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Senate District 26 Forum held at Tougaloo College

By Othor Cain
Contributing Writer

Tuesday, October 7, the Benjie G. Thompson Academic Complex at Tougaloo College served as the backdrop for a pivotal political forum featuring five of the seven candidates vying for the Senate District 26 seat, left vacant when John Horhn assumed the role of Mayor for the City of Jackson.

Sponsored in part by Mississippi Votes (Tougaloo College Chapter), Mississippi Votes ACTION Fund (C4), Capitol Dreamers, Gamma Upsilon Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., and the Jackson (MS) Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., the event aimed to amplify the voices of college voters, reflecting a growing engagement among young constituents.

Candidates Jermaine Cooley, Theresa Kennedy, Kamesha Mumford, James Pittman, and Jeffery Stallworth presented their platforms and addressed pressing issues, from voter access, youth retention to employment opportunities in Mississippi. Although opinions differed on certain topics, common ground emerged on the importance of mental health resources and judicial reform, resonating deeply with the audience.

The forum was moderated by Dr. Lawren Long, Interim Chair of the Political Science Department and Director of the Public Policy Program at Tougaloo College, who encouraged audience



Candidates for Senate District 26 engage in forum at Tougaloo College.

to maintain decorum and not respond to any of the candidates with applause or loud outbursts.

Student engagement was on full display, as attendees posed insightful questions about creating sustainable pathways to good-paying jobs and ensuring equitable access to mental health services. This vibrant exchange highlighted the urgent need for political representation that prioritizes the voices of younger generations, signaling a collective commitment to shaping the future of Mississippi.

The forum exemplified the power of civic discourse in fostering informed decision-making in the upcoming electoral process. The two candidates that did not attend missed an opportunity to garner the student vote.

We wanted to briefly profile the five distinguished candidates that were present at the forum, each embodying a unique vision for the community. Full stories on each candidate will appear in the Mississippi Link, as the election draws near.

(In alphabetical order)

Jermaine Cooley, a local businessman, aims to stimulate economic growth through entrepreneurship. He envisions a future where small businesses thrive, providing jobs and resources for aspiring entrepreneurs in the district.

Community Advocate The-

resa G. Kennedy has devoted her career to championing underrepresented voices. Her passion for grassroots activism has transformed neighborhoods, as she seeks to implement progressive policies that prioritize education and health care accessibility.

Attorney and Judge Kamesha Mumford bring a wealth of legal experience, having served in various ca-



Kennedy



Mumford

Forum

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Deaths, Disappearances, and Danger in Immigrant Detention

In partnership with American Community Media – National Briefing Series

By Christopher Young
Contributing Writer

Pilar Marerro, co-producer of American Community Media's Weekly National Briefings served as moderator for this briefing with three expert panelists and eighty media outlets. She reported that fifteen immigrants have died in immigration detention so far this year, ten of them between January and June, making that period the deadliest in recent history. Some of these deaths were suicides. Additionally, more than 1,200 people are allegedly missing from the infamous and controversial Everglades facility dubbed "Alligator Alcatraz," with families and attorneys unable to locate them.

Advocates report that children are being subjected to prolonged detention under harmful conditions, and that reports of overcrowding, unsanitary facilities, and problems with food and health care access are multiplying. There are currently close to 60,000 detainees, a record number, and the rapid expansion of arrests and detention, combined with diminishing transparency, signals a worsening situation for immigrants, most of whom have not been convicted of

Detention

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Attorney Heather Hogan. Photo courtesy of www.Linkedin.com.



R. Andrew Free, Esq.
PHOTO COURTESY OF [HTTPS://HUMANTRAFFICKINGACADEMY.ORG/](https://humantraffickingacademy.org/).



Attorney Yannick Gill.
PHOTO COURTESY OF WWW.LEGISLATIONFORM.COM.

Sean "Diddy" Combs sentenced to 50 months as court weighs acquitted charges



Diddy

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Newswire
Senior Correspondent

Sean "Diddy" Combs stood before the court, flanked by his children's pleas and his lawyers' defenses, yet weighed down by a system that has never been even-handed with Black men. His sentence—50 months—was neither the crushing 11 years prosecutors demanded nor the brief 14 months his attorneys sought. But it was enough to remind America of a truth it has never faced squarely: even acquittal does not mean freedom when you are Black.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. warned, "An injustice anywhere is an injustice everywhere." That truth reverberates here. The injustice lies not in whether Combs harmed others—he confessed to "disgusting, shameful, and sick" behavior—but

in the court's willingness to allow acquitted charges to shape his punishment. A jury of his peers declared him not guilty on racketeering and sex trafficking charges, yet the judge permitted prosecutors to raise that conduct as if guilt had been established. What does acquittal mean, if the shadow of it can still cage you?

Combs' violence toward women like Casandra "Cassie" Ventura and another, known as Jane, is undeniable, and his own words confirm it. But justice becomes corrupted when it ignores the protections of the Constitution. The Fifth and Sixth Amendments promise freedom from double jeopardy and guarantee fair trials. To let acquitted conduct decide a man's sentence hollows those rights. This is not just about Combs. It is about the dangerous era in which we now live. It is about an

America under authoritarian rule, where ICE raids seize even citizens, where the Smithsonian's Museum of African American History and Culture is threatened, where diversity is stripped from institutions, Black women are fired in alarming numbers, and social safety nets and affordable healthcare are being dismantled.

And it is about the contrast. A Trump ally and megachurch pastor who admitted to sexually abusing a 12-year-old girl will serve only six months. A former state senator who confessed to buying sex from minor boys overseas negotiated a plea. Other men in Trump's orbit face allegations as damning as Combs', yet they walk free or with little consequence. The color of their skin and their political connections protect them in ways no wealth or fame

could protect Combs. Judge Arun Subramanian told Combs, "A history of good works can't wash away the record in this case. You abused these women." But Combs's attorneys reminded the court that he built something rare, a Black-owned label, clothing lines, and schools that lifted others as he rose. They said his success showed generations of young people that they could own their future. The judge listened but dismissed the weight of those legacies.

In that courtroom, Combs' children begged for mercy. "He is my hero," said Christian Combs. "Please give us grace." Their tears revealed a deeper wound—the stripping apart of yet another Black family by both a father's failings and a

Diddy

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Judah School of Performing Arts celebrates nine years and gives back to the community

By Janice K. Neal-Vincent, Ph.D.
Contributing Writer

Since its origin, time has moved swiftly for Judah School of Performing Arts (731 S Pear Orchard Rd, Ste 30, Ridgeland, MS). The Christian, artistic school sets out to cultivate, channel, and train students to hone their skills while demonstrating the excellent glory of God. Last Saturday brought that reality into existence during the school’s celebration of nine years. The well-attended event, filled with merriment, occurred from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and drew many adults, youth, and children.

Attendees visited vendors who welcomed their presence. Food, clothes, candles, hair products, Italian ice, and other items were sold. A bounce house was even available for children to energize their strength.

While showcasing their skills via performance, students gave parents, other supporters, and curiosity seekers a glimpse of the learning atmosphere at Judah. Children attended free dance and music trial classes with live demonstrations that targeted their “feel” for art-



Amber Jones - Director/Owner of Judah School of Performing Arts marvels at skill development that has impacted the lives of Judah’s children and youth. PHOTOS, COURTESY OF AMBER JONES

forms that are being offered through 2026. Venturing was a notable component displayed by the children.

Maya Kyles, a music major (Jackson State University), taught students how to play several tunes on the drums. Her step-by-step approach put the

students at ease and enabled them to venture without pressure. Kyles also demonstrated strokes to use for right-handed students and left-handed students.

Face painting, the art of decorating a person’s face with temporary paints, is popular for

children who attend parties and other social gatherings. Appropriate for Judah’s celebration, when done correctly, it presents a professional appeal. Melody Jones did face painting as children accompanied by adults stood in line. Facial sketches were displayed for children to

make their choices. The artist chose the right supplies and stroked the right face painting techniques.

Participants gave the school high marks for time invested at Judah. “I think this is a very nice event. “We need more events like this for the area, seeing that crime is going on, and the children basically don’t have an outlet,” said Jaylon Arnold whose goddaughter attended with him.

Jordan Brooks has been a student at Judah for many years. He commented, “My experience at Judah has been extremely entertaining. There’s a lot to learn and do at Judah, and just like everything else, it’s tough. The family you gain, however, makes it worth it.”

Formerly from Greenville and now a Jackson resident, Quanesia Anderson commented, “I saw an ad on Facebook about today’s event. I’m getting a feel of Judah School of Performing Arts. I’ve observed the care that I’ve seen here, and I like it. My daughter, Summer, will [soon] be four, and she’s in the hip hop class. She’s shy today, but it doesn’t take her long to adapt to

the environment.”

Students range from twelve months to eighteen years at the school. Registration – for classes that have started this week– continues through November 2025. Shanna Watson, who worked the registration table, indicated that students desiring to participate in the February 2026 recital have until the end of October of this year to register.

The Director/Owner of Judah School of Performing Arts is Amber Jones. She and her team have seen many students enhance their skills beyond measure over the years. Also, the team has witnessed many adults’ eyes glitter with approval at their children and grandchildren’s startling developmental stages. The school has performed and received standing ovations at Jackson Medical Mall; Disney World; New York City; McDonald’s Gospel Fest; Jackson City Hall; Thalia Mara Hall; Smith Robertson Museum; and several Tree Lighting Ceremonies.

For further inquiry, call 769-257-0330, or visit <https://www.judahschool.com>.



Registration is essential for children and youth at Judah School of Performing Arts

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Forum

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capacities within the judicial system. Her commitment to justice and equity has made her a respected figure among constituents. Her passion and commitment to improving the lives of the citizens in District 26 and beyond is evident in her ability to connect with and relate to everyday Mississippians.

James E. Pittman, a former educator, emphasizes the importance of investment in education. With a focus on equitable funding and resources, he aims to ensure that every student has access to quality learning opportunities.



Pittman

Pastor Jeffery Stallworth, a dedicated community leader, draws upon his extensive experience in faith-based initiatives. His platform emphasizes moral integrity and social responsibility, advocating for policies that uplift local families and foster community cohesion.



Stallworth

Diddy

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system designed to punish him beyond his crimes. Combs is not innocent. He is not absolved. But this sentence—delivered in a courtroom where acquittal carried no weight—stands as another warning. When the law bends itself to cage even those it found not guilty, when fairness itself becomes conditional, every Black man in America should see the truth: injustice anywhere is indeed injustice everywhere.

Detention

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any crime.

The first panelist, Heather Hogan, Policy and Practice Counsel, at American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA). Hogan indicated that “the government is taking significant actions in immigration enforcement that will have long-term consequences for individuals, their families and American society as a whole... I’ve talked to hundreds of detained asylum seekers, and I was frequently struck by how they’re treated like incarcerated criminals, despite many having no criminal record. I can describe a typical day, starting for an asylum seeker with an extremely early wake up, as early as 3:30AM, and by the time I talked to them they were tired, they were hungry -this is a really important- you know, life-altering interview to determine if they potentially qualified for a hearing in front of an immigration judge.

Here they are seeking asylum, most with no criminal record, yet housed in a prison in orange jumpsuits and shackled at the wrists and ankles. So, the system is extremely dehumanizing and mocking detainees and referring to them as bodies are common examples. It’s no surprise that in detention, especially prolonged detention, it causes widespread mental health issues. Most asylum seekers, frankly, already have had really traumatizing experiences before they ever come to the U.S. - detention then exacerbates their trauma.”

R. Andrew Free is an Atlanta-based lawyer and founded the hashtag #DetentionKills. “I’ve been working with families and communities in responding to deaths in ICE custody since May of 2017. That’s when I was contacted by the immigration lawyer of Gene Jimenez, who died at the Stewart Detention Center (Lumpkin, GA) by suicide. The Stew-

art Detention Center is the deadliest facility in the United States for the last eight fiscal years. I’m just going to talk to you very briefly about where we are in terms of morbidity and mortality and ICE custody this year. I’ve moved out of the active practice of immigration law and civil rights law into journalism, and I now write stories about this, and I spend a lot of time helping other journalists and publications report out stories about this. It’s the deadliest year in ICE detention since COVID. At the end of the fiscal year, which ended last week, we had 22 deaths in ICE custody. That’s the second highest level ever on record, exceeded only by deaths in custody in fiscal year 2004.

