Eighty-five per cent of U.N. member states already include ERA protections in their constitutions. The U.N Human Rights Committee has highlighted U.S. failure to do so, and called for the U.S. government to include the ERA in our Constitution. The 40,000 member strong American Bar Association has supported the ERA since 1972. In 2024 it went beyond that support and established a legal position on the ERA for the first time. The arguments in this article are drawn from that position.

A further argument is that six states have “rescinded” their ratification. Again, the Constitution makes no provision for rescission, and James Madison himself wrote that ratification is “in toto and forever.”

Arguments against the ERA include the time limit imposed by Congress for ratification in 1972. However, the U.S. Constitution does not grant Congress the authority to impose a time limit when it proposes a constitutional amendment. The 27th amendment to the Constitution was proposed in 1789 and was ratified in 1992, when it went into effect.