The largest number of deaths happened at the Krome North Detention Center in Miami, it’s particularly overcrowded and understaffed. We’ve had women sleeping in buses in the parking lot and people dying as a consequence. Texas was the second largest. In FY25, the average daily detention population was 61,000. The VERA Institute has released information detailing 437 active detention facilities, with another 961 facilities labeled as inactive.”

There are numerous facilities located or being used by DHS/ICE in Mississippi, including the Madison County Jail, Jackson MS Hold Room in Pearl, Adams County Detention Center in Natchez, and the Hancock County Public Safety Complex in Bay St. Louis. These facilities are often used for 24-hour holds, with nightly populations ranging from 8 in Pearl to 2,206 in Natchez, per The VERA Institute.

In responding to questions from media outlets, panelists shared that it is important to remember that people are fleeing to the United States for safety, and then some are

being held in solitary confinement, which the United Nations labels as torture. “The difference now with detention is that cruelty is the point, the goal encouraged by the government, whereas in the past human rights and the rule of law were priorities,” per the panelists.

Free also indicted that “ICE only lists about 180 facilities, the last time he checked. So, there are a bunch of shadow sites. We would call these black sites, if it were any other country.

The nature of these sites is also particularly troubling because, when you’re not in a detention facility with a statistical reporting system, you’re probably also not in the ICE Detainee Locator. That is what my colleagues have referred to as the consequence of enforced disappearances.”

The final panelist, Attorney Yannick Gill, with Human Rights First - an independent advocacy organization which challenges America to live up to its ideals – discussed not only the conditions surrounding access to detention centers, but the continued rise in the use of third-party country agreements. “We are seeing rampant human rights violations; inhumane, unnecessary and unlawful conditions of migrants and asylum seekers. Our reports cite evidence of medical neglect, physical and psychological mistreatment, and denial of legal counsel. All are unconstitutional.” Yannick added that currently the United States has agreements with Venezuela, Cuba, Costa Rica, Haiti, Ghana, Eswatini, Rwanda, and Sudan, for the deportation of immigrants.

The entire one-hour briefing can be viewed at <https://americancommunitymedia.org/media-briefings/deaths-disappearances-and-danger-in-immigrant-detention/>.

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Central Community Church of God celebrates 50 years of excellence

By Janice K. Neal-Vincent, Ph.D.
Contributing Writer

Central Community Church of God (2305 St. Charles St, Jackson, MS) is a pillar in the Jackson Metro area. Parishioners have established and maintained “family” and “community” bonds for five decades. In that regard, they celebrated three days (October 3rd – 5th) of love, commitment, and to honor God Almighty, worship with families and friends.

The Church remembered and shared its humble beginnings. According to Mary Taylor Knott, an original and sustaining member, many believed that the Holy Spirit was calling for a Church of God to fellowship in the City of Jackson. Mary Z. Taylor and Eulalia Boston had a burden and appealed to God through prayer and consolation that their children and families would worship together in one dwelling. National Church leaders – Dr. Robert Culp of The First Church of God in Toledo, Ohio and Forrest Robinsin- conducted Bible School Classes. Several meetings were held, and ultimately, the Church landed across time on its present site.

The Church held onto the theme, “Building on our Past, Present and Future with Excellence,” a theme that summarizes Hebrews 12: 1-2. Encompassed within these verses is determination to remain steadfast in Jesus’ teachings, regardless of circumstances. The following events occurred during the three-day period: a memorial service of members who transitioned to the Great Beyond; a welcome reception that included “Living Witness Testimonies;” and Sunday Worship.

The culmination of activities resulted in the worship service led by Dr. Ena K. Scott, Sunday, October 5th. Praise and worship induced several speeches and songs by the Praise Team, Central’s former choir members, and Vickey Smith of Anderson, Indiana. The love of God was exemplified and held the gatherers spellbound. Joseph Larry mentioned in his welcome address, “We honor every member



Rev. Handel Smith of Anderson, IL, charged listeners to refrain from deviating from God.



The Praise Team ignites the service.



Pastor Calvin D. Waddy, Jr., glowingly introduces Rev. Handel Smith, keynote speaker as a man of God. PHOTOS BY JANICE NEAL-VINCENT

who walked this path with us, and we thank each of you for being here today.” The Rev. Robert Williams explained to Central’s

members that they were being celebrated because of their faithfulness to God. He opined that they had impacted the commu-

nity for 50 years.

Sanford Knott – a founding member – reflected that the Church was inspirational, caring,

protective, and supportive of him and the other youth during his growing years. He recalled the Christian programs and National



Doris Braddy expresses delight in being overwhelmed by the 3-day 50th Anniversary of Central Community Church of God.



Sanford Knott, a founding member of Central Church of God, recalls the days of his growing years. He was inspired to press forward.

Youth Conventions. He recalled how members recommended that they go to school and own their own businesses. “We had some wonderful counselors,” he claimed.

The speaker for the hour was introduced and presented by Pastor Calvin D. Waddy, Jr., Central’s shepherd. “For more than 40 years, we have walked together...we share a heart. His love for God and his steadfast faith defines him,” he said of the Rev. Handel Smith.

Smith stood before attendees and challenged them with a two-word theme: “Stay Connected.” Emphasizing John 15:1-8, he warned that God is a reminder that the Church must “be connected vertically and horizontally.” He continued, “We look good from the outside, but are we connected?”

That rhetorical question led Smith into explaining the text. He asserted that God is the seeker of spirit-led lives that are connected to the vine and connected to each other. He specified the significance of relationship building from God’s perspective. “Some of you are the approval vine people, the bank account people. [You portray] something that is good, but it’s false,” he claimed.

He then urged the listeners to learn to face reality. This can be done by (1) not being false vines; (2) not allowing people to invite them into their storms; (3) not wallowing in a valley of shame; and (4) including God in their lives. Of these, Smith concluded that the Church must depend on God. “We can do more at Central. Help us, God, to invite the community and change them to know about Jesus. Exercise love, justice, and longsuffering.” Hence, leaning on God means that “He will help the Church in more ways than they can imagine.”

Dorris Braddy extended heartfelt thanks to Central Community Church of God’s well-wishers, team members, and Church members. “I’m just overjoyed. This has been a wonderful celebration,” she stated.

From Fellow to President

Special to The Mississippi Link

A high school education is a step toward success, but one that thousands of people across the state of Mississippi are not able to achieve during the traditional age timeline. For those individuals, high school equivalency programs, known to many as the GED or HiSet, are available and advocates are ready to serve.

The Mississippi Association of Adult and Community Education (MAACE) recently elected Daphne Monix Higgins as its newest president of the organization’s Board of Directors, to serve as the spokesperson for those assisting individuals looking for an alternative route to educational opportunities.

MAACE is comprised of all Mississippi’s community colleges and community educational centers that provide adult education opportunities to those seeking to receive their high school equivalency and/or participate in career development



Daphne Higgins

programs, through a partnership with the Mississippi Community College Board.

Higgins, the first African American and female to serve in this role, is an employee of Holmes Community College. Not only will she serve as the spokesperson for MAACE, but will help to provide leadership to the board, preside over meetings, guide the organization’s

strategic planning, ensure the board fulfills its governance and fiduciary responsibilities, and appoint committees.

Higgins’ road to this position began while working as a contractor for Holmes’ Workforce Development program. She was approached by the then newly named District Director of Adult Education/HSE WIOA Director, Earline Russell



Earline Russell Smith

Smith, to teach an adult education class. Reluctant at first, she finally agreed in 2017 and years later, now serves as the lead Instructor for Holmes’ Adult Education Program.

“I really didn’t think the classroom was for me and then to work with a population that has no age limits. I really didn’t know what to expect. I clearly understand it all now. God was

preparing me for this. I find myself relating to each of my students in ways that even surprise them. Because of the student - teacher, sometimes silly but all times professional relationship that exists within our program, my students are generally happy to come to class, participate and eventually graduate. It is my goal to build a similar relationship with advocates across the state,” said Higgins.

Higgins said all of the Mississippi programs are unique with their learning presentations. Barriers may vary from location to location, but each AE program is prepared to assist the students to help them reach success. Due to the dedicated instructors and the students’ determination to obtain his/her high school equivalency (diploma), Mississippi is a leading force in adult education.

Prior to being elected to her current post, in 2022, Higgins was chosen to serve as a State Advocate for Adult Education

Fellow (SAAEF) for Mississippi during the second cohort of the Coalition of Adult and Basic Education (COABE). Again, as a Mississippian serving in the role of first of her race in this national program, Higgins served in COABE with 53 other fellows across the country focusing on the development of leadership, advocacy skills, and research capacity, all while building a network of influence for adult educators, educational staff, and/or administrators. The purpose of this fellowship is to help build a robust network of leaders and advocates focused on the advancement of adult literacy across the country.

Smith expressed her pride in Higgins adding, “Daphne brings a high level of enthusiasm to our program, has added a stronger perspective on meeting those who lead our state, and is now paving a stronger path as the leader of MAACE. We are excited about what this year holds.”

Court Appointee takes over Hinds County Jail

By Daja E. Henry
Staff Writer, The Marshall Project

This Article was published in partnership with The Marshall Project, a nonprofit news team covering Mississippi’s criminal justice systems. Sign up for their Jackson newsletter, and follow The Marshall Project on Instagram, Reddit and YouTube

Amid a decade-long court battle, control of Hinds County’s Raymond Detention Center — severely understaffed and rife with violence, dysfunction and inhumane conditions — is now under the control of a court-appointed administrator.

Wendell M. France Sr., the receiver appointed by a federal judge, took the helm of the long-embattled facility October 1. France is in charge of the jail’s budget, personnel and day-to-day operations. He is a public safety consultant and a former assistant jail warden of the Baltimore Central Booking and Intake Center.

France and his team are prohibited by the judge from making public statements.

The change was ordered nearly three years ago but was delayed by the county’s appeal



The Raymond Detention Center in Raymond, Mississippi.

of the scope of France’s duties. France will oversee a jail that has gotten worse during that time, according to court-appointed monitors. There have been at least six deaths this year, including a homicide, a drug overdose and another suspected drug overdose.

The facility has physically deteriorated as well. In one unit, almost all of the windows are broken out. Nearly half of the facility’s cameras are inoperable. And incarcerated people are sleeping on the floors, according to people formerly

detained there and the latest monitoring report.

“The complete shock, as far as the conditions, was mind-blowing,” said Tedrick Francois, who spent two weeks this summer detained in the jail after being charged with attempting to deposit checks more than once. “I’ve been to a few county jails, and by far, Raymond... is the worst.”

Francois rattled off a list of issues, many of which have been documented over the years in reports written by a court-appointed monitoring

team: severe understaffing, violence, drugs and detainees who control the facility.

The biggest, and one of the most persistent, concerns raised by monitors in August at a federal court hearing was the jail’s understaffing, which monitor Elizabeth Simpson said led to a lack of safety.

“There just aren’t sufficient staff to supervise the building,” she said at the hearing.

The county entered this receivership after the Department of Justice filed a lawsuit in 2016 following its investigation into

the county’s detention facilities. The department found numerous violations of detainees’ rights to due process and protection from cruel and unusual punishment. The department cited understaffing, violence, a steady flow of contraband and poor record-keeping that led to people being detained past their release dates. The other facilities have been closed or brought into compliance, except for the Raymond Detention Center.

Although both parties agreed to fix the constitutional violations in a court-approved consent decree, the county failed to comply with many parts of the agreement. U.S. District Court Judge Carlton Reeves held the county in contempt of court twice in 2022, before ordering the receivership now held by France.

Imposing a receivership is one of the most extreme measures that can be taken to correct constitutional violations, aside from shutting down a facility. It’s only happened about a dozen times in U.S. prisons and jails. There are two active receiverships over California prisons’ medical and mental health care systems, and another has been imposed in New

York, pending the appointment of a receiver.

The court-enforced monitoring provides a rare look into the operations of a county jail in a state where there is no inspection or regulation of correctional facilities.

“In the absence of any kinds of checks and balances on the jail, or some kind of external oversight, then the only thing you’ve got is the courts,” said Michele Deitch, a distinguished senior lecturer at The University of Texas at Austin who runs the National Resource Center for Correctional Oversight. “That’s why it’s come to this.”

The county has made changes. It closed one housing unit deemed dangerous and reduced the population of the 594-bed facility to about 400. The Hinds County Board of Supervisors approved the sheriff’s request for pay raises to attract and retain detention officers. And some of the physical issues, such as faulty locks, will be in the past once detainees are moved into a \$125 million facility that the county is building. It’s scheduled to be completed in 2028, but some detainees may be moved in as early as next year.

Woman sues Mississippi police over son’s killing



AP PHOTO/ ROGER V. SOLIS

By Sophie Bates
Associated Press

The mother of a 25-year-old Black man who was fatally shot by police is suing the officers involved, the Mississippi Capitol Police and the Mississippi Department of Public Safety, among others.

Arkela Lewis’ son, Jaylen Lewis, was shot by Capitol Police during a traffic stop on Sept. 25, 2022. Two officers involved, Stephen Frederick and Michael Rhinewalt, were indicted for manslaughter in March. Both have entered not guilty pleas and are no longer employed with DPS.

According to the lawsuit, Frederick, Rhinewalt and other Capitol Police officers were conducting a drug operation when they pulled Lewis over. He reversed his car into a police vehicle, and officers opened fire.

“Jaylen (did not) brandish a weapon, reach for a weapon, make any violent gestures, threaten anyone or otherwise take any actions that could reasonably be perceived as endangering officers,” the lawsuit says.

Arkela Lewis, who has spoken out against Capitol Police, is ask-

ing the court to force DPS and Capitol Police to adopt a policy that would “prevent future instances of the type of misconduct” that led to her son’s death.

She is also seeking compensation for emotional damages.

“The Mississippi Department of Public Safety is aware of the lawsuit and does not comment on pending litigation,” Bailey Martin, a spokesperson for the department, wrote in a statement.

Rhinewalt and another Capitol Police officer are also being sued by another woman, Sherita Harris, who says she was shot in the head by Rhinewalt during a pursuit after a traffic stop, also in 2022.

The officers have said the car Harris was in fled after they exited their patrol vehicle, and they heard gunshots from the car as they gave chase, according to court records.

Two officers involved in that shooting, including Rhinewalt, have been indicted on aggravated assault charges. They have both pleaded not guilty.

The Associated Press made multiple attempts to reach Rhinewalt and Frederick, but did not immediately receive a response.

Mississippi civil rights attorney seeks congressional seat held by GOP’s Trent Kelly

By Sophie Bates
Associated Press

A Democratic civil rights attorney who has advocated for better treatment of prisoners and testified against Mississippi’s diversity, equity and inclusion ban said Thursday that he is running for Congress.

Cliff Johnson, director of the MacArthur Justice Center at the University of Mississippi School of Law, said he is seeking the northern Mississippi seat held by Republican Rep. Trent Kelly, who has indicated that he is seeking reelection.

In his announcement video, Johnson criticized cuts to health care and policies that he said favor the wealthy and corporations, not working-class families. He also condemned politicians across the political spectrum, casting himself as a Democrat who isn’t afraid to push back against the party establishment.

“Who’s fault is that?” Johnson said after listing issues facing the country. “Democrats, Republicans, independents who are more interested in maintaining the status quo and keeping us divided than living the values we all were taught.”

Kelly, a supporter of President Donald Trump, has held the seat since securing it during a special election runoff in 2015. He filed a statement of candidacy with the Federal Election Commission indicating his intention to run for reelection.

Kelly has practiced law privately and as a district attorney. He spent 39 years in the Mississippi Army National Guard and serves on the House committees for armed services, agriculture and intelligence.

Kelly’s office did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Johnson’s candidacy comes at a time when Democrats are looking to gain ground in a state controlled almost exclusively by Republicans.

On Thursday, the Democratic National Committee announced it is investing in



AP PHOTO/ ROGER V. SOLIS

the Mississippi Democratic Party ahead of elections in 2025 and 2026.

Republican Sen. Cindy Hyde-Smith is also facing Democratic challengers in 2026, including Scott Colom, a Demo-

cratic district attorney.

Democrats have come close to winning powerful Mississippi offices in recent years, narrowly losing the 2023 governor’s race.

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Obama fills the void in a fading Democratic Party

By Stacy M. Brown
Black Press USA Senior National Correspondent

Former President Barack Obama has stepped back into the political arena, delivering some of his sharpest critiques yet of President Donald Trump as the Democratic Party struggles through one of its weakest moments in modern history. With the party's leadership approval at historic lows and its ties to Black-owned media nearly nonexistent, Obama's renewed visibility has exposed both the vacuum and the disillusionment threatening to fracture the Democratic coalition.

In recent weeks, Obama has spoken out against Trump's authoritarian-style intimidation of universities and the administration's crackdown on the press, declaring that America must "resist being intimidated" and warning that protecting democratic values may require "sacrifice." At Hamilton College, he admonished Trump's White House for suspending security clearances and canceling contracts with law firms and schools tied to perceived political rivals. "That kind of behavior is contrary to the basic compact we have as Americans," Obama said. "Imagine if I had done any of this." Days later, he took to social media to denounce media companies for capitulating to Trump's threats. "After years of com-



Obama

plaining about cancel culture, the current administration has taken it to a new and dangerous level," Obama wrote, urging journalists and networks to "get a spine" and stand up for free speech.

Late in September at London's O2 Arena, Obama ex-

panded his message beyond immediate politics, telling a packed crowd that true leadership means constant vigilance and the courage to "show up and speak out even when it's uncomfortable." He cautioned against complacency, arguing that progressives had grown

"smug" and unprepared for the rise of authoritarianism. "True democracy is a project much bigger than any one of us," he said. "It's a job for all of us." Obama's renewed activism comes at a time when his party's base has grown increasingly restless. A Pew Research survey found that 59 percent of Democrats disapprove of their party's leadership—the highest level of dissatisfaction since the question was first asked more than a decade ago. Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer's approval among Democrats has collapsed to 35 percent, while House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries remains little known to nearly four in ten Democratic voters.

That lack of visibility and engagement has been felt most acutely within the Black community. At the Black Press of America's annual Leadership Awards, where Jeffries and Congressional Black Caucus Chair Yvette Clarke were to be honored, anticipation filled a packed ballroom. But neither showed up.

Civil rights attorney Ben Crump pledged \$50,000 to support the struggling Black Press, urging others to follow suit. "Typical of Democrats," one attendee said afterward. "They don't spend money with us. They don't show up. And then they expect us to deliver their

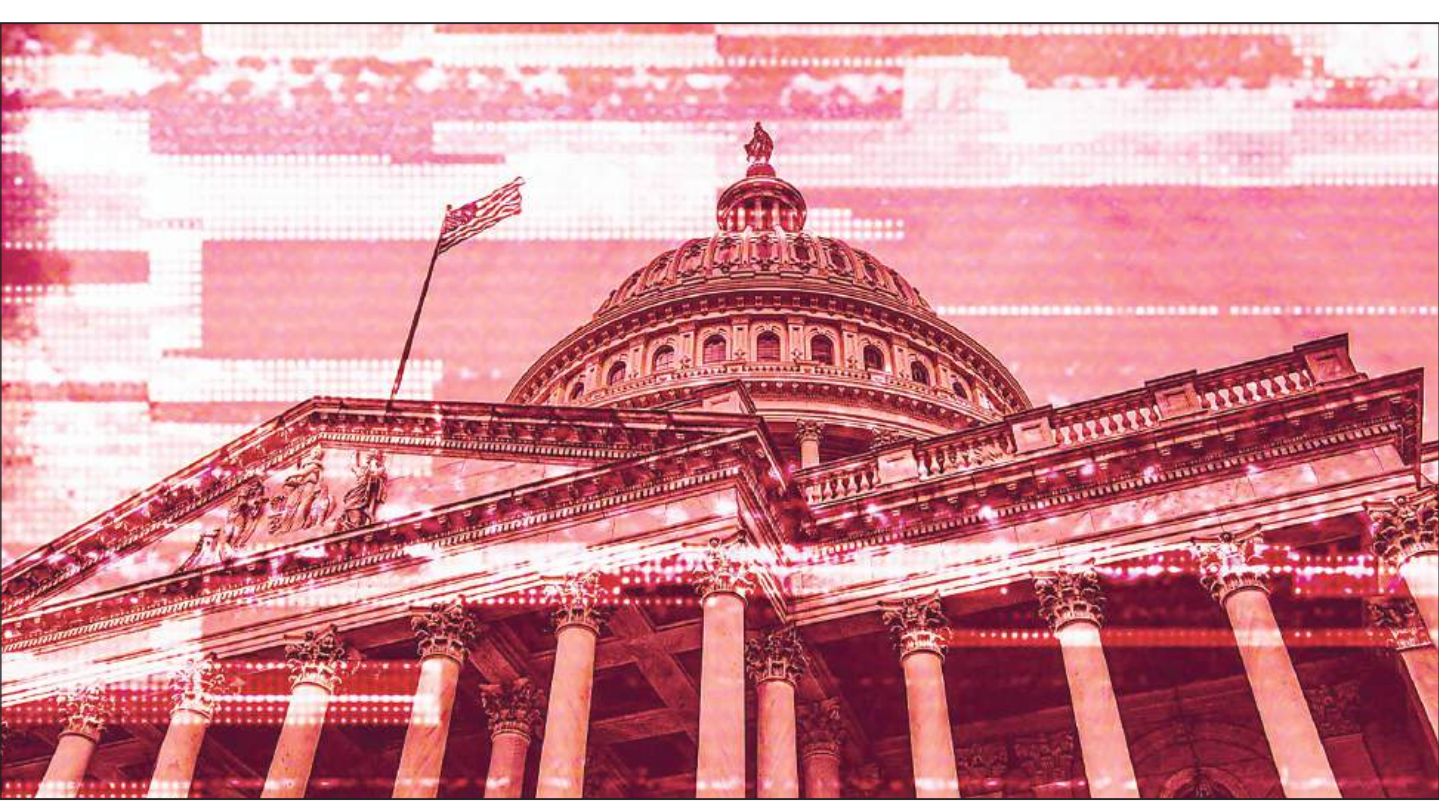
message for free." The snub, just 18 months before the Black Press's bicentennial, struck a nerve among publishers who have covered every chapter of America's freedom struggle—from emancipation to civil rights—without the financial support they deserve. "Our ancestors built this press through every trial in this country," said one Black publisher after the event. "The least Hakeem Jeffries could do was show up."

Obama's reemergence has not gone unnoticed by voters or by Trump. During a recent Navy celebration in Virginia, Trump attempted to incite the crowd to boo Obama, but the attempt backfired. As he invoked "Barack Hussein Obama," the crowd met him with dead silence. Meanwhile, polls show that Obama remains the most admired living president. A Marquette Law School survey found Obama with a +17 net favorability, compared with Trump's -15 and Joe Biden's -24. Even so, Obama's return to the spotlight underscores a sobering truth: the Democratic Party, battered by infighting and a failure to connect with its own base, still lacks a clear, trusted voice. Obama's critiques of Trump's policies—whether over healthcare rollbacks or media suppression—stand in contrast to the muted response from current Democratic leaders, who

have failed to mobilize voters around issues that once defined their moral compass.

Trump's efforts to dismantle the Affordable Care Act have revived Obama's signature policy as the centerpiece of a national political showdown. Democrats, scrambling to extend ACA subsidies that prevent premiums from skyrocketing, have tried to make healthcare their rallying cry again—but without strong, unified leadership, the message has struggled to resonate. For all his measured tone, Obama's message has sharpened into something closer to alarm. He warns that complacency, even within his own party, has opened the door to authoritarianism. "Progressives assumed our trajectory would bend inevitably toward progress," he told the audience at the O2. "That complacency left us unprepared." As Trump wields federal power to punish dissent, the former president's words carry the weight of both warning and legacy. But even as Obama reasserts his influence, the party he once led remains uncertain and divided—still ignoring the independent Black media that carried it through generations and still searching for leadership that matches the gravity of this moment. Obama may have left office eight years ago, but in 2025, he appears to be the last Democrat still leading.

Republicans shutdown government



By April Ryan
NNNPA White House Correspondent

Democrats and Republicans are both pointing fingers, saying the shutdown is the other party's fault. The government shutdown means that money has stopped flowing, and there is no continuing resolution to continue the funding for the government. Republicans are in charge of the House, Senate, and White House and do not want to open borders or focus on healthcare to expand the Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare. Firings are expected after an Office of Management and Budget memo during this shutdown,

with no end in sight. House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries went on social media after midnight, saying, "Democrats are on duty, ready to sit down with anyone, any time, and at any place to reopen the federal government and pass a spending agreement that meets the needs of the American people."

However, Jeffries chastises Republicans, saying they are not a "credible partner" right now. He goes on to say, "We will not support a partisan republican spending bill that guts the healthcare of the American people. Not now! Not ever! In a statement, the Congressio-

nal Black Caucus emphasized" Today, our country is facing a crisis entirely of the Republican Party's making and, unfortunately, Black communities will be forced to bear the brunt of their political games." During the 2018-2019 shutdown, the longest government shutdown in the nation's history, the Postal Service, Medicare, and Social Security payments continued. Still, according to reports, some SSA services could be impacted during this shutdown. Federal courts, border security, disaster aid, banks, air traffic control, federal law-enforcement agencies, prison staff, the Secret

Service, and the Coast Guard remain open.

Due to the shutdown, the National Museum of African American History and Culture posted on Instagram that it will remain open until October 6th, using existing funding to stay open until Monday. When it comes to airports, TSA agents are working without pay. However, once the government reopens and funding is flowing, TSA workers will receive their pay retroactively. Also, the nation's veterans will receive health insurance during the shutdown from Veterans Affairs.

Minority-Owned businesses shut out as loan denials soar



By Stacy M. Brown
Black Press USA Senior National Correspondent

The doors of opportunity remain locked for too many. A new LendingTree analysis reveals that Black-owned businesses faced the highest rejection rate for financing in 2024, with 39 percent denied loans, lines of credit, or merchant cash advances. Hispanic-owned businesses followed at 29 percent. By contrast, just 18 percent of white-owned businesses were turned away.

The figures draw a map of inequality, where capital flows freely to some and is dammed up for others. The report shows that one in five businesses overall—21 percent—were denied financing last year, a number nearly unchanged from 2023. But beneath that flat surface lies a story of disparity: while white-owned companies hit roadblocks less often, Black and Hispanic entrepreneurs carried the brunt of rejection. Size and age also stacked the deck. Firms with just one to four employees were denied 26 percent of the time, five times the rate of larger firms. Startups fared poorly,

but even businesses with three to five years under their belts faced the highest denial rate, at 29 percent. By loan type, SBA loans and lines of credit proved the hardest to secure, with nearly half—45 percent—rejected.

The reasons mirror a harsh economy. High interest rates, inflation, and an unsteady job market have made banks wary. Community development financial institutions, often praised as a lifeline for underserved communities, turned down applicants 34 percent of the time. Large banks followed at 31 percent. Matt Schulz, LendingTree's chief consumer finance analyst, said the trend is part of a larger retreat by lenders. "Inflation, tariffs, high interest rates, and a slow job market are making things tough on small businesses and the customers they're trying to attract," he said. "[With] this uncertainty, banks pull back—as they tend to do in risky, unpredictable times. Standards for lending to consumers and businesses have generally been tight for some time, and that's unlikely to change soon."



America is on edge today. Can't you feel it?

By James B. Ewers Jr. Ed.D.
President Emeritus
Teen Mentoring Committee of Ohio



When I was young and had a fever, I always felt a bit different. Things weren't normal. I wanted to get back to my normal way of feeling.

You know when things aren't right. It doesn't feel right and it doesn't look right. The Covid-19 pandemic comes immediately to mind.

We saw a lot of people with masks on and taking some special health precautions. For example, we had to distance ourselves from each other if we were standing in line.

Hand washing became a pri-

ority. At every juncture, we were using hand sanitizers. Restaurants did not have as many people in them. People were simply afraid to go out to eat. Staying at home was normalized.

Places of worship had fewer people attending. Those who normally attended church listened online to the messages. I would opine that there are still people who haven't returned to in-person worship services. They have gotten accustomed to being at home. That's just sadly, today's reality.

I can't put my finger on it is a timeless expression that we have used to describe unfamiliar circumstances. However, I believe we can put our finger on what is happening today in

America.

There are several unusual things that are occurring now. First and foremost, we are afraid of each other. We are fearful of what people will do or say.

Just a few days ago, I was about to enter a customer service waiting area. There was one person already there reading a magazine. When she saw me, she immediately jumped to her feet and left.

Was that a coincidence of her being ready to go? I don't think it was. I think it was simply her uneasiness.

The political divide in this nation has never been so drastic as it is now. Our views about most things are now clarified and even glorified by our political affiliation.

There is unspoken angst about political talk these days. There is no more political banter about the possibilities to compromise. There isn't an avenue for healthy debate.

The talk is all negative and mean. People have attitudes about their political leanings. Succinctly put, our America is in trouble.

In some communities, people are afraid to go to work for fear of being jailed. As a result, our economy is suffering because of it. Work is a time-honored tradition in this country, however right now, we have a stoppage in some circles.

The American public is tight-lipped and hurting when it comes to issues of the day. We are like ships passing in the

night. Threats and intimidation have ruled over our rationale thinking.

We know that there is a government shutdown. Some federal workers are in danger of being furloughed. Paychecks once certain aren't so much anymore. Federal funding is being withheld from certain states in our union. We know the term, the divided states of America and that is where we are right now.

It will be interesting to see how long our government will stay shut down. Remember, we are talking about the most powerful country in the world. Both political parties have their reasons as to why the government is closed for business. This is a heavyweight battle and there is no referee.

Senator Chuck Shumer, Democrat from New York said, "A shutdown gives the executive branch pretty much complete freedom as to what parts of the government to fund and what parts not." Representative Mike Johnson, Republican from Louisiana and Speaker of the House blames the Democrats.

Well, both sides are entrenched in their beliefs, and we the people are on the other side of the mountain. Maybe cooler heads will prevail in the coming days. Pain and suffering are equal opportunity maladies. They don't have a bias upon who it affects. They could care less about whether you are blue or red. America, are you feeling uneasy yet?

For freedom. For equality.

The Revolution promised freedom. Reconstruction promised equality. Neither fight is finished.

By Ben Jealous
People For the American Way



In my house, two legacies face each other. On one wall hangs a reproduction of The Spirit of '76, painted by my cousin Archibald M. Willard for the nation's hundredth birthday. The central drummer in that painting — the older man leading the trio — was modeled after Archibald's father, my cousin too.

The Spirit of '76 is America's most famous Revolutionary painting, the definitive image of independence, instantly recognizable wherever it appears. First displayed at the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia, it captured the mood of a nation celebrating its hundredth year and looking back on its birth in revolution.

For my family, it is not just symbolic. My father descends from six officers in the Massachusetts Line of the Continental Army and from a seventh, a 13-year-old fifer who fought at Lexington and Concord. He was the youngest combatant on that battlefield, carrying both a fife and a musket into the first fight of the Revolution. He lived into his 90s, long enough to be photographed, the only person from that battlefield whose face we can still see.

That painting is the definitive picture of 1776, a battered but unbroken march for freedom and equality. My family is literally in the frame and in the fight.

Across the room sits another inheritance, the desk of my mother's great-great-grandfather, Peter G. Morgan,

born enslaved in Nottoway County, Virginia, in 1817.

Beside it rests the courting set he bought so his three daughters, once freed, could welcome suitors in dignity.

My family isn't just in the picture of 1776. We live the unfinished fight of 1876.

A wager for freedom and equality

In 1864, while Petersburg was under Confederate siege, Morgan walked into a Confederate court and freed his wife and daughters.

Virginia law was brutal, any Black person gaining freedom — and their family — had 12 months to leave the state. Fail to leave, and you could be seized and enslaved again.

So, Morgan wagered exile — or even re-enslavement — if Confederate authorities got to them before the Union did. Still, he took the risk. He bet everything on freedom and equality.

He was right on the first count. And for a time, right on the second.

Reconstruction's promise

After the war, Morgan served in Virginia's House of Delegates from 1869 to 1871. He sat on Petersburg's city council and school board.

He helped build schools, relief associations, and even a bank. He believed that Reconstruction — America's "second founding" — could finally make freedom and equality real.

But he also lived to see those hopes collapse.

The collapse came just after the hopeful celebration of 1876, with the Compromise of 1877, a backroom deal to resolve the contested race between

Democrat Samuel Tilden and Republican Rutherford Hayes. Republicans kept the White House by giving in to Democratic demands to pull federal troops from the South.

With the old Union soldiers gone, white supremacists unleashed murderous violence to retake power. Reconstruction ended not with a bang but a betrayal and lynch mobs burning human flesh.

Twin revolutions, both unfinished

That is America in a nutshell: twin spirits, twin moments, both unfinished.

1776 was for freedom.

1876 was for equality.

Yet neither dream dies.

The fire passes from Harriet Tubman to Ella Baker. From Frederick Douglass to Martin Luther King Jr. From Chicago's Jacqueline Jackson to Chicago's Michelle Obama. And it burns on in young organizers today.

The warning is clear, freedom and equality are fragile, and gains can be rolled back. Today, both are under attack again with democracy itself on the line, racial equality undermined, and immigrants targeted with open hostility.

The charge is clearer still if my great-great-grandfather could bet on freedom and equality in 1864 while Petersburg burned and my father's young ancestor could join his father and brothers in arms at Lexington, surely we can fight for freedom and equality in our own time.

Ben Jealous is a former national president of the NAACP and a professor of practice at the University of Pennsylvania.

Is it about how much time you have or how you spend your time together?

By LaShunda Calvert, Ph.D.
Tips for a Good Marriage



We only have 24 hours in the day. I have heard many people say that if they had more time in the day, they would be able to accomplish so much more. What would you do differently if you had more time? What if you had more time to spend with your boo?

Unfortunately, if I had more time has become an annoying nuisance in many marriages. If I had more time I would communicate more. If I had more time, I would take out the trash. If I had more time, I would cook. If I had more time, we would date more. If I had more time, I could focus more on how to love you. If I had more time, I would assist with the house chores. If I had more time, I would be affectionate. If we had more time, we would argue less. If I had more time, we would be intimate. If I had more time, our marriage would be so much better off.

My husband and I are currently what society would label as empty nesters because both of our children are currently out of our home pursuing educational endeavors. Yet, we are still very involved in their lives. But we are back in our early years when we had no children and had all the time in the world to do whatever we pleased. I had looked forward to becoming an empty nester but as it turns out we have not been able to enjoy it due to our busy schedules with work, church, and so much more. As we became empty nesters, I noticed that we began to fuss at each other about anything and everything. For instance, I got upset one evening because my husband purchased a different brand of tissue than what we normally utilize, I fussed until the tissue started rolling off its cardboard holder. Yup, I was being petty at the end of the day, I had to admit that the tissue was going to do its job rather soft or brittle; just would need some A & D Cream and/or Vaseline depending on the texture.

We were wasting the little time we had on petty disagreements, debates, etc. However, as time progressed and our prayer life continued, we realized something was wrong. So, we communicated about this and continued praying and by the Grace of God we finally discovered what the issue was. The issue was we were frustrated that

we weren't spending as much time as we wanted to together and it was causing a rift or was it really causing a rift?

I asked my husband was the lack of spending time together negatively affecting our marriage. My husband's response shocked me. He said, "it's not about how much time you spend together it's about what you do with the time you have together." I promise when he said that it changed everything. We now understand in our twenty years of being married that quality time is more important than quantity. We were focusing primarily on the numbers than the potential "good time."

I promise by the Grace of God with prayer, patience, and good communication, we are in a much better place and have decided that we will not waste any more time bickering and debating. We now cherish our phone conversations and that's a miracle because neither of us is fond of conversing on the phone. Further, we now vigorously plan date nights/activities as much as we possibly can even if it's on a Sunday. We recently purchased bicycles mostly for exercise purposes, yet we get to spend quality time together and we have returned to utilizing our regular tissue brand. All and all, we have decided to spend as much quality time as we can together because we do love each other.

In conclusion, don't get me wrong, there is absolutely nothing wrong with spending countless hours together. However, if your time is limited, I challenge you to please stop wasting time observing your clock and start focusing on having a "good time," with each other whether it is for ten minutes or six hours. Is it about how much time you have or how you spend your time together? Spouses, please choose quality over quantity because quality helps promote bonding and trust, intimacy increases and you grow as one. Love grows [buy the correct brand tissue] and it nurtures your marriage overall.

Contact Dr. LaShunda Calvert for speaking engagements (Motivational, Ministering, Marriage Counseling, Marriage Workshops, Marriage Seminars, Marriage Conferences, etc.) Marriage Ministry: The Restoration Church, Suite H, Jackson, MS. 39206, on: Instagram: letsstay2gether4ever (Dr. LaShunda Calvert) Facebook: Dr. LaShunda Calvert Email:letsstaytogether4eva@gmail.com Contact # 601-596-2528

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NOTICE TO BIDDERS
City of Jackson
Jackson, Mississippi

Sealed, signed bids are invited and will be received by the City of Jackson, Mississippi, until 3:30 P.M. in the City Clerk's Office of Jackson, the bid must be stamped in by 3:30 P.M. Tuesday, November 18, 2025 at which time said bids will be publicly opened at the City Hall located at 219 South President Street (City Council Chambers) in City Hall for the following:

91263-111825 RFP- Remodeling of Grove Park Pool

BIDS ARE NOW AVAILABLE AT WWW.JACKSONMS.GOV or www.centralbidding.com

Official bid documents can be downloaded from Central Bidding at www.centralbidding.com. Electronic bids and/or reverse auction bids can be submitted www.centralbidding.com. For any question relating to the electronic bidding process, please call Central Bidding at 225-810-4814.

The above must comply with the City's specifications. Copies of proposal forms can be obtained from the Purchasing Division, 200 South President Street, Room 604, Hood Building, and Jackson, Mississippi 39201. Copies of Bid specifications are filed with the City Clerk for public record in accordance with House Bill No 999, 1986 Regular Session of the Mississippi Legislature.

The City reserves the right to reject any and all Bids. The City also reserves the right to waive any and all informalities in respect to any Bid submitted. Bid awards will be made to the lowest and best company submitting the lowest net price in accordance with specifications. The award could be according to the lowest cost per item; or to the lowest total cost for all items; or to accept all or part of any proposal. Delivery time may be considered when evaluating the Bid proposal. In those cases where it is known prior to advertising that the City's intention is to award according to the lowest total cost for all items, or in some variation thereof, statements to this affect will be included on the proposal form. Absence of such statement means the City will make that determination during the Bid review.

Monica Oliver, Purchasing Manager
moliver@city.jackson.ms.us
Purchasing Division
(601) 960-102

10/9/2025, 10/16/2025

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RFP-98854-111825 Grove Park Lightning

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Monica Oliver, Manager Purchasing
Purchasing Division
(601) 960-1028

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96297-110425 Weigh Scale System for Landfill

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Official bid documents can be downloaded from Central Bidding at www.centralbidding.com. Electronic bids and/or reverse auction bids can be submitted www.centralbidding.com. For any question relating to the electronic bidding process, please call Central Bidding at 225-810-4814.

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The City of Jackson is committed to the principle of non-discrimination in Public Purchasing. It is the policy of the City of Jackson to promote full and equal business opportunities for all persons doing business with the City.

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Monica Oliver, Purchasing Manager
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Purchasing Division
(601) 960-102

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Advertisement for:
RFQ 2025-03-26
Windows 10 Managed Upgrade Proposal for JPSP

Electronic RFP proposals for the above RFP will be received by the Board of Trustees of the Jackson Public School District, in the Business Office, 662 South President Street, Jackson, Mississippi, on Wednesday, October 29, 2025 until 10:00 A.M. (Local Prevailing Time) on the following dates and times associated with each RFP proposal which time and place they will be publicly opened and read aloud

A Pre-Bid Conference concerning the listed project will be held Via ZOOM (see below for link) on Friday, October 17, 2025, at 10:00 A.M. Attendance at the pre-bid conferences is non-mandatory but strongly encouraged. Please see the link below.

Join Via ZOOM: <https://jackson-k12- ms.zoom.us/j/87265155743?pwd=bXf5MbZlON Sx0YbiuJ3n2TWs9reubT.1>

Please email RFPajackson.k12.ms.us to ensure your spot in the pre-bid conference. It is imperative to have this information before the meeting to confirm your attendance.

The Board of Trustees reserves the right to reject all RFPs, waive informalities, and withhold the acceptance of any RFP if approved forty-five calendar days from the date RFPs are opened.

There are two (2) options in which RFP proposals may be obtained. Download from Central Bidding website at www.centralbiddiracom for a small fee of \$49.99 or visit JPSP website at www.jackson.k12.ms.us and download. Vendors must be registered with Central Bidding in order to electronically upload RFPs proposals at no cost. For any questions concerning the process, or how to register, please contact Central Bidding at 225-810-4814.

All hand-delivered proposals must be delivered before the opening time (local prevailing time) and the date the bid is scheduled to open. These deliveries are to be made to the Business Services Office at 662 South President Street, Jackson, MS 39201.

Performance Dates:

- 1st Advetise: 09 October 2025 (Clarion); 09 October 2025 (Jackson Advocate, MS Link)
- 2' Advetise: 16 October 2025 (Clarion); 16 October 2025 (Jackson Advocate, MS Link)
- Pre-bid Conference: 17 October 2025 (ZOOM)
- Final Date for Questions: 21 October 2025
- Answers to Questions: 23 October 2025
- Bid Opening Day: 29 October 2025 @ 10:00 A.M.
- Vendors may be notified of Board Review and Potential Award after the Bid Date

10/9/2025, 10/16/2025

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Advertisement for:
Bid 26-3275
Powell Middle School Cafeteria Serving Equipment

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A Pre-Bid Conference and walk through concerning the listed project will be in person on Friday October 17, 2025, at 9:00 A.M. at 3655 Livingston Rd Jackson, MS 39213. Attendance at the pre-bid conferences is non-mandatory but strongly encouraged. Please see the link below.

The Board of Trustees reserves the right to reject all RFPs, waive informalities, and withhold the acceptance of any RFP if approved forty-five calendar days from the date RFPs are opened.

There are two (2) options in which RFP proposals may be obtained. Download from Central Bidding website at www.centralbidding.com for a small fee of \$49.99 or visit JPSP website at www.jackson.k12.ms.us and download. Vendors must be registered with Central Bidding in order to electronically upload RFPs proposals at no cost. For any questions concerning the process, or how to register, please contact Central Bidding at 225-810-4814.

All hand-delivered proposals must be delivered before the opening time (local prevailing time) and the date the bid is scheduled to open. These deliveries are to be made to the Business Services Office at 662 South President Street, Jackson, MS 39201.

Performance Dates:

- 1st Advetise: 09 October 2025 (Clarion); 09 October 2025 (Jackson Advocate, MS Link)
- 2' Advetise: 16 October 2025 (Clarion); 16 October 2025 (Jackson Advocate, MS Link)
- Pre-bid Conference and Walkthrough: 17 October 2025 (IN PERSON)
- Final Date for Questions: 21 October 2025 • Answers to Questions: 23 October 2025
- Bid Opening Day: 29 October 2025 @ 10:00 A.M.
- Vendors may be notified of Board Review and Potential Award after the Bid Date

10/9/2025, 10/16/2025

LEGAL

RULE 81 SUMMONS BY PUBLICATION
IN THE CHANCERY COURT OF HINDS COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF
OTELIAN WOODSON-BASS, DECEASED

CAUSE NO. P2024-289M/4

PETITIONER: WALTERINE UNDERWOOD

SUMMONS

THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

TO: THE UNKNOWN HEIRS OF OTELIAN WOODSON-BASS WILLIAMS, DECEASED

You have been made a Defendant in the suit filed in this Court by Walterine Underwood Petitioner, seeking the adjudication of heirs of Otelian Woodson-Bass Williams, Deceased.

You are summoned to appear and defend against the complaint or petition filed against you in this action at 9:00 a.m. o'clock a.m., on the 12th day of November, 2025, in the Chancery Courtroom of Hinds County before Honorable Crystal Wise Martin, Chancellor. In case of your failure to appear and defend a judgment will be entered against you for the money or other things demanded in the complaint or petition.

You are not required to file an answer or other pleading but you may do so if you desire.

Issued under my hand and the seal of said Court, this the 7th day of October, 2025.

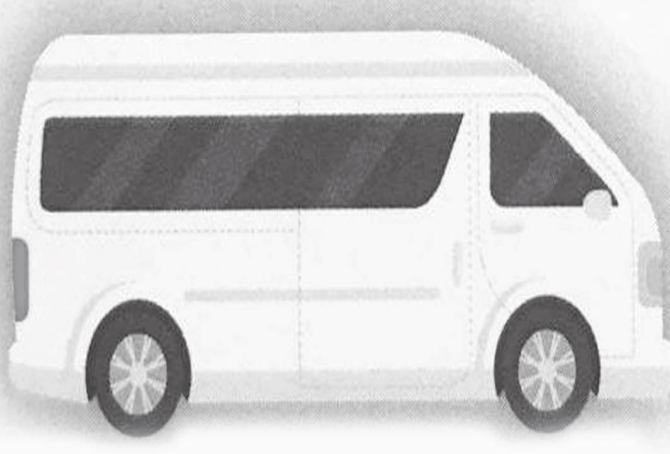


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	2					1		9
	7						8	6
					4			3
		9		2				
3				4	8		6	5
				3			4	
							1	
	5			8	9			
8						2		

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Sudoku Solution

6	2	4	8	7	3	1	5	9
1	7	3	2	9	5	4	8	6
5	9	8	6	1	4	7	2	3
4	8	9	5	2	6	3	7	1
3	1	2	7	4	8	9	6	5
7	6	5	9	3	1	8	4	2
9	4	7	3	6	2	5	1	8
2	5	1	4	8	9	6	3	7
8	3	6	1	5	7	2	9	4

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P R E S E R V E D

Boaz ain't broke

By Shewanda Riley
Columnist



“I don’t want a Paw Paw,” exclaimed a 50 something co-worker a few years ago. After we stopped laughing at her comment, we resumed our conversation about her struggle finding mature men who were dating and marriage material. Clubbing was out of the question and the men that she seemed to be meeting were too old (and set in their ways) for her tastes. “They are either too old to remember what it was like to be in a love with a woman and treat her well or too hurt by past relationships to try” was her pointed observation.

“I want my Boaz” she said with a cheery grin on her face. “How do I know him when I see him? Maybe I’ve met him already?”

I leaned on her office door frame and replied, “I don’t know if you’ve met him al-

ready but remember that “Boaz ain’t broke or broken.” We burst into laughter again. “I don’t mean that Boaz automatically has lots of money (that is a plus). What I mean is that Boaz, the one that you’ve been praying for God to send, is not broken emotionally, physically, financially, or spiritually He’s whole.” She nodded her head in agreement and said, “Amen to that.”

I thought about this conversation from a few years back when I watched the recent Netflix movie Ruth and Boaz. It is a modern-day retelling of the biblical story and watching the movie made me revisit the columns I wrote a few years ago about Ruth and Boaz. As I watched the movie, I thought about the similarities and differences between the biblical story and the movie adaptation. There were a few differences, but the movie remained true to the heart of Ruth and Boaz’s love story.

The story of Ruth and Boaz in the Old Testament is one of the greatest love stories that

also shows us women what to look for while waiting for our Boaz...it also shows women what Boaz looks like. Boaz’s actions toward

Ruth showed that he was whole emotionally, spiritually, financially, and physically.

Ruth 2:1 says that Boaz was “a man of standing.” Some translations say he was a man of “wealth and influence.” It wasn’t the fact that he had wealth that made him whole; it’s what he chose to do with his wealth. In Ruth 2:8 he even advises her on where she’d be safest. Later in that same chapter, he showed his generosity by inviting her to join him at the noon mealtime and giving orders to his men to help her while she is glean- ing. He didn’t try to manipulate her, but he showed her and others that he was genu- inely concerned all the while encouraging and protecting her.

In thinking about their love story, I think about how those of us over 50 years old have a unique set of issues when

it comes to rediscovering love and embracing authentic romantic relationships. We meet people who are dealing with decades of relationships games and are very skeptical, in some cases, that true love still exists.

One definition for broken is separated into parts or disconnected. Broken men are separated into parts and sometimes are often nursing wounds from past hurts. A whole man may still have personal and professional disappointments, but he has learned to allow God to heal him.

Next week, we’ll explore more about how Boaz ain’t broke physically, financially, emotionally, and spiritually.

Shewanda Riley is a Fort Worth-based author of “Love Hangover: Moving from Pain to Purpose After a Relationship Ends” and “Writing to the Beat of God’s Heart: A Book of Prayers for Writers.” Email her at preservedbypurpose@gmail.com or follow her on Twitter @shewanda

Sin will cause you to be confused

By Pastor Simeon R. Green III
Special to The Mississippi Link



Daniel knew about the Prophet Jeremiah that they were to be in Babylonian captivity for seventy years. No doubt, Daniel talked with others who were there, and there was confusion. They felt that the seventy years was due to be over, but they had no sign from God. In other words, no revelation was coming from God on how He was going to deliver them, so they were confused. They knew what the Prophet Jeremiah said, but they did not see anything happening.

Then Daniel said, in so many words: “I know the reason that we are not hearing from God. God is not talking to us through His prophets because we have sinned. We have disobeyed the prophets and leadership. We are here as a punishment. We need to repent.” Instead of Israel being ashamed, the people continued in disobedience and were not progressing with God. They were in bondage in Babylon with no voice from God. Many people are confused today, and the reason is that they have allowed things in their lives that are against the Word of God. They have transgressed, and they are not hearing from God. They will not hear from God until they do what they know they need to do

Repentance must come first.

Daniel said, in essence, “To us belongs confusion of faces.” They were confused. Israel was down in Baylon, and the time of their captivity had about ended, yet they were not hearing from God. Daniel understood the prophecy written by the Prophet Jeremiah. Jeremiah 25:11-12 reads: “And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the King of Babylon seventy years. And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the King of Babylon, and that nation, saith the Lord, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations.”

God cannot stand hypocrisy. You do not want to face Jesus Christ at the final judgment as a hypocrite. A hypocrite is a pretender or an actor. That would be one of the worst ways to meet God. The only people in Israel in touch with God were Daniel and the three Hebrews boys. Other Israelites were in confusion. So many people are confused today. But it is not God’s fault. They are confused because they have allowed sin to stay in their lives, and they know what they need to do. Read 1 Corinthians 14:33 “For God is not the Author of confusion, but of peace, as in all Churches of the saints.”

Simeon R. Greem, III, First Church of God 6517 Walmsley Blvd. Richmond, Virginia 23224



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Unbreakable: Black Women and Mental Health

By Monique LeNoir
African American Wellness Project

As a Black woman, I felt compelled to write this article after reading the heartbreaking news about Tyra Spaulding, the former Miss Universe Jamaica contestant who died after publicly sharing her struggles with mental health. I also recalled Cheslie Kryst, Miss USA 2019, who died by suicide at only 30. Two young women who seemed happy and accomplished on the outside were, in truth, battling pain within. Their deaths are painful reminders that depression is real and that even those who appear to have everything can be suffering in silence.

This year has been heavy for so many of us. Between the nonstop political news cycle, the pressures of returning to office life, persistent racial injustice, and the violence and division that weigh on our communities, the stress feels unrelenting for Black women, who so often hold families,



Practicing self compassion matters PHOTO BY DELMAINE DONSON

COMMENTARY

careers, and communities together; that stress compounds in ways that can be overwhelming. But too often, we don't stop. We ignore the signs. We push through exhaustion. We tell

ourselves it's just stress, that we don't have time to deal with it, or that talking about it would make us look weak. We keep going, caring for others, excelling at work, holding it all together, while quietly breaking down inside.

The statistics make clear just how

urgent this issue is:

- More than 7 million Black and African American individuals in the U.S. live with a diagnosable mental health condition such as depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, or schizophrenia.
 - Black women are more likely than other women to report symptoms of depression but are less likely to receive treatment.
 - In a national survey, nearly half of Black women who rated their mental or physical health as "fair" or "poor" reported experiencing at least one negative consequence from bias in a medical encounter.
 - Only 4 percent of psychologists in the U.S. are Black, limiting access to culturally competent providers.
 - Among adolescents, Black girls are nearly twice as likely as their male peers to attempt suicide.
- These are not just numbers-they are us- our sisters, daughters, moth-

ers, and friends. They remind us that strength and success do not shield us from struggle.

So, what can Black women do if they are struggling?

Start with self-awareness. Pay attention to changes in your appetite, energy, or mood. Exhaustion and persistent sadness are warning signs. Talk about it. Share how you're feeling with someone you trust—a friend, a family member, a pastor, or a counselor. Speaking words out loud is a powerful first step. Seek professional support. Therapy and counseling can help, especially with providers who understand cultural context. If affordability is an issue, look for community health centers, nonprofits, or online services with sliding-scale options. Build supportive routines. Regular exercise, journaling, prayer, meditation, and prioritizing rest can all help support mental health.

Top 10 things to know about the New AHA/ACC High Blood Pressure guideline

BLOOD PRESSURE CATEGORY	SYSTOLIC mm Hg (top/upper number)	and/or	DIASTOLIC mm Hg (bottom/lower number)
NORMAL	LESS THAN 120	and	LESS THAN 80
ELEVATED	120 – 129	and	LESS THAN 80
STAGE 1 HYPERTENSION (High Blood Pressure)	130 – 139	or	80 – 89
STAGE 2 HYPERTENSION (High Blood Pressure)	140 OR HIGHER	or	90 OR HIGHER
SEVERE HYPERTENSION (If you don't have symptoms*, call your health care professional.)	HIGHER THAN 180	and/or	HIGHER THAN 120
HYPERTENSIVE EMERGENCY (If you have any of these symptoms*, call 911.)	HIGHER THAN 180	and/or	HIGHER THAN 120

American Heart Association

Blood Pressure Categories:

There is stronger proof now that high blood pressure is linked to increased risk of cognitive decline and dementia. If you have high blood pressure, lowering it now may help protect your brain health in the future.

High blood pressure is the leading risk factor for stroke and a number of heart conditions such as coronary artery disease, heart failure and atrial fibrillation (AFib).

During or after pregnancy, you can develop high blood pressure, including a dangerous condition called preeclampsia. Checking blood pressure before, during and after pregnancy helps you and your health care team stay on top of your health. Talk to your health care professional about treatment options.

Know your numbers: Normal blood pressure is when:

Systolic pressure (top number) is less than 120 and

Diastolic pressure (bottom number) is less than 80

If your blood pressure is higher, talk to your health care professional about how to lower it.

If your systolic is higher than 180 and/or your diastolic is higher than 120, it could be life-threatening. Call 911 right away if you have any of these symp-

toms:

- Chest pain
- Shortness of breath
- Back pain
- Numbness
- Weakness
- Change in vision
- Difficulty speaking

Anyone can develop high blood pressure. People are encouraged to have their blood pressure checked regularly. This includes people in all age groups: children, young adults, adults and older adults.

To get the best blood pressure reading, sit in a chair with support for your back, both feet flat on the ground, arm extended and supported at heart level, stay quiet and still. Find out how to check your blood pressure the right way.

In addition to lifestyle changes, you may need medication. Learn more about the different types of high blood pressure medications.

Eating a healthy diet can help lower or prevent high blood pressure. Some key nutrition information to know:

Sodium (Salt) – Adults should have 2,300 mg (about 1 teaspoon of salt) of sodium a day or less, moving toward an ideal limit of less than 1,500 mg (about 2/3 teaspoon of salt). Follow a heart healthy eating pattern, for example the DASH eating plan, which emphasizes reduced so-

dium intake and a diet high in vegetables, fruits, whole grains, legumes, nuts and seeds, and low-fat or nonfat dairy, and includes lean meats and poultry, fish and cooking with non-tropical oils.

Fruits and Vegetables – Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables, emphasize variety.

Alcohol – Drink less or no alcohol to lower or prevent high blood pressure.

For individuals living with excess weight, losing about 5% of body weight can support overall health and help lower or prevent high blood pressure. Here's an example. If someone weighs 180 pounds, they could look up: what is 5% of 180. The answer is 9. Losing 9 pounds can help lower their blood pressure.

Check out Life's Essential 8 to learn more about what you can do to improve your heart and brain health. To help manage blood pressure, eat smart with a DASH-style eating pattern, stay active your way, reduce or eliminate alcohol, and try stress-reducing activities, including meditation, breathing control and/or yoga. It's also important to ask your health care professional about other common health conditions that can lead to high blood pressure, which include conditions such as overweight, sleep apnea, diabetes and thyroid problems.

Three Things every older adult should do for their health this Fall



PHOTO SOURCE: (C) JLCO - JULIA AMARAL / ISTOCK VIA GETTY IMAGES PLUS

StatePoint

For older adults, fall is an important time to focus on health and wellness.

According to Ryan Kocher, who leads Medicare growth for HealthSpring, the new brand for Health Care Service Corporation's Medicare business, formerly owned by the Cigna Group, the following three tasks are essential for seniors to complete as cool weather sets in.

Get a Flu Shot

An influenza vaccine can help prevent serious illness due to flu. As immune defense diminishes with age, older adults are increasingly susceptible to flu complications. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend the use of higher dose flu vaccines for people 65 years and older. This fall, in advance of flu season, visit your healthcare provider or pharmacist to get the right vaccine for you. This is also a good time to catch up on any other immunizations that your provider recommends.

Review Medicare Coverage

Medicare is the government health insurance program for

Americans 65 and older and others who qualify. Many Medicare beneficiaries choose or change their plans during the Medicare Annual Enrollment Period (AEP), which takes place between Oct. 15 and Dec. 7. HealthSpring is offering a host of Medicare options for 2026. The company provides these tips for selecting a plan:

- Check for plan changes: Review your plan every AEP, especially if you've experienced changes to your health, lifestyle or finances. It's especially important to read your Annual Notice of Change (ANOC) letter – delivered every September – to find out about any modifications to your current plan.

- Dig into the details: A good plan is one that includes your favorite providers and specialists and covers the medications you currently take. When reviewing plans, take these factors into consideration.

- Consider all your options: Medicare Advantage plans cover everything Original Medicare does, so do your research to see if these plans will work for you.

- Learn more: Before enrolling in a particular plan, be sure you understand the details. Call Medicare at 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; TTY users can call 1-877-486-2048. Or, visit the Medicare Plan Finder website at Medicare.gov/plan-compare. For local assistance, refer to the State Health Insurance Assistance Program website at www.shiptacenter.org. You can also visit individual Medicare plans' websites for more information. For example, HealtSpring's website is www.healthspring.com.

Use Your Health Care Benefits

Annual enrollment also serves as a good reminder to take advantage of all your Medicare benefits. Preventive care and a healthy lifestyle can help you maintain your independence and vitality as you age. Tap into what your plan offers so you can actively engage in your health and well-being.

By checking a few important items off your to-do list during autumn, you can ensure you're well-positioned for a healthy winter and 2026.

Dreka Shevon’s Momma’s Boy captivates at exclusive red carpet screening

Special to The Mississippi Link

The Capri Theater was filled with excitement and pride as filmmaker, writer, and producer Dreka Shevon hosted an exclusive red carpet screening of her newest film, Momma’s Boy, September 20, 2025. Guests arrived dressed to impress, walking the red carpet and posing for photos before settling in for an unforgettable evening celebrating Mississippi talent and storytelling.

The event buzzed with energy as family, friends, and supporters gathered to honor Shevon’s creativity and perseverance. Her commitment to authentic, faith-driven storytelling continues to distinguish her as one of Mississippi’s most promising filmmakers.

Audience reactions were overwhelmingly positive, with one attendee, Carlton E. Little, sharing his thoughts after the screening:

“I’ve seen many movies this year. As a Marvel fan, respectfully this movie Momma’s Boy by Dreka Shevon and Prime Stone Media is the best of 2025 for me. The writing and acting were top tier. When it’s available, you’ll enjoy this gem.”

The evening carried all the glamour of a Hollywood premiere while remaining grounded in community pride. From the elegant red, black, and silver décor to the genuine support filling the theater, the night reflected a shared celebration of art, faith, and perseverance.

A Stellar Cast Brings the Story to Life



Dreka Shevon is being interviewed on the red carpet exclusive screening of Momma’s Boy by on air personality Chelle B, 99 Jams WJMI.

Momma’s Boy features an impressive ensemble cast led by Pooch Hall, best known for his roles in The Game and Ray Donovan. The film also stars Brely Evans, Dorian Davis, Sunjai Williams, Selena Johnson, and Kerwin Claiborne, each delivering powerful, heartfelt performances. Their chemistry and depth brought Shevon’s complex characters to life, giving the story emotional weight and authenticity.

Produced under Prime Stone Media, Momma’s Boy is a gripping psychological thriller exploring love, loyalty, and survival within the dynamics of family life. Blending faith, suspense, and raw emotion, the film dives deep into how human

connections can both heal and destroy.

Q&A, we had a series of questions for Shevon:

ML: What inspired you to create Momma’s Boy, and why was this story important for you to tell?

Shevon: I didn’t see this growing up, stories like this weren’t being told in my community. God gave me an idea and I ran with it. Momma’s Boy came from a place of being aware of what I see in our communities and allowing my imagination to expand into a story that explores the darker, more complicated sides of that: loyalty and survival. I wanted to create something bold that would challenge audiences,



LeCourtney and Pooch Hall, actors in Dreka Shevon’s Momma’s Boy

especially in the psychological thriller space. For me, it was important to prove that a Mississippi filmmaker can tell a gripping, layered story that resonates far beyond our state.

ML: As the writer, producer, and filmmaker, what was the biggest challenge you faced in bringing this project to life?

Shevon: The biggest challenge was twofold, financing the project and executing it at the level the story deserved. Independent filmmaking in Mississippi means constantly finding creative ways to fund your vision while still delivering a film that looks and feels cinematic. I wore multiple hats, with this film, writing, producing, directing, and even handling some of

the camera work, while making sure the suspense, pacing, and performances stayed sharp. It was demanding but worth every moment.

ML: How can audiences watch Momma’s Boy and support you in your future projects?

Shevon: Right now, audiences can catch Momma’s Boy at our exclusive screenings, starting here in Jackson and expanding to other cities. The best way to support is by showing up, spreading the word, and following the film online to stay updated. We’re pursuing streaming distribution, so soon people everywhere will be able to watch. Supporting Prime Stone Media Institute also helps

create opportunities for other Mississippi filmmakers.”

ML: Anything else you’d like to add?

Shevon: I just want to give glory to God. He gave me the vision for this film and connected me with the people and resources to make it possible. To see a sold-out screening in Jackson and feel the community rally behind this project, it’s proof of what happens when faith and hard work come together. This is only the beginning.

To stay updated on Momma’s Boy screenings and Dreka Shevon’s upcoming projects, visit PrimeStoneMedia.com and follow her journey on social media @drekashevon.



Dreka and her friends celebrate a great screening of Momma’s Boy
PHOTOS BY DR. JAY

Reenactment at Mount Olive Cemetery honors African American Heritage

The Mississippi Link Newswire

Mount Olive Cemetery, a significant historical landmark in Jackson, Mississippi, will be hosting a special event Tuesday, October 14, at 12:00 noon. The community is invited to join in honoring the rich history and cultural heritage that this cemetery represents. The cemetery offers a powerful glimpse into African American life across generations.

Established in the early 1800s, Mount Olive Cemetery is one of the oldest private cemeteries for African Americans in Mississippi. The cemetery serves as a lasting testament to four pivotal eras in American history: slavery, Reconstruction, Jim Crow, and the Civil Rights Movement. It is located at 1400 John R. Lynch Street, on the campus of Jackson State University.

The event will feature guided tours, historical presentations, and special re-enactments brought to life by performers scripted to reflect the meaningful stories of those interred. The re-enactors will help bring to light the enduring legacy of courage, resilience, and hope embodied in this sacred ground.



Dr. Wilma E. Mosley Clifton, award-winning documentary filmmaker, author, writer, producer, director, and president of NMHS Unlimited Film Productions, the scriptwriter for the re-enactors, shared her thoughts: “Bringing history to life through re-enactment allows us to connect deeply with the stories of those whose lives shaped our present. Mount Olive Cemetery is more than a resting place – it is a powerful narrative of struggle, survival, and triumph that deserves to be honored and remembered by all.”

Dr. Heather Denne’, director of Community Engagement at Metro Jackson Community Prevention Coalition, Jackson

State University, added: “This event is an opportunity for the community to engage with our history in a profound way that fosters education, healing, and unity. By honoring interred in Mount Olive Cemetery, we pay tribute to the legacy of those who endured so much and inspire current and future generations to overcome challenges with strength and resilience.”

All residents, historians, students, and visitors are warmly invited to attend this meaningful gathering. For more information, contact Dr. Heather Denne’ at 601-979-5826. Join us as we honor the past and inspire future generations by preserving the history of this vital site.





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Walton Elementary’s Denise Thaggard named September Alyce Clarke award winner



Thaggard

The JPS Newswire

Walton Elementary School Assistant Principal Denise Thaggard was recently honored as the September Alyce Clarke Award winner by WAPT Channel 16. Her name echoed through the halls as scholars and staff proudly congratulated her on the recognition. Holding back tears, Thaggard said she was surprised and humbled by the award, especially meaningful because she now leads in the very school she once attended.

“I walked these very same halls, so I am a voice to say you can do it—I did it. I went to Walton, the same neighborhood. Anyone can do it,” Thaggard shared.

A Jackson native, Thaggard has dedicated more than 18 years to education. She began her career at Lake Elementary School, teaching Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten, and 1st grade, later serving as an interventionist. Her administrative journey started at Pecan Park Elementary School, where she served as Assistant Principal before moving to Walton Elementary, where she continues to serve today.

Throughout her career, Thaggard has supported both scholars and teachers by providing instructional strategies, modeling best practices, and offering feedback that enhances teaching and learning. She is admired by her school community for her compassion and leadership. Fifth grader Mailaya Montgomery described her as “nice, kind, and always helping others after school or with their homework.” Third grade English teacher Apryll Porter added, “I love Ms. Thaggard so much. She’s perfect. She’s like a mom to me. If you want support, she’s always there. If you want guidance, she’s always there—and it’s more than just in the classroom.”

Walton Elementary Principal Laroy Merrick praised Thaggard’s leadership and dedication, saying:

“Mrs. Thaggard is truly deserving of the Alyce Clarke Educator Award. Her passion for literacy and her commitment to ensuring every scholar can read are unmatched. Walton is a better school because of her.”

For Thaggard, serving others is both her passion and motivation. “It just makes me want to press on and keep going,” she said.

Thaggard is a proud graduate of Belhaven University, where she earned her Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees. She later completed a Specialist Degree in Educational Leadership from Liberty University and has finished all doctoral coursework toward her doctorate, now working toward completing her dissertation.

Her recognition with the Alyce Clarke Award is a reflection not only of her dedication to the profession, but also of the deep impact she continues to make on her school, her students, and the Jackson community.

Lion Elastomers names technology center after Alcorn alumnus Dr. Willie Burton

The Mississippi Link Newswire

Lion Elastomers, a premier manufacturer of elastomeric polymers, honored Alcorn State University alumnus Dr. Willie Burton of Zachary, La., by naming its analytical and R&D facility, The Willie C. Burton Technology Center, recognizing his 32-year career as a chemical research trailblazer.

The newly dedicated center, formerly the Uniroyal Chemical Company, now houses the company’s Analytical, Quality, Rubber Compounding, Research, and Development laboratories, as well as the synthetic rubber pilot plant.

The naming is a tribute to Dr. Burton’s pioneering work and long-standing commitment to the chemical industry, from which he retired in 2024. “I was fortunate to spend my career working on challenging and innovative projects, first at Dow and then at Lion Elastomers,” said Dr. Burton. “To have this technology center



Burton

named in my honor is a humbling recognition that reflects not only my work but also the strong foundation I received from Alcorn State University.” Since his retirement in December 2024, Dr. Burton has continued his relationship

with Lion Elastomers as a consultant.

Dr. Burton, the eldest son of Lillie Burton and the late Willie D. Burton, is a 1970 graduate of Alexander High School in Brookhaven, Miss. He earned

his Bachelor of Science degree in chemistry from Alcorn State University in 1974. Following his time at Alcorn, he earned both a master’s and a Ph.D. in organic chemistry from the University of Southern Mississippi.

Upon graduating, Dr. Burton accepted a research position at Dow Chemical Company in Plaquemine, La., focusing on catalyst research, where he developed expertise in Ziegler-Natta catalysis for the production of high-density polyethylene and linear low-density polyethylene plastics. After 11 years at Dow, he was recruited by Uniroyal to develop heterogeneous Ziegler-Natta catalysts for the production of synthetic rubber.

Throughout his career at Dow and Lion (Uniroyal), he was issued more than 20 United States and international patents and authored or co-authored more than 20 scientific publications.

Mississippi Valley State University awarded an education grant

The Mississippi Link Newswire

Mississippi Valley State University (MVSU) has been awarded \$279,000 by the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) to support its role in the Mississippi Teacher Residency (MTR) program, a statewide initiative designed to prepare highly qualified teachers for critical shortage areas across the state.

The grant will provide tuition, books, testing fees, mentoring stipends, and other supports for MVSU participants pursuing licensure in Elementary Education (K–6) or Special Education Mild/Moderate (K–12). In return, participants commit to teaching in Mississippi’s geographical shortage areas, directly addressing one of the most urgent needs in public education.

“We are proud that Mississippi Valley State University is continuing to play a vital role in strengthening the teacher pipeline in Mississippi,” said Theresa Dumas, Ph.D., Associate Professor/Acting Department Chair, Education & HPER Department. “This investment allows us to prepare, support, and retain future educators who will make a lasting difference in classrooms and communities across the state.”

MVSU is one of nine institutions of higher learning selected to share in \$2,968,855 in grant funding awarded by MDE to expand the MTR program. The statewide



initiative will support up to 236 teacher residents through its partner institutions.

The Mississippi Teacher Residency program is part of the state’s broader strategy to recruit and retain effective teachers. Since its launch in 2018, MTR has provided hundreds of aspiring educators with tuition support, classroom experience, and mentoring opportunities, while creating a reliable pipeline of teachers for schools in greatest need.

Mississippi Valley State University has a proud tradition of preparing educators who are both

academically strong and community-focused. Through its teacher preparation programs, MVSU equips graduates to lead classrooms with skill, compassion, and cultural awareness, ensuring that Mississippi’s students are taught by qualified, passionate professionals.

MTR Partner Institutions and Grant Awards

Delta State University – \$280,000

Jackson State University – \$272,417

Mississippi College – \$119,684

Mississippi State University –

\$1,298,981

Mississippi University for Women – \$140,000

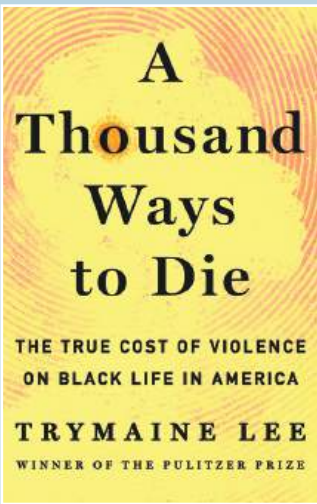
Mississippi Valley State University – \$279,000

University of Mississippi – \$242,773

University of Southern Mississippi – \$196,000

William Carey University – \$140,000

This investment is part of a broader statewide strategy to expand the teacher pipeline and retain high-quality educators across Mississippi.



BOOK REVIEW: A THOUSAND WAYS TO DIE: THE TRUE COST OF VIOLENCE ON BLACK LIFE IN AMERICA BY TRYMAINE LEE C.2025, ST. MARTIN'S PRESS \$29.00 • 257 PAGES

By Terri Schlichenmeyer
Columnist

Face it: some scores can never truly be settled. You can try tit-for-tat, you can scheme and plan, but making things even? Not a chance; the other guy is probably scheming, too, so full pay-back ain't happenin'. And besides, why let revenge live in your head? Life's too short, you just can't do it – and especially, as in the new book “A Thousand Ways to Die” by Trymaine Lee, you can't do it with a gun. Eight years ago, Trymaine

Lee almost died. Fortunately, the blood clot in his body, the “widow-maker,” was caught in time but the whole episode affected his then-young daughter, who continued for some time to beg for stories about it, and to ask about life and death. Lee didn't always know what to say. “I struggle,” he says, “to answer why things are the way that they are, especially when it comes to Black folks like us.” Death by violence happened in his own family: in 1923, a young great-uncle left on horseback to run an errand and was never seen alive again, which “ripped a hole in the family” that resonated for generations. Lynchings were common then, as was Jim Crow and so “Black folks... began leaving the South en masse...” Guns, he says, were “central to the violence” then, on both sides. Violence followed Black soldiers to Vietnam, and home again. It went to prison with some people, most often, men. Lee himself almost got in trou-

ble once for a “twelve-dollar toy gun from Walmart” that looked realistic. Black funeral directors learned how to hold open-casket funerals, as death stalked Black Americans for not learning to swim because Jim Crow kept them from it. Cancer caught others in unequal numbers. Some were wrapped up in “the deadly grind of the drug trade,” while “innocent victims [are] caught in the cross fire.” “We still bleed,” he says. “... yet salvation from America's violence has remained out of

our grasp, like trying to put shape to the wind.” On the surface, you may think there's not much new to say about violence, when talking about Black life in general. In many ways, it's been a part of American life for so long, it's almost some sort of wrong-headed new normal. And yet, read “A Thousand Ways to Die” and your thinking is going to twist, and twist again in a whole new direction. While author Trymaine Lee's main focus is on gun violence in the past century or so, he di-



ZACK WALLACE
Hinds County Circuit Clerk



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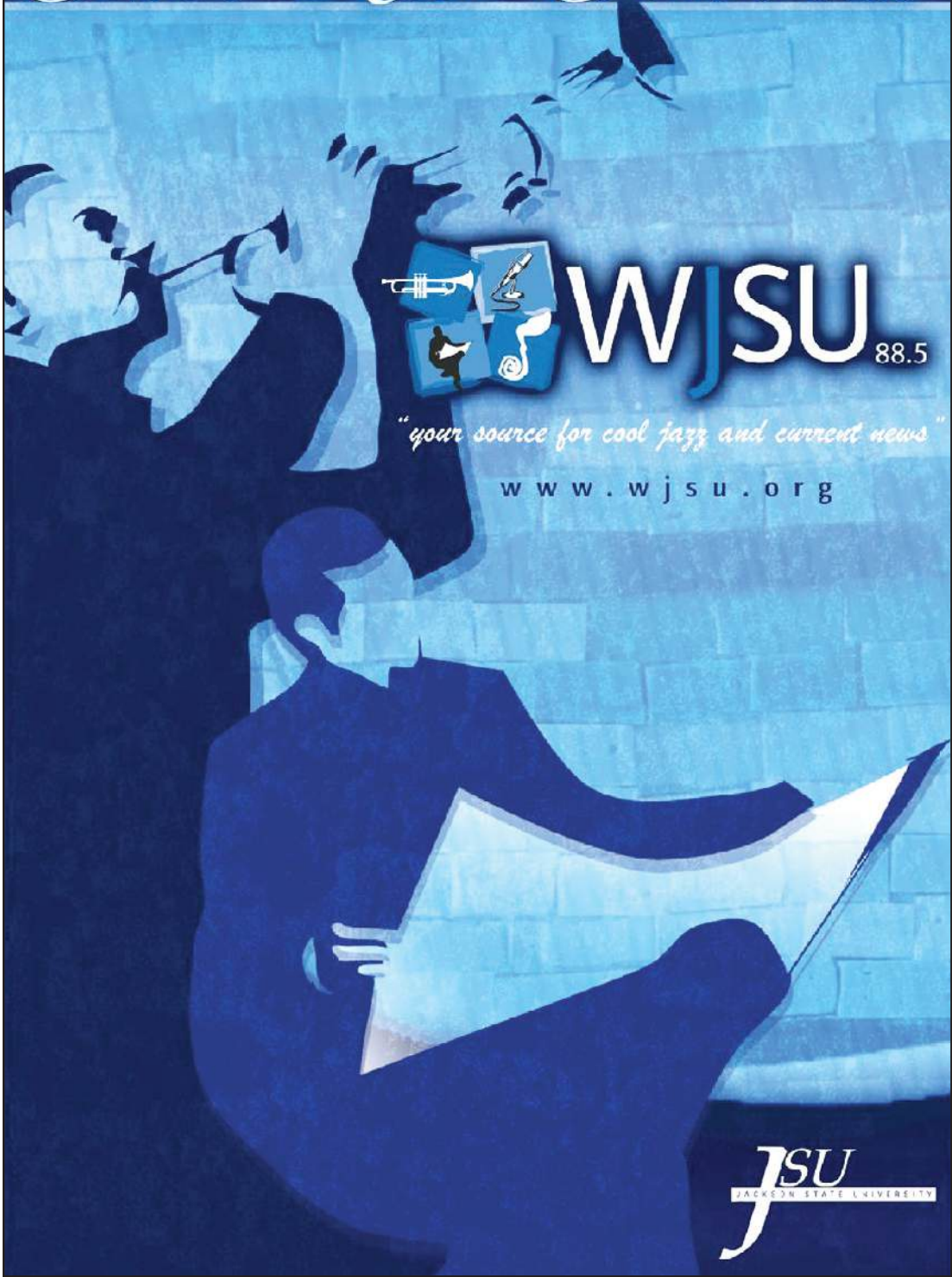
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HBCU Football Week 5 Roundup: Jackson State keeps the good times rolling

Brief recap of key games in week 5 of the 2025 Black College Football season

By Itoro N. Umontuen
Black Press, USA

JaCobian Morgan Shines with 5 Total Touchdowns as Jackson State Dominates Alabama A&M 57-24

Quarterback JaCobian Morgan delivered a stellar performance, throwing four touchdown passes and running for another to lead Jackson State to a commanding 57-24 victory over Alabama A&M on Saturday night.

Morgan completed 21 of 30 passes for 314 yards and added 120 rushing yards on 12 carries in a dual-threat showcase. Shemar Savage and Ja’Naylon Dupree each caught two of Morgan’s touchdown passes, while Travis Terrell Jr. contributed 103 rushing yards on just seven carries as the Tigers racked up 388 yards on the ground. Savage finished with 91 receiving yards and two scores.

For Alabama A&M (3–3, 0–2 SWAC), Cornelius Brown IV went 26-of-39 for 341 yards, throwing two touchdowns and one interception. Daveon Walker led all receivers with nine catches for 100 yards and a touchdown, while Franck Pierre added another score.

Alabama State Rolls Past Bethune-Cookman 52–35 in Homecoming Victory

Alabama State University celebrated Homecoming in style, defeating Bethune-Cookman 52–35 before a lively crowd of 24,736 at ASU Stadium.

The Hornets (4–1, 2–0 SWAC) displayed a balanced offensive attack, amassing 559 total yards with five different players scoring on the ground. Quarterback Andrew Body led the charge, completing 11-of-16 passes for 171 yards and two touchdowns,



JaCobian Morgan continues to dominate as his Jackson State Tigers maintain their winning ways. PHOTO: ITORO N. UMONTUEN/BLACK PRESS USA

while also adding 95 rushing yards. Karl Ligon powered through for 59 yards and two scores, and Jahbari Kuykendall, Marcus Harris II, and Jamarie Hostzclaw each added rushing touchdowns.

Monmouth Outlasts Delaware State 49–38 Behind Derek Robertson’s 4 TDs

Derek Robertson threw for 351 yards and four touchdowns, while Rodney Nelson rushed for 203 yards and two scores

as Monmouth defeated DeSean Jackson’s Delaware State 49–38 on Saturday.

Delaware State (3–3) was paced by Marquis Gillis, who rushed for 132 yards and a touchdown, and James Jones, who punched in three short-yardage scores.

Texas Southern Crushes Arkansas-Pine Bluff 51–7

Roriyon Richardson caught two touchdowns and Donovan Jones added a special teams

score as Texas Southern dominated Arkansas-Pine Bluff, winning 51–7 on Saturday night.

The Tigers piled up 557 total yards, including 350 rushing and 207 passing. Richardson had a career night with seven receptions for 103 yards and two TDs, while Cooper completed 16-of-23 passes for 197 yards and two scores. Athean Renfro rushed for 133 yards, and Isaiah Bogerty anchored the defense with seven tackles.

Webb’s 44-Yard Field Goal Lifts Prairie View A&M Over Alcorn State 13–12

A clutch 44-yard field goal by Webb with 14:54 left sealed a narrow 13–12 win for Prairie View A&M over Alcorn State on Saturday at Jack Spinks-Marino Casem Stadium.

The Panthers (4–2, 3–0 SWAC) controlled the clock with a balanced ground attack. Cameron Peters led the way with 66 rushing yards, while

Lamagea McDowell added 51 yards. Jyzaiah Rockwell was the top target with seven receptions for 45 yards.

Hampton Tops Norfolk State 41–34 in Battle of the Bay

Braden Davis threw for one touchdown and ran for another as Hampton held off Norfolk State 41–34 in the annual Battle of the Bay.

Davis finished with 202 passing yards, 64 rushing yards, and two total touchdowns. Gracen Goldsmith contributed 75 rushing yards and a score, while X’Zavion Evans tallied 93 yards for the Spartans. Kuhns completed 15-of-26 passes for 242 yards and three TDs in the losing effort.

Eastern Illinois Downs Tennessee State 31–7

Connor Wolf threw for two touchdowns, and backup QB Cole LaCruce added two short rushing scores to power Eastern Illinois past Tennessee State 31–7.

For the Tigers (1–4, 0–2), Byron McNair threw for 205 yards with one touchdown and one interception as their losing streak extended to four.

Georgetown Stuns Morgan State with Last-Second Hail Mary

Dez Thomas II connected with Jimmy Kibble on a 49-yard Hail Mary touchdown as time expired, giving Georgetown a dramatic 27–24 victory over Morgan State.

The Bears had surged ahead 24–21 after Dante Archie’s 28-yard TD pass to Justin Perry late in the third quarter, but they were unable to convert on a key fourth down with 32 seconds remaining, setting the stage for Thomas’ game-winning throw.

Steven Fisk birdies his last 3 holes in Mississippi to win first PGA Tour title

Associated Press

Steven Fisk said he wasn’t going to let anything get in the way of his first PGA Tour victory, and it took birdies on his last three holes Sunday to close with an 8-under 64 to win the Sanderson Farms Championship.

Fisk and Garrick Higgs of South Africa finally separated themselves over the closing holes at the Country Club of Jackson, and they put on quite a show.

They were tied when Fisk missed a 5-foot birdie putt on the reachable par-4 15th. That turned out to be his last mistake.

He holed a 40-foot birdie putt on the 16th, and Higgs said he heard someone in the crowd say, “Take that, Higgs.” The South African answered with a 12-foot birdie of his own — his fourth in a row on the back nine — and playfully put his finger against his lips with a smile.

Fisk hit wedge that danced around the cup and settled 3 feet away on the 17th. Higgs answered again with a wedge



Steven Fisk watches his drive from the No. 1 tee during the fourth round of the Sanderson Farms Championship golf tournament, Sunday, Oct. 5, 2025, in Jackson, Miss. AP PHOTO/ROGELIO V. SOLIS

to just outside 3 feet. It appeared as though it would go down to the wire, except that Higgs’s short birdie putt caught the left lip.

Fisk pulled one head with the birdie, and then left no no doubt with an approach to 4

feet for one final birdie to win by two shots over Higgs.

“I came out today with an attitude that nothing was going to stop me,” Fisk said during his Golf Channel interview on the 18th green. “I just felt like I’d be standing right here, right

now, before the round started. I know I’m good enough. I thought I could do it.”

And he did, finishing at 24-under 264 for a win that carries big benefits for the 28-year-old who played his college golf at Georgia Southern and who

played on the 2019 Walker Cup team at Royal Liverpool.

Fisk was at No. 135 in the FedEx Cup standings, destined to return to the Korn Ferry Tour unless he made up ground during the remaining two months of the Fall Series. Only the top 100 at the end of the season keep full cards.

He now has a two-year exemption through 2027, after it took him five years to get to the tour.

“To have some job security is pretty nice,” Fisk said. “It’s been a long, hard year.”

Higgs looked to have taken himself out of the mix with a bogey-bogey start to the back nine. But then he ran off four straight birdies to catch Fisk, and was poised to make it five in a row until the short miss at the 17th that cost him.

“My mindset was to birdie every hole,” Higgs said. “I almost did that. Steven did the same, so hats off to him.”

Danny Walker was tied for the lead early on the back nine, but he hit it into the water going for the green on the par-5

11th and made bogey, and then drove left into a hazard on the 17th that led to another bogey. He shot 69 and tied for third with Vince Whaley (67) and Ryder Cup player Rasmus Hojgaard, who had a 66-65 weekend.

All three of those players came away with a small consolation prize. Hojgaard was at No. 87 in the FedEx Cup, which is why he left the Ryder Cup celebration in New York for Mississippi. He went up 12 spots to No. 75.

The other two moved up 18 spots, Whaley to No. 84 and Walker to No. 86.

“I won’t be quite as stressed out, hopefully, around that 100 number,” said Walker, who had missed the cut in eight straight tournaments coming into the Sanderson Farms Championship. “You can just go to play to win, really. That will be a lot nicer feeling.”

Hojgaard, Whaley and Walker were among those headed for Japan for the Baycurrent Classic, the lone PGA Tour stop in Asia this year.

Hinds County School District Weekly Update

ENGAGING-EMPOWERING-ENSURING-EXCELLENCE

School Board Meeting

At September’s School Board Meeting, outstanding faculty and staff were honored through the superintendent’s S.P.E.C.I.A.L. (Selflessness Potential Empathy Connection Inclusion Authenticity Love)